Physical Expression in the Post-Online Era: Case Study of Execution of IDF since 2020 to 2024

Madoka FUKUOKA

This chapter focuses on the physical expression in the Post-Online Era. Through the examination of the Indonesian Dance Festival (IDF)'s online event in 2020 and the subsequent online and in-person presentations of works and discussion, the chapter considers the possibility of the unique execution of a dance festival utilizing the online platform where diverse perspectives towards the human body can be seen.

1. Dawn of Contemporary Dance in Indonesia and the Start of the Indonesian Dance Festival (IDF)

The term "contemporary" was first introduced to the Indonesian dance scene in the 1950s. The term was proposed by leading dancers who had studied modern dance in the States and returned to their home countries. Eko Supriyanto describes the history of contemporary dance in Indonesia referring to Sal Murgiyanto's opinion (Supriyanto 2018: 92-106). As the pioneers of modern dance, Seti-Arti Kailola, Bagong Kussudiardjo, and Wisnu Wardana had been influenced by American modern dancer Martha Graham and had the opportunities to study in the Graham school in New York. After returning from the U.S. in 1958, each of them began to engage in educational and creative activities in different ways¹⁾. They used modern dance techniques

The description in this section was also written with reference to the following literature: Contemporary Dance in Indonesia In Edi Sedyawati ed. 1998 *Performing Arts. The 8th volume of Indonesian Heritage*. Archipelago Press, pp. 110-119. The author of this section is not specified, but is presumably Sal Murgiyanto.

¹⁾ After returning from the U.S., Seti-Arti teached in her dance school named as "Sutalagati" that produced many students. Bagong opened his studio named as "Pusat Latihan Tari (PLT) Bagong Kussudiardjo," that has had a profound influence on many younger artists. Wisnoe Wardana opened "Contemporary Dance School Wisnoe Wardana," and focused on the educational activities. Although the term was not widely used at that time, this is thought to have been the first dance studio to use the term "contemporary" ("kontemporer" in Indonesian language).

to create their own unique forms of expression, which may have had elements of today's contemporary dance, although the term "contemporary" or "kontemporer" itself was not very popular and sometimes the term "modern" or "kreasi baru (new creation)" or "karya tari baru" (new dance work) were used during this period (Supriyanto 2018: 94).

The term "contemporary" gradually spread after the establishment of the Jakarta Art Center (TIM Taman Ismail Marzuki)(1968), and the creative performance experiments began there²⁾.

Kusumastuti pointed out in her dissertation that the establishment of the Jakarta Art Center (TIM) and setting up the dance department in DKJ (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta) were the prominent elements to produce the relationships between culture, politics, audience, and media (Kusumastuti 2016). As pointed out by Kusumastuti, the relationship between these four stakeholders has been continued until today and the ecosystem of contemporary dance has been constructed. The practice of contemporary dance in Jakarta has been the central ecosystem for various experimental activities in Indonesian dance adapting many attempts and many disputes both domestic and international.

Examining three eras of the Indonesian contemporary dance scene, Raditya considered the characteristics of each. He positioned the first era (1968-1990) as the era of "reinterpretation of tradition." As the representative dancer, he mentioned the name of Sardono W. Kusumo(Raditya 2021: 105-114). The activities of Sardono were also considered by Supriyanto, Kusumastuti, and Murgiyanto (Supriyanto 2018, Kusumastuti 2016, Murgiyanto 1995).

Sardono W. Kusumo learned modern dance in the States in 1964, then he became the leading dancer in the Indonesian contemporary dance

²⁾ In November 2023, this author had the opportunity to see an exhibition in Yogyakarta on the activities of Wisnoe Wardana, held by the new dance organization in Yogyakarta named "Arsip Tari." Wardana created many works, including the work titled as "Manusia dan Kursi (Human and Chair)," and one of his disciples reenacted the performance of the piece.

scene. In 1978, Sal Murgiyanto had the initiative to execute the Young Choreographers' Festival and Sardono was one of the reviewers in the event. Dancers who participated were, Ben Suharto (Yogya), Wayan Dibia (Bali), Wiwik Sipala (Makassar), Tasman and Suprapto (Solo) and Endo Suanda (Bandung)³⁾. Each of these participants has been leading dancers in Indonesian dance world. This shows the importance of the festival. The Young Choreographers' Festival had continued since 1978 to 1984 (Supriyanto 2018: 113). The Indonesian Dance Festival began as the successor of the Young Choreographers' Festival in 1992⁴⁾. According to the exhibition in IDF2022, the Young Choreographers' Festival was reenacted in IDF1994, and many young dancers from the various regions both domestic and international participated (Vasana Tari Archive Exhibition at S. Sudjojono Gallery, TIM October 2022).

After the above mentioned process, IDF began in 1992 and has gained international attention as the largest contemporary dance event in Indonesia and also in Southeast Asia. It features performances by a diverse range of artists. It is also characterized by the participation of many curators both domestic and from abroad, including specialists in theater and visual arts, regardless of genre boundaries.

In the exhibition of 2022, there was the following description.

"The term "curator" was introduced to IDF in 2014, where Helly Minarti, Tang Fu Kuen, and Daisuke Muto took on the role of artistic curators. However, this does not mean that there were no curatorial practices in IDF events before then. In previous periods,

³⁾ Online communication with Endo Suanda and Marjorie Suanda on 26 January, 2025.

⁴⁾ While considering Sardono's acitivity, Eko Supriyanto did the intensive consideration on 5 leading dancers in 1990-2008, including Martinus Miroto, Mugiyono Kasido, Hartati, Jecko Siompo, and Eko Supriyanto himself (Supriyanto 2018: 133-192).

Raditya also positioned the second age of contemporary dance (1990-2010) as the age of expansion of contemporary. He also mentioned many dancers from various regions such as Hartati, Mugiyono Kasido, Martinus Miroto, Eko Supriyanto, Jecko Siompo. As the characteristics of the third age (2010-2020), he pointed out the development of discourses, profound research, and creative exploration (Raditya 2021: 105-114).

the editors and translators of the IDF's artistic vision were framed in roles such as head of the program department, program section, and artistic council. Through various perspectives and practices, dozens of these registered names have contributed and helped in building an artistic vision for IDF" (Vasana Tari Archive Exhibition at S. Sudjojono Gallery, TIM, October 2022).

According to this statement, based on the accumulation of the program by various stakeholders, the role known as "curator" had been set, and IDF had constructed a more international system of dance festival since 2014.

The 1996 edition of IDF began with the signing of a joint agreement between the Jakarta Arts Institute (IKJ), the Jakarta Arts Council (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta), the Jakarta Arts Foundation (Yayasan Kesenian Jakarta), the Jakarta Arts Center-Taman Ismail Marzuki, and the Jakarta Arts Center-Gedung Kesenian Jakarta (Vasana Tari Archive Exhibition at S. Sudjojono Gallery, TIM, October 2022).

Currently, the staff members are composed mostly of women, and as an organization led by women, it is building an ecosystem of dialogue on various social issues through physical expression. The festival celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2022 as a leading festival that most prominently displayed trends in contemporary dance in Southeast Asia, and the exhibition presented the history of the festival since its founding.

2. The Development of Visual Media and

the Influences of Online Distribution Platform

In the history of media development, various kinds of visual media have become widespread and the performing art forms have been transmitted and disseminated through them. Audio media saw the development of recording technology from the early 20th century, with distribution through

LP records and radio, and cassette tapes became very popular in the 1970s. In contrast, the development of visual media began with the advent of television, although there was the film industry before that, but dance and theater were not widely disseminated to the society. Since the end of the 1970s to 1980s, various performing art forms such as dance, theater, and puppet plays have been disseminated through the television. Videotapes such as VHS or Beta have also been used to record and preserve the performances in this era.

However, even in this period, visual media were still not as widespread as audio media. For example, in the case of the dance named *jaipongan*, which was very popular in West Java and other region in Indonesia from the late 1970s to the 1980s, the music was spread mainly through the cassette tapes, and the original dance choreography created by *JUGALA* was not properly conveyed, resulting in the rampant use of many incorrect choreographies. Gugum Gumbira, the founder of *JUGALA* group, was so saddened by this situation that he stopped creating new pieces for a while. It is considered as one example that indicates the difficulty of the dissemination of dance choreography while musical sounds were disseminated widely.

In Southeast Asia, the visual media that brought the most significant change was VCDs. Since the 1990s, discs known as VCD (video CD) became widespread in Southeast Asia. VCDs did not require a dedicated player and could be viewed on a computer, so they became popular throughout Southeast Asia, and many audio and video streams were disseminated through VCDs. The original dancing of Indonesian famous dangdut singer and dancer Inul Daratista was also spread by VCDs.

DVDs and CDs also were disseminated, but not for very long periods of time, then the era shifted to the streaming era after the 2000s. With the shift to the streaming era, around the 2010s, these discs fell out of use and distribution platforms such as YouTube or short video clips through SNS

began to be used more.

The distinctive feature of the streaming era is that video is no longer just for recording, but is also now mainstream for creation, processing, and distribution. While the primary purpose of visual media has been to record and reproduce content, the emergence of live or recorded streaming using online platforms have turned these platforms into creative spaces, spurring the creation of video works.

The use of these video distribution platforms has progressed rapidly since the pandemic that began since 2020. People have begun to distribute video clips as works that they have created and processed on a screen. The background of the execution of IDF online in 2020 was under this situation.

3. IDF since 2020 to 2024

Below, I will describe the trajectory of the execution of IDF since 2020 to 2024. The titles and staff members and main programs of each year are as follows⁵⁾:

(1) IDF 2020 online ".zip Daya: Cari Cara"
Program Manager: Ratri Anindyajati,
Curators: Arco Renz, Linda Mayasari, Nia Agustina, Rebecca Kezia.
Opening: Serial performances by 1'59 and collaborators
Closing: <i>LiTuTu</i> by Ayu Permatasari
(2) IDF 2022 in-person "Rasa: Beyond the Body"
Director: Ratri Anindyajati House Curator Linda Mayasari
Curatorial Consortium: Arco Renz, Hartati, Linda Mayasari, Nia Agustina, River Lin, and Sal Murgiyanto(curatorial consultant).
Opening: "SILO" by Hari Gulur (Surabaya, Indonesia)
Closing: No. 60, Pichet Klunchen (Thailand)

⁵⁾ In addition to this, the name of Nungki Kusumastuti, Melina Surya Dewi, and Maria Darmaningsih are mentioned as the founder and consulting committee.

(3) IDF 2024 in-person "Liquid Ranah" Director: Ratri Anindyajati Curators: Arco Renz, Linda Mayasari, Nia Agustina, River Lin. Opening: Bedhaya Hagoromo by Didik Nini Thowok (Yogyakarta, Indonesia) Closing: Pan Xian by Huang Huai-Te (Taiwan)

Also, the following presentations and discussions were distributed online between each year's in-person festivals.

2021 online "Layar Terkembang Body and Rasa in Terra Incognita series."
 (Billowing Sails: Body and Rasa in Unexplored Territory)

 2021 online "Layar Terkembang Virtual Body series."
 2023 online "Layar Terkembang Tubuh di dalam Jeda Lipatan Waktu" (Billowing Sails: Body in the Folds of Time)

Looking at the trajectory of the execution of the festival over the past five years, the following characteristics can be noted: the 2020 festival was the catalyst that stimulated the presentation and discussion of works in the online world, the performance and discussion in both the online and in-person spaces have become more substantial, and video shooting and editing techniques have evolved and become more important. IDF 2022 and IDF 2024 were held in-person, and after 2020, the accumulation of works and discussions online has led to the pursuit of diverse body representations and the enrichment of the discourse. Below, I examine the status of each year's event and summarize its characteristics, referring to some impressive works.

3-1 IDF Online 2020

In 2020, the festival was held online due to the covid-19 pandemic. The title of the 2020 was "*IDF 2020.zip Daya: Cari Cara*" that means "Zip. Power: Find the Ways." The title reflected the circumstances at the

time when those involved were thinking about how to hold a dance festival online.

In IDF2020, with core dance works, the section named *Kampana* was added. *Kampana* is the presentation space mainly for the works of upcoming young choreographers. There was also the space of "zip. Conversations" where many dialogues and discussions had been executed. In the section named as "*Kampana* Trajectory," many young dancers presented their cultural experiences and the process of creating their works.

In the introduction of this working paper, I positioned the body in physical expression as the accumulation of artists' memories and experiences. Presentations of "*Kampana* Trajectory" consisting of their narrations and video clips of their activities, are considered as the important section to know and be aware of the young choreographers' cultural experiences and physical expression reflecting these experiences.

As I will discuss later, this online event made the organizers and the participants conscious of new ways of communicating and popularizing dance through video distribution. And, making use of this experience, in 2021, young dancers presented their works and held discussions on dance in the online platform under the title "*Layar Terkembang*: Body and Rasa in Terra Incognita series." (Billowing Sails: Body and Rasa in Unexplored Territory)

The pandemic has transformed IDF into more of a festival rather than a biennale, continuing forever in both the online and in-person worlds. As an international festival showcasing trends in contemporary dance held around the Jakarta Art Institution and Art Center TIM (Taman Ismail Marzuki Park), it has welcomed many participants, including guest dancers from Indonesia and abroad, and presented a variety of results.

At the "zip. Conversations" in IDF2020, various discussions were held regarding the method of holding the festival online.

It is evident that the performances are being made into edited video

works in the online festival, and we need to consider the merits and demerits of the situation continuously. The merits of seeing the performance online are: ① audiences can see the performances from anywhere and as many times they like utilizing the platforms of video distribution such as YouTube. ② audiences can see the video clips sometimes with reading the commentary or seeing other video clips such as talks or interviews of the artists.

There are also demerits to the online distribution: ①The most prominent one is that audiences can't participate in the actual site of the performances, and can't know or feel the atmosphere of the live performances directly. ②Although online communications are available through comments, it is difficult to do the direct interaction between the artists and audience⁶).

Here I would like to introduce some interesting insights of an Indonesian novelist, Ayu Utami presented during online discussion "zip. Conversations" in IDF2020⁷⁾. She positioned dance as "poetry in the language of the body"(puisi di dalam bahasa tubuh), and spoke about the advantages and challenges of holding the festival online as follows:

The advantage of holding an event online is that it transcends various boundaries of time and place, allowing people from different parts of the world to participate online.

On the other hand she mentioned three challenges; ①Our Indonesian view of the body is different from the Western mind-body dualism, in that the mind and body are inseparably linked. This view of the body is extremely vulnerable and defenseless against the intervention of technology, if not with critical thinking. ②When held online, the live performance or "presentation" is replaced by a

⁶⁾ Although I couldn't discuss in this article, we need to protect the creator's copyright.

zip. Conversations Presence: Where Are We Now? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= SBEOlutBZsA&t=7901s
 Accessed in 16th December, 2024.

"representation" on a computer screen. 3 The digital divide separates those who can access and participate in online festivals from those who cannot (Ayu Utami's talk in *zip. Conversations Presence-Where Are We Now?*)

The above points are highly suggestive when thinking about online festivals in Indonesia. As Ayu Utami pointed out, the mind and the body have been considered to be inseparably linked in the traditional view of Indonesian people. Explaining the concept of "rasa" (that means feeling, emotion, or taste)⁸⁾ listed by great educator and thinker Ki Hadjar Dewantara, Ayu Utami examined how human body rooted in culture cannot be fostered by intellectual and rational thinking alone. The stakeholders of IDF 2020 faced the execution of an online dance festival, and they pursued the possibilities of the various physical expressions. It was a challenge to overcome the vulnerability of the traditional view of the body that the mind and the body are indivisible.

I will examine the characteristics of the online dance festivals by looking at the case studies below.

One is the attempts to integrate physical expression and discourses in the performance.

The first case study is the performance of gymnastics by a temporally collective "Gymnastik Emporium." The group continues to hold performances and workshops aimed at reflecting on the control of the body during the Suharto regime⁹⁾. In Indonesia, gymnastics called "morning gymnastics" had been disseminated in 1975. The movement of the gymnastics, as a fusion of martial arts and Japanese gymnastics, were so complicated. "Morning gymnastics" were difficult to practice, while people liked to see the performance.

^{8) &}quot;rasa" has various meanings, such as "taste," "emotion," and "feeling"

⁹⁾ Suharto regime continued since 1966 to 1998 and it is also called as "orde baru" (new order). It is known as the authoritarian regime that continued for 32 years long.

In the 1980s, gymnastics called "gymnastics for body health"/body refreshing (*Senam Kesegaran Jasmani* SKJ) had been disseminated. The exercise of SKJ has come to be performed as a national duty. Gymnastik Emporium's activities aim to share with people the history of gymnastics and the way the body has been controlled by the state through performing the exercises, teaching them to many people, and performing together. The aim is to share the experience or perspectives with the members of society ¹⁰).

In the 2020 online performance, the members performed the exercises while speaking one by one about their relationship with gymnastics. The footage showed the entire stage from the audience's perspective, and when a statement was being made, there was a close-up of the member speaking. The video technique was simple, filming the stage from the audience's perspective, occasionally focusing on an individual. The visual effects were also simple, in the form of exercises and speech, with no video processing. The performers on this occasion were a mixed team of school teachers ¹¹⁾.

The title of the gymnastic performance in 2020 was "SKJ 2020." It means gymnastics of diverse bodies (*Senam Keragaman Jasmani*). SKJ originally means the gymnastics for the refreshment of bodies (*Senam Kesegaran Jasmani*), and the SKJ 2020 was a parody of the original SKJ.

In this work, each performer performs gymnastic exercises while talking about the various interpretations of SKJ seen since the time of the Suharto order (*orde baru*). The contents of the talks were varied, including

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¹⁰⁾ In November 2023, I did the interview with the collective's director and dramaturg Irfanuddien Ghozali. Born in 1982, he positioned himself as the person in "transition of generation (generasi transisi) and positioned his generation as "one that views the Suharto order (orde baru) like watching the theater play. He also stated that his generation clearly distinguishes itself from older generations that actually experienced the Suharto order, and that he is keenly aware of the need to take part in activities that will allow him to reexamine that era. He recalls that gymnastics class (senam wajib) was what he hated most when he was in elementary school in the 1990s, which is why he chose gymnastics as a subject to think about the controlled body. He told that "the purpose of the collective's practices are to consider the issue of our body (isu tubuh kita), and to indicate the discourse (wacana) about physical theater (teatre tubuh)".

¹¹⁾ Performance: #SKJ 2020 by Gymnastik Emporim https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= s3FhBtGBIM0&t=293s Accessed in 16^{th} December 2024.

interpretations of gymnastic movements in relation to religion, examinations of the distinction between dance and gymnastics, conscious discourse on SKJ's control of the bodies of its citizens, and discourse that considers racial issues and gymnastics through the reinterpretation of Chinese physical practices into the section of gymnastics. At the end of the performance, there is a scene in which one dancer remains to perform. The meaning of the scene was that the performance expressed a situation in which the dancer wanted to be free from the power of control, but could not be. This presentation shows the attitude that we need to be conscious of the fact that our bodies are controlled in many ways even today.

The focus on gymnastics in the context of a dance festival and the various interpretations of gymnastics as a form of national physical control were unique aspects of this work. In order to realize this event online, the IDF 2020 invited audience submissions, two of them were selected as the best works and distributed. The collective's emphasis was not only on the contents of the performance, but also on the methods and approaches¹²⁾.

One more example is the work utilizing the effect of video editing. It is the work titled "*Rubuh Tubuh*" (Collapse of Touching Bodies). The work depicted the difficulty of physical contact under the pandemic situation. The production method combines the effects of staging and video technology, and is positioned as a work that takes advantage of its online distribution status. The conceptor of this work is Indonesian dancer and choreographer, Eko Supriyanto. In the credits of the clip, the concept of the work is written as follows:

The body collapsing. The desire to meet face-to-face is strongly desired. The closeness of meeting is limited. It is a new space, a virtual

¹²⁾ Performance: winner of Gymnastik Partisipatori https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idYHV CjeJTk&t=892s

Accessed in 16th December 2024.

The participatory approach has been also applied to other cases besides gymnastics, such as local rituals.

space. In the virtual meeting, the body's activity is limited. Touching is not possible. We cannot feel warmth. Many senses are blocked by time and space. This work, in which many imaginations and thoughts are nostalgic, is about nostalgia and the collapsing body¹³⁾.

This piece depicts a situation in which several dancers dance in an outdoor meadow, trying to touch each other but unable to. With the natural landscape as the performance site, the fantastic atmosphere of the contemporary musical piece titled "Birds in Warped Time II" composed by Somei Satoh had been featured in the work. It is positioned as a created work utilizing video editing and video distribution techniques.

In addition to the presentation of works that challenged the situation of physical expression online, as described above, IDF2020 was characterized by a full range of discourses such as "zip. Conversations" and "Kampana Trajectory." Two interesting points were the use of video distribution platforms to stimulate discussion, and the sharing of information about the works and the artists' memories and experiences behind them with a large audience.

In the online press conference, the founders (Maria Darmaningsih, Nungki Kusumastuti, and Dewi Lina) stated, "We have been through many political upheavals, economic crises, disasters, and other situations that have made it difficult to dance, but we have continued to hold festivals." (Press Conference of IDF 2020.zip DAYA: Cari Cara)¹⁴⁾.

The program also included the distribution of excellent works by

¹³⁾ Indonesian version is as follows: Rubuh Tubuh, rasa ingin bertemu tersangatkan. Intensitas pertemuan, tetap muka terbatasi. Adalah ruang baru, ranah virtual. Aktivitas tubuh banyak dibatasi oleh pertemuan virtual, tak bisa memegang, tidak bisa merasakan kehangatan pertemuan, kita terhambatkan ruang dan waktu. Rindu banyak rasa, banyak imajinasi, banyak pikiran. Karya ini adalah tentang rindu dan tubuh rubuh yang sendiri. Rubuh Tubuh//Bodily Archive-Road to IDF 2020 zip Daya: Cari Cara https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tO_BUTRxFq8&t=434s Accessed in 16th December 2024.

¹⁴⁾ Press Conference of IDF 2020.zip DAYA: Cari Cara https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boYJx0nN7B8&t=1074s Accessed in November 2020.

viewers and a form of online participation. The festival showed a strong message that even in the midst of a global emergency, we must not forget to enjoy dancing together. As indicated by the title "Cari Cara," (find the way), the organizers' strong will to realize an ecosystem through dance while exploring new methods was demonstrated.

3-2 IDF 2022 in-person "Rasa: Beyond Bodies"

IDF2022 was the first festival to be held with in-person presentations since the pandemic, as well as the 30th anniversary of the festival. After the pandemic of the online festival in 2020 and the online presentation in 2021, IDF is no longer a biennale, but rather a festival that continues to present and discuss works in both the in-person and online worlds. 2022 was the first in-person festival after such a change.

The 2022 IDF was held to commemorate the 30th anniversary. It was mainly held in-person, with discussions and other events streamed online under the title of "*Rasa: Beyond Bodies*." Also to commemorate the 30th anniversary, an exhibition was held showcasing the history of the festival so far.

In 3-1, I mentioned about the difficulty of performing online in situations where the body and mind are inseparable. After the execution of IDF 2020, the organizers have presented the importance of the concept of *rasa*, a concept that unites the body with emotions and sensations. This concept, of Sanskrit origin, which means taste or feeling, connects the mind and the body, and is a concept that embodies the inseparability of the mind and the body. As discussed below, it was used in the title of the series of the *Layar Terkembang* 2021 event, and is also a key word in the title of the 2022 event. The use of such titles indicates the importance that the organizers have attached to the characteristics of Indonesian dance.

The opening performance was a work titled "SILO" by Hari Ghulur, a dancer from Surabaya/Madura. The piece was a development of a work titled "Sila," created when he became a resident of the American Dance



program book of IDF2022

Festival. Hari Ghulur has focused on the "Sila," a seated posture used in the tahlil religious ritual he has been familiar with since childhood, to create a piece that emphasizes movement of the torso. The "Sila" presented at IDF2020 (online) was performed by four dancers in a mosque¹⁵⁾, but for 2022, Hari Ghulur and the company members have composed a production suitable for a large theater. The work emphasized intense movement stemming from the instability of posture and the repetition of the dialogue

with God. Many audience members enjoyed the work by feeling their tension, and it was an opportunity to share the joy of experiencing the taut atmosphere of the venue live.

The closing work was "No. 60" by Thai contemporary dancer Pichet Klunchen. This work is the result of Pichet's development of 59 basic forms of thepanon, in a traditional Thai dance drama called khon, which he has been practicing in his body. This work presents the possibility of rationally thinking about and mastering this 700-year-old traditional dance (IDF 2022 program book pp. 32-33). Co-performer, Kornkarn Rungsawang, a dancer who has studied Thai lakhon, also explores physical expression based on traditional dance. The creation of a contemporary dance based on Thai traditional dance had a great impact on Indonesian audiences by showing the possibility of physical expression and its development trained by tradition, and by giving them a sense of both commonality with their cultural tradition and a novel point of view.

Kornkarn Rungsawang also performed the work titled "Dance Offering"

¹⁵⁾ Sila by Hari Ghulur https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahJg5cj5NhU&t=317s Accessed in November 2020.

in the category of *Kampana*. The work is based on the Thai traditional performance called "*Rum-Kea-Bon*" (IDF2022 program book p.41). In the performance, Kornkarn invited some audiences to offer wishes through a digital shrine and if their wishes are answered, she danced as a form of reciprocal offering. Utilizing the VR (virtual reality) headset and AR applications, the work explored the virtual spaces and virtual body in the in-person performance site. The work can be positioned as one with new possibilities to combine the artist's physical expression, audiences, and the virtual world.

One more suggestive work in *Kampana* was "*Body Tarekat*" performed by M. Safrizal. According to the program book of IDF2022, "the performance that both builds on and departs from embodiment practices while doing "*tarekat*," specially the *Qadriyah tarekat* from Aceh. *Tarekat*, in a general context, is a method or path to get close to The Almighty by praising named of his greatness. For the choreographer, "*tarekat* is life, in a way of how he perceives life and existence itself" (IDF 2022 program book p.39). In this performance, movements and the repetitions to unite with The Almighty were performed for over an hour, and the audience shared the time and space. This performance, in which physical movements and the atmosphere created by these movements were fostered over time, was something that could only be achieved in this in-person setting.

The aforementioned Gymnastik Emporium implemented an audienceparticipation performance titled "Senam Kota Kita" (gymnastics of our city) in a large theater in 2022. Under the guidance of an instructor, the event focused on the city of Jakarta and provided an opportunity for performers and audience members to perform gymnastics together. The audience was invited to participate in the performance, but the emphasis here was not only on having fun, but also on sharing the history of gymnastics and physical control with as many people as possible. Photos of gymnastics during the colonial period and the Japanese occupation were projected on



Performance of "Senam Kota Kita" photo by author 25th October 2022

the background screen.

The 2022 in-person program is not so much a return from the online to the in-person format, but rather the emergence of a world of presentations and discussions that have persisted in the online space in the form of in-person meetings. The 2022 program was realized against the backdrop of a substantial body of work and discussion online. The works were presented primarily in in-person settings at multiple venues. Discussions also took place in person, some of which were streamed online.

The program for 2022 consisted of four parts: a presentation of core works, a presentation of works by mostly young dancers called "Kampana," dance workshops, and a session of talks. The section of Kampana had been added in 2020. Until 2018, it was positioned as "Showcase." Because IDF 2020 was the online event, in the talk session of IDF 2022, the intention of setting the Kampana section was explained. The section Kampana, a Sanskrit word meaning "vibration" was created in order to produce a deeper and freer space for dialogue and creation. This section was created to allow curators and various stakeholders to deepen the dialogue, including the dancers' cultural backgrounds and life experiences, and to reach a mutual understanding of the creative work 16). In the section 3-1, I mentioned

the difficulties of organizing an online dance event in the context of the inseparability of body and spirit, and this explanation of "*Kampana*" gives us an idea of the willingness of those involved to overcome such challenges by deepening the connection between physical expression and discourse.

3-3 IDF 2024 in-person "Liquid Ranah"

IDF 2024 was held in person under the title of "Liquid Ranah" (liquid sphere). The festival opened with a performance of "Bedhaya Hagoromo" by representative female impersonator dancer from Yogyakarta, Didik Nini Thowok, female impersonator dancers, and the performers of Noh theater from Japan. The closing program was a performance of the Pan Xian by Huang Huai-Te from Taiwan.

IDF2024 was impressive in that the possibilities for diverse forms of physical expression were explored in both performances and talk sessions. In particular, many performances and discussions focused on the expression of gender and sexuality. The opening piece "Bedhaya Hagoromo," a fusion of Javanese court dance and Japanese onnagata (female Impersonation) traditions, prompted a reconsideration of the artistic tradition of onnagata in Asian dance traditions. In terms of the story world, it was based on legends found throughout Asia, including Japan and Indonesia (or in Southeast Asia). It is also significant that the performance of onnagata is positioned as one of the common traditions in Asia.

In the talk session titled "The Mystical Gender in the Intersection of Artistic Stage and Daily Life," various opinions on the trans-sexual body expression in contemporary dancing were exchanged.

The work titled "*The Synthetics of Hybrid Beings*" by Ishvara Devati, presented in *Kampana*, indicated the new hybrid identity after having the experience of Hormonal Replacement Therapy(HRT)(IDF2024 program book p. 61).

"Pan Xian," as the closing program was the result of a reexamination



Didik Nini Thowok performing "Bedhaya Hagoromo"

2nd November 2024 ©Elitha Evinora Beru Tarigan

of the ceremonial event within Traditional Han Opera and Taoist ritual (IDF2024 program book p.43). Various kinds of physical expression had been explored in the work, including traditional martial arts, modern dance, etc. Various gender expressions can be seen in the work, including a body trained in martial arts, masculine body, trained female body in modern dance, transsexual body movement, etc.

The presentations and discussions of these works provided an opportunity to explore the possibilities of physical expression and identity and diverse forms of physical expression, and to share these issues with the participants. As a festival held in Indonesia and as an international festival, the IDF has become an important arena for considering diverse senses of values on physical expression both in the local context and the global context.

IDF2024 was the second in-person event since the pandemic, and the program had a very full lineup. Although there are some programs I don't know about because I couldn't follow all of them especially some work-in-progress performances, I think many programs were suggestive such as

performances of the core programs, *Kampana*, talk sessions, and site-specific performances¹⁷⁾.

Throughout the entire schedule, there were many experimental attempts, as well as many works that could be described as reinterpretations of traditions, utilizing the power of each region's artistic traditions¹⁸⁾. The work itself was interesting, and at the same time, many of the intentions behind the work were conveyed to the audience through the talk. Some talk sessions are distributed through the online platform.

The site-specific performances that took place twice during the festival utilized the open-air space of TIM, with many audience members surrounding and participating in the dance performances. As the center

of Jakarta's art scene, this event has created a situation in which people gather to watch and enjoy dance together, sometimes even becoming potential performers.

The *Graha Bhakti Budaya* Theater, where the opening and closing ceremonies were held, was attended by about 1,000 people, creating a space where many people could think and feel about dance and the state of physical expression.



program book of IDF2024

¹⁷⁾ The category of site-specific performance itself is new in 2024, but its equivalent was seen before then. Nia Agustina, one of the current curators, cites the performance in 2016 that performed in the form of a parade in TIM, in an attempt to consider the power of demonstration("Rough Machine/Soft Power" by Fitri Setyaningsih and Punkasila), and the collaborative creation by Mexican dancer Mariana Artega and a yoga group, Yoga Gembira, performed in yoga practice space in Suropati Park (e-mail communication with Nia Agustina 3 January 2025).

¹⁸⁾ A striking feature was the original perspectives in the research and the way the results were presented. For example, in "Ridden," a work dealing with the relationship between nature and humans after a disaster, the characteristic movements of a sailor were repeated intermittently, and cardboard objects reminiscent of a shelter were placed on the stage. As for the works in Kampana category, in "Sanghyang," a work focusing on the traditional Balinese ritual of sanghyang, physical expressions were performed with video images and songs, and in "Ping," the dynamic music featured drum, or kendang, and physical movement featuring hip movement that based on West Javanese folk dance "Bajidoran" were presented.

3-4 Layar Terkembang (Billowing Sails) 2021, 2023

Programs titled "Billowing Sails" were also supported to explore the practice of IDF in the online space. The title of each year, decided by Ratri and Linda, are the combination of some languages (Indonesian, Sanskrit, Latin, English) and indicate the complexities of new spheres of expression. These are as follows:

2021 online "Layar Terkembang Body and Rasa in Terra Incognita series" (Billowing sails: Body and rasa in unexplored territory) and "Virtual Body series"

2023 online "*Layar Terkembang Tubuh di dalam Jeda Lipatan Waktu*" (Billowing sails: Body at Rest in the Folds of Time)

The works have many unique innovations based on the premise that they will be presented online. For reasons of space limitation, I will examine only one work as an example. This work, titled "*Titik Koma Koma*" (moment of commas), combines a dance performance with a metalworking video. The two scenes, which would be difficult to perform simultaneously on a stage facing each other, were effectively combined through video editing. ("*Titik Koma Koma*" by Tyobabond)¹⁹⁾

Below is the statement by the creator:

"*Titik Koma Koma*" emerged from an intentional interpretation of how the body is positioned in context to the process. Their current being is the result of studying past ignorance. In their journey, each step becomes a space that cannot be repeated nor revisited. This space turns into an abstraction and cannot be mapped.

What makes for an interesting reading is that "the present body" is a manifestation of a process within a space, meanwhile "the future

^{19) &}quot;Titik Koma Koma" by Tyobabond https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3asY1a3Kbg&t=389s Accessed in 16th December 2024.

body" is a manifestation of the present body. But how and what is "the future body" has never been answered before he himself was overcome.

In the panel discussion held after the video distribution, the creator Tyobabond stated "Not only are we unable to know the bodies of others, but even the path our own bodies have taken is merely a memory and we do not fully understand it. This work was conceived from such a perspective."

"It shows four points of existence: the present moment, the state of becoming, the abstract space of memory, or image, and the spirit of the path that the body follows. The video of the metal forging process was combined as a metaphor for the moment and for what is being forged and made."

"My father is a traditional dancer. Although I myself chose to be a contemporary dancer because of my upbringing, I presented my own body, and my father also participated in the performance to show the impact of the existence of the traditional body."

As indicated in the above statement, dancers' bodies are positioned as the result of accumulations of memories and experiences in this work. The perspective indicates the commonality with the position of body described in the Introduction to these discussion papers. The work also positions the trial of the pursuit of new possibilities as the edited video clip where the dance presentation and the scene of metal forging are combined technically.

The online execution of IDF 2020 had a significant impact on the perceptions of those involved, foreshadowing possibilities that were not limited. They described it as a "blessing in disguise" and pursued new possibilities for expression in the online space, and *Layar Terkembang* 2021 is the result of their pursuit of such possibilities. After IDF2022, *Layar Terkembang* 2023 was held online under the theme "*Tubuh di dalam Jeda Lipatan Waktu*" (body in the fold of time). More works were accumulated

under the theme²⁰⁾. Many of the works were delivered as 15-20 minute edited video clips. In addition, video clips of talk sessions in which the artists discussed each of the works were also made available. Through "*Layar Terkembang*" series, viewers can learn about the work, as well as comments about the work, how it came to be, the cultural experiences of the dancers, and so on.

4. Conclusion

4-1 Dance Festival Utilizing Online Platform

From the above examples, the following can be noted as characteristics of performance in the online era:

First, discourse is becoming increasingly important. Discourse is considered important in both performance and discussion opportunities, with emphasis placed on artists talking about their works, the findings of their research activities, the idea and the concepts behind their works, and the background to their creations. Aforementioned researcher Raditya pointed out the development of discourses, profound research, and creative exploration as the characteristics of the third age (2010-2020) in Indonesian contemporary dance (Raditya 2021: 105-114). The situation of IDF where discourse is becoming increasingly important, is thought to be similar to his opinion. Also, the same situation can be seen in the field of visual arts where discourse is also emphasized. While the concept derived of local language are explored, discussions in English were actively broadcasted, and local language discussions were given English subtitles, so there was a strong tendency to emphasize English discourse as an international dance festival.

²⁰⁾ Since 2023, the project named "Lawatari (melawat tari) (dance visiting)" had been started. It is the trial to share the work presentation and discussion in various regions in Indonesia. IDF originated the center city Jakarta is expanding the ecosystem through dance to various regions in the country.

Also, in relation to the emphasis on discourse, it can be noted that there is a strong tendency to place more importance not only on the performance content itself, but also on the concept and method of approach. These discourses will be presented online through talk sessions, panel discussions, etc. Additionally, the footage of the performances will include explanations of the concepts behind them, which will be distributed online along with the performances. It is necessary for the artists to talk about their work and concept, to state their thoughts on some social situation, as well as presenting their performances in both online and in-person spaces.

Secondly, there has been an increase in video clip productions of performances rather than just archival footage of the performances. As the performance as a video clip work became more important, the role of the shooting staff and video editors became more important, and edited music and sound were often used. In this situation, various roles including video makers, sound designers, etc. are assigned to produce a single video work.

Thirdly, video distribution platforms such as YouTube are being used. Rather than being limited pages, methods that allow many people to access the content freely are being used. By the video distribution platform, the way people see the dance performance had changed from getting some software to referring, choosing and participating the programs.

The distribution platform produces the scene where many people participate and exchange the comments each other. The tendencies were also observed in festivals that were held in-person, where the discursive aspects, particularly the discussions and talks, were widely distributed through video streaming platforms.

The IDF2020 online event was followed by *Layar Terkembang* in 2021, and dance performances were enhanced in both the online and in-person spaces.

The production of online video clips flourished, finding its way online.

While some of the works were video recordings of regular performances, most of the works were presented with an awareness of the body as it is represented on the screen. A variety of works were created by combining physical expression itself, the space and location where physical expression took place, sound, and video processing techniques. The quality of dance works in the post online era are sometimes evaluated not only from the originality of the performances, but also from the degree of completion as video works.

Discussions were also enriched in both spaces, and discourses were forged and deepened. The presentation and sharing of concepts, the content and quality of the narratives grew in importance, the performance of the work was supported by the discourse, and a close relationship between the performance and the discourse was observed.

The 2022 in-person event was an opportunity for people to share the joy of coming together again after the accumulation of presentations in online spaces, and to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the event. Although there were still many participants wearing masks, people enjoyed the face-to-face performances and lively discussions. The program was well organized, including discussions, workshops, etc. An exhibition was also held to look back on the 30 years since the program began in 1992, creating an opportunity for many participants to experience the history of contemporary dance in Indonesia.

After *Layar Terkembang* in 2023, the IDF will continue to enrich the work of many dancers, including young artists. In addition to that, new attempts to reach out from the central city of Jakarta to other parts of the country had begun.

In IDF2024, participants from various regions of Indonesia and abroad presented works that confronted physical expression in the globalized age of modernity against a background of both online and in-person accumulation, and various discussions took place, creating a space for a large audience to

share them.

Artists are exploring their own unique forms of physical expression based on diverse artistic traditions, responding flexibly to the changes brought about by the online shift, and finding new avenues and possibilities in their activities.

On the other hand, there may be some challenges. While it is meaningful to share dance works and concepts at international festivals, and to engage in dialogue and share issues with curators and directors who come from many parts of the world, some of these concepts, including the fact that English is the dominant language, are somewhat difficult for the general public to participate in. In this sense, the IDF Producerial Open Kitchen at IDF2024 was an interesting talk session, as it provided an opportunity to discuss the organization of dance festivals in a public space, the Galeri Indonesia Kaya, with a large public audience. The discussion was illuminating in that it made an international event open to a large public audience.

In order to create an ecosystem of art as "socially engaged art" through dance, it is important to present social issues and global concepts. On the other hand, it is also important to ensure the quality of the performance itself. The problem of balancing social activities and the quality of artwork is also pointed out in the research of Helguera Pablo in the book on "socially engaged art" (Helguera 2011). The issue of the balance between social activities and the quality of artwork will be an important point when thinking about contemporary art activities, regardless the field.

In the midst of many ambitious works, it is necessary to widely demonstrate the importance of the quality of the performance in order to prevent the performance from becoming only an agenda-driven type. In this sense, the opening and closing works of each IDF event have ensured the high quality of presentation, and their leading performances have conveyed the appeal and importance of dance performance to many people. It is

precisely because of these unwavering performances that many young artists are provided with the opportunity to experiment in a variety of ways. Such a program structure is also very important.

4-2 The Era of Contemporary for Indonesian Artists

Finally, I would like to examine what is the characteristic of the activities of contemporary Indonesian artists and what kind of period is "contemporary" for them? Contemporary Indonesian society is the society of an era in which the powerful centralized authority, such as Suharto's regime, "orde baru" is absent. In this contemporary society, to what do they direct their expressive activities?

The researcher of Indonesian theater, Barbara Hatley positioned the contemporary era as "new freedoms, complexities, and challenges," (Hatley 2015: 4-7), and pointed out the characteristics of the era as follows:

Performance activities, free of the political restrictions of the Suharto years, are vibrant and diverse. But conditions vary across the regions, and a new form of repression threatens, not from the centralized state apparatus but from within society, particularly from hardline groups claiming the right to defend Islamic religious values against perceived offence. Theatre practitioners respond by celebrating alternate pluralist values through their performance, while engaging dynamically with new global media such as digital recording, mobile phones and the internet (Hatley 2015: 4-5).

Although Hatley's study is on theatrical performances, the examination is suggestive to consider the characteristics of current physical performances including dance performances. We can point out the various kinds of flexibilities of contemporary performance artists, including the adaptation to

various senses of values, developing technologies, etc.

I would like to consider the IDF case study with regard to alternate pluralist values in Hatley's point above. Regarding the conflict between physical expression and social norms, including Islamic values, alternative values have been presented, such as the importance of increasing awareness of gender and sexuality expression from a global perspective, reevaluation of the value of traditional arts, and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The emphasis on both the traditional value of transgender dance performance and the importance of transsexual body expression in a global context, as seen in the aforementioned presentation and discussion of works at IDF 2024, may also be an example of the pluralist values.

Regarding the activities using the various technologies, we can see a balance in the use of both the enhancement of in-person staging and the high-quality distribution in the online space. This is due in large part to the ambitious work of the artists and the technical contribution of the video shooting and editing team, along with the ideas of the online platform conceptors.

The people and artists involved in IDF have been pursuing new possibilities for physical expression while maintaining a sense of pluralistic balance and dealing with the diverse values of contemporary society. They have emphasized both adaptation to global norms and presentation of the power of local dance traditions and local arts. This is due to the rich dance traditions in Indonesia, as well as the fact that the director, organizing team members, and curators are knowledgeable about global art trends as well as local artistic traditions, and have been supportive of the creative process of the ambitious works created by the young artists.

The Indonesian case may serve as a suggestive example of contemporary art practice in Southeast Asia.

In a symposium commentary posted in Hatley's book, anthropologist Ariel Heryanto noted that the term "post new order," which is so often used, is a sign that we are still trapped in the shadow of the new order (Heryanto 2015: 253-255). Indeed, the Suharto regime was a period of enormous influence. As he points out, the post-XXX era, including the present age, is not completely free from past history and epoch-making events. Rather, it is an era in which we are looking back at these past eras together, sharing challenges, and exploring ways of living

Based on this opinion, what should dance performances be like in the post-pandemic era, the post-online distribution era? The mission of IDF is to explore ways of living by confronting history and facing the times through constructing the ecosystem of physical expression. Facing both online and in-person spaces, the IDF's endeavors would continue in the future.

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