Reconstructing Marongge Dance Based on Folklore Through an Art by Research Approach

Restructuring and reactualizing the ethical-aesthetic values of the legend Marongge from local myth into an academic dance performance

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Cultural Context & Stigmatization

Sumedang Larang Heritage

Reductive Commodification & Mysticism

Stigmatization of the "Marongge love charm" pilgrimage obscures original aesthetic structures and symbolic representations.

Degradation of Traditional Art

Scarcity of structured choreographic documentation threatens local intangible cultural heritage in Sumedang.

Urgency of Artistic Reconstruction

Restoring the Sasakala Marongge narrative into kinetic aesthetic forms embodying female sovereignty.



02. Research Focus

Core Objectives of Marongge Dance Reconstruction

Movement Restructuring

Reassembling fragmented movement vocabularies and vocalities of Sumedangan-style Sundanese dance.

Symbolic Reinterpretation

Transforming mystical charm concepts into expressions of inner spiritual poise and feminine elegance.

Educational Reactualization

Packaging the performance into adaptive formats for higher arts education curriculum modules.

03. Research Methodology

Art by Research Paradigm Framework

CHOREOGRAPHIC THEORY

Alma Hawkins Synthesis

Artistic creation positioned as a primary epistemological method generating scientific insights across 3 phases:

- **Exploration:** Body and movement vocabulary discovery
- **Improvisation:** Space, time, and dynamics testing
- **Forming:** Complete choreographic structure assembly

TRADITIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

Djelantik & Widyastuti Model

Systematic excavation and revitalization of traditional arts through integrated analytical lenses:

- **Textual Analysis:** Oral literature and cultural memory study
- **Socio-Cultural Analysis:** Deconstructing societal stigma
- **Expert Validation:** Verification with Sumedang elders

04. Research Workflow

Four Operational Methodological Pillars

Phase 01

Excavation

Unearthing historical-mythological data via elder interviews and Todorov narrative analysis.

Phase 02

Reconstruction

Building Sumedangan dance movement vocabulary through the choreographer's physical body.

Phase 03

Reinterpretation

Transforming mystical symbols into stage metaphors of female dignity and poise.

Phase 04

Reactualization

Packaging adaptive modern performance with updated karawitan music and stage lighting.

05. Sasakala Marongge

Historical Narrative of the 4 Sumedang Heroines



4 Key Female Figures

Mbah Gabug (Nyai Gabug) alongside her 3 sisters: Setayu, Naibah, and Naidah defending self-sovereignty.

Conflict with King Gubangkala

Rejecting forced marriage proposals via the challenge of floating a *kukuk* (gourd) upstream against Cilutung River current.

Toponymy of Marongge

Harmonious blend of magical light glow (*merong*) emanating behind bamboo branch cover (*rengge*).

06. Transmutation Matrix

Converting Oral Narrative into Choreographic Language

Narrative Element	Dramatic Motif	Movement Vocabulary	Musical Accompaniment	Visual / Prop
Pilgrimage of 4 Princesses	Independence & Sisterhood	Langkah Empat, Lencang Kanan/Kiri	Pelog Tembang Kagetan	Sundanese Kebaya in 4 gradient shades
Proposal Rejection	Sovereignty & Resistance	Tumpang Tangan, Tolak Impes, Gilek	Confrontational Tepak Dua Kendang	Firm gestures without physical weapons
Gourd River Test	Inner poise conquering current	Swaying Movement, Wave Gesture	Melodic Sundanese Flute (Suling)	Replica Gourd & Water Effect
Shawl Flicking	Feminine sacred softness & power	Seblak Selendang, Kebrak (3x)	Accentuated Goong & Kecrek	Cindewulung Lokcan Shawl
Merong-Rengge Light	Transcendence & eternal virtue	Sembah Sorog, Pose Puspasari	Crescendo Kacapi Rebab into silence	Top-light bamboo glow effect

07. Performance Dramaturgy

Three-Act Choreographic Structure

Act I

Exposition

Introduction of the four princesses and the setting of Sumedang Larang Kingdom.

Focus: Elegance & Independence

Act II

Development

Staging the proposal conflict, gourd river challenge, and magical shawl flicks.

Focus: Climax & Inner Power

Act III

Resolution

Transcendence of the merong-rengge phenomenon radiating eternal spiritual values.

Focus: Serenity & Harmony

Two Key Symbolic Motifs

Cindewulung Shawl

Flicking three times symbolizes self-mastery and feminine gentleness conquering coercion while preserving dignity.

Merong-Rengge Phenomenon

Radiant glow (*merong*) through bamboo twigs (*rengge*) representing eternal self-worth and moral steadfastness.



09. Impact & Contributions

Academic, Social, & Preservation Implications

Curriculum Development

Providing new choreography learning materials for FPSD UPI and dance education institutions in West Java.

Public Paradigm Shift

Shifting public perception from mystical love-charm rites to honoring Mbah Gabug's moral sovereignty.

Heritage Preservation

Documenting the reconstructed dance as a *living document* of Sumedang's intangible cultural heritage.

10. Conclusion

Primary Research Achievements

ARTISTIC RESEARCH MODEL

Performance Epistemology

The *Art by Research* approach successfully transforms oral archives into rigorous performance art without diluting traditional roots.

Reactualizing Sumedang Identity

Elevating the dignity and sovereignty of Sundanese women within global performing arts contexts.

Precedent for Future Arts Research

Serving as a methodological benchmark for Nusantara folklore-based dance creations.

Thank You

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