

Rider, Waves from a Body Aquaculture Experimental to the Inter-Audiences Participatory

Darlane Litaay

Dance Study Program, Department of Performing Art Indonesia Institute of the Arts and Culture,
the Land of Papua

ABSTRACT

The Rider is a dance performance series that proposes the association between humans, spaces, nature, and non-humans. This research aims to break down the chronological aspects of the trilogy performances, Rider, presented in the three distinct venues. It employed a practice-based research approach in four key stages: the training ground process, the use of the arch as a flux dramaturgical tool, the artist as a subject perspective, and shifting the (inter) mediums interactivity. This investigation highlights the connection between the body aquaculture as a performance material and the natural characteristic of the ocean and revolving the dramaturgical reflection. It also explores the level of engagement - participatory of the inter-audiences and mediums as it experiences response-ability, which has been seamlessly integrated into the artwork known as Rider. As a result, the sensitivity of self-awareness to social circumstances, environmental issues, and global conflicts could be achieved. In other words, by experiencing art, the senses of the aesthetics of human beings could be used in our daily lives to make a peaceful and better world in this uncertain future.

KEYWORDS

repetition, body aquaculture, waves, inter-audiences

Introduction

Although the power of nature was unlimited, unpredictable, endless, and repeatable like the ocean itself, nowadays, the underwater ecosystem is penetrated by human manipulation, an advanced technology. Branter and Khatib highlight this part. Branter [1], stated One Ocean as a humanoid underwater robot. Its purpose is to maintain and redesign the marine ecosystem and help from the exploitation and climate global issues. That indicates that the marine life ecosystem is undergoing impactable changes that require human intervention and influence on the coastal communities, people, and culture. In their land, those communities have a long story connection to the salt water and routine daily practices with the sea element. When it changes, it will affect their body aquaculture performances. As a small part of nature, the human body is one of the most complex and responsible entities in the earth's ecosystem. Moreover, organically, both macro and micro of the Oceania contexts have the fundamental traditional behavior, repetition. This "looping" was applied in the trilogy performances, Rider, and the conceptual bridge for connecting that massive power in the sense of repetition, blended into the body aquaculture performed by the author.

In 2016, the Rider had its first show at the Witch Dance Festival in Berlin. The author accomplished that premier's 20-minute ocean training ground process at the Sophiensaele Theater. Use the ocean as an inspiration and its flowing cycle as the organic arch and apply reinterpretation in many layers.

The second performance was held at the Jakarta Biennale in 2017, surrounded by fine artworks in the warehouse. The imagination was used to recreate the physical space transformed into the underneath of the deep dark blue ocean, while the performer's body

stood as a focus of the material. It moved intensively, changing the costumes like marine biota and octopuses, moving between the coral reefs, and changing their skin colors.

From the two indoor stages, the Rider moved to the third performance on top of the hills in the suburb village at the Flores land. This environment was more of a communal-based community relationship, though the performance scenes were inspired by how underwater dwellers drove together in the sense of a community clan. Could the underwater world ambiances be applied on the peak of the mountain in order to offer the turbulence experience of the space, sensation, outdoors, and with the fire element? Could that experience affect the audience members for the indoor (theater and the warehouse) performances? How can we mesmerize and captivate the audience members with this work? What kind of imagination was provided on the stage, and how intensely did the spectators experience the Oceanian performances?

Method

To respond to these inquires, the answer can be elaborated in the Practice-Base Research [2] frameworks simplified by Candy and Edmons [2] that practice-based research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge, partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice. The training and experiment of the performer are employed to execute the research stages, initiating from the ride of the wave with navigating skills as Semple argues in Andaya [3] that littoral societies world-wide occupy a ‘peculiar habitat’, where estuaries and enclosed seas operated as an ‘elementary school’ for honing navigational skills before the ‘larger maritime spirit’ moved on to the open ocean. This study of human-environment interaction is connected to the historical habit of the author’s (performer himself) father’s lineage as a ferryman closer to their body aquaculture embodiment. Hence, training on saltwater is essential as a foundation of this piece.

Secondly, implementing the types of dramaturgy in the system of flux, as written by Hansen,

The system is also a form of architecture in flux; that is, it is built of certain variables positioned within defined parameters, but it remains open and responsive to new sources from outside the system that can change its behaviour and thus render it unpredictable” [4].

Having collected these responses, the subsequent term would use the term an arch as a dramaturgy framework, Moreover, shifting the idea of the artist as a subject, like what Scott [5] has done for his performance work’s in *I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free*. Activate the audience participation mode during performances, make them able [6], as explained by Breel. And develop the audience participation theory described by Pargman and Rossitto during the show as the reflected facet [7] and post-performance as the immediate facet [7], for measuring the interactive mode. In addition, the data was gathered from audience members who provided feedback after the performance. As well as from the real-time interactive insights offered by the author’s Instagram account will be delved into further during the discussion.

Discussion

1. 2016, Sophiensaele, Berlin, “RIDER”. Witch Dance Festival

The exploration phase for this performance stressed the connection between the performer’s body and the behavior of the ocean waves. How can the organic habits of those repetitions be achieved? On the one hand, biologically, the human body repeats the routine of daily activities, such as sleep and wake, breathing, heartbeat, eyes blinking, drinking and pee, or even birth and death. However, this repetitive action does not form a circle; it is a replay in a spiral form. That is, make a distinction between humans and robots. As Kilpinen expresses,

This sounds baffling to such a person who knows only the received meaning for the habit-term. Is not the truth precisely the opposite? Doesn't 'robotic' characterise aptly just the habitual mode of life, as it refers to repetitive action, to mechanical accommodation to one's circumstances, without any suggestion of changing them? So it may seem - but only seem. We can be creative creatures only in so far as our actions are based on the established bedrock of action patterns on which we can draw, according to the demands of the situation [8].

That frame indicates it is repeating, growing, and moving from one point to another. Like the human footsteps, it is repetitive while bringing one body from one spot to the next. The factual training ground process manifested where the author's body stood on the shoreface zone with the saltwater level around the stomach. The performer, who is also the writer, lets the body, particularly the hip, flow in the direction of the current waves, moving forward and backward. It swings in multiple directions to the land and the reverse orientation. Also, sometimes, the movement was against the direction of the current waves in order to boost endurance and maintain physical strength. It was then applied at the Rider premier, showing and projecting the ocean characteristics. The choreography was adaptable, not improvised, but to arrive. As Hansen [4] explained in the "performance generating system".

On the other hand, the ocean delivers the repetition of the tide, the rise and fall of the sea surface, the sound of the waves, and the visual crashing waves. Concretely, at the show, the Rider's premier arch was started when the performer made a live sound "chsstttt" repeat from the mouth, representing the ripples. The performer's body was moving on a low level and slowly entered the white floor stage like the waves commute through the sands on the shoreline. Then, it lay on the floor and took off the sali - an indigenous tassel skirt for Papuan women. It symbolizes the wave marks on the sand at low tide.



Figure 1. Darlane Litaay, "RIDER" at Sophiensaele Berlin, 2016
[Source: Author's documentation]

Furthermore, there was a Manarmaker, an indigenous mask from Biak island, a present character "knowing all the secrets in the universe," including human and non-human secrets and seen and unseen entities. This apparatus performed its function as a symbolic object [9].

Before the costume changed from a sali to a phallus sheath (koteka), the author performed the hip waves gesture. Clearly, the scene was not intended to show the exotism, primitivism, sensuality, and gender issues. Nevertheless, it projects the texture and shape of traditional clothes when it is anatomy and functionally like it works organically. For sure,

spectators have free will to interpret. Surprisingly, it got a feedback perspective from one of the audience members, Mary Wigman student Irene Sieben. After watching the Rider show, she said, "I saw your gesture on the stage like a man makes an intercourse motion." The author then explains that it was inspired by traditional dance about fertility after the harvest. It was constantly moving and had alternately been training on the ocean. Christoph Winkler, the festival curator, added to the conversation and described more based on the curatorial statement that the ritual has influenced contemporary dance from the beginning.



Figure 2. Darlane Litaay, "RIDER" at Sophiensaele Berlin, 2016
[Source: Author's documentation]

Subsequently, the climax scene before closing the show shows how the performer choreographs himself in a crashing wave pattern, jumping like a fish, pushing, and against gravity. At the same time, the music background for that scene was recorded using an iPhone during a Sunday church service. The harmony demonstrates the characteristic singing style of coastal communities.

2. 2017, Gudang Sarinah, Jakarta, "RIDER", Jakarta Biennale.

It was a biennale artscape surrounded by paintings, installations, mixed media, sculptures, video arts, films, and artistic works. Because there were too many exciting objects in the space, bringing the Rider between those pieces was a challenge. To make it strong, however, locating the author's body as a center of the performance is applied in this occasion, the artist as a subject [5]. As a marginal artist, the writer activates the scheme of performance art, using the body as a raw material. That phenomenon has been happening in marginal performance artist bodies in New York City. Valerie Cassel Oliver, for *Radical Presence Black Performance in Contemporary Art*, stated,

For black artists, the emphasis on "body as material" does not come without its own historical tethers. The black body carries within it signifiers and markers that are deeply rooted in historical narratives [10].

When it simultaneously becomes a material, it stands as the center of focus. On the stage, as a part of a scenography, there was a dominant blue intensity color coming out from the long line LED spread out on the floor of the mini stage, offering the sense of 'Seascapes,' as Ian McNiven has shown in his study of Australian aboriginal societies, are

best understood in terms of cosmologies that 'frame and constrain perception, engagement and use of seas' [3].

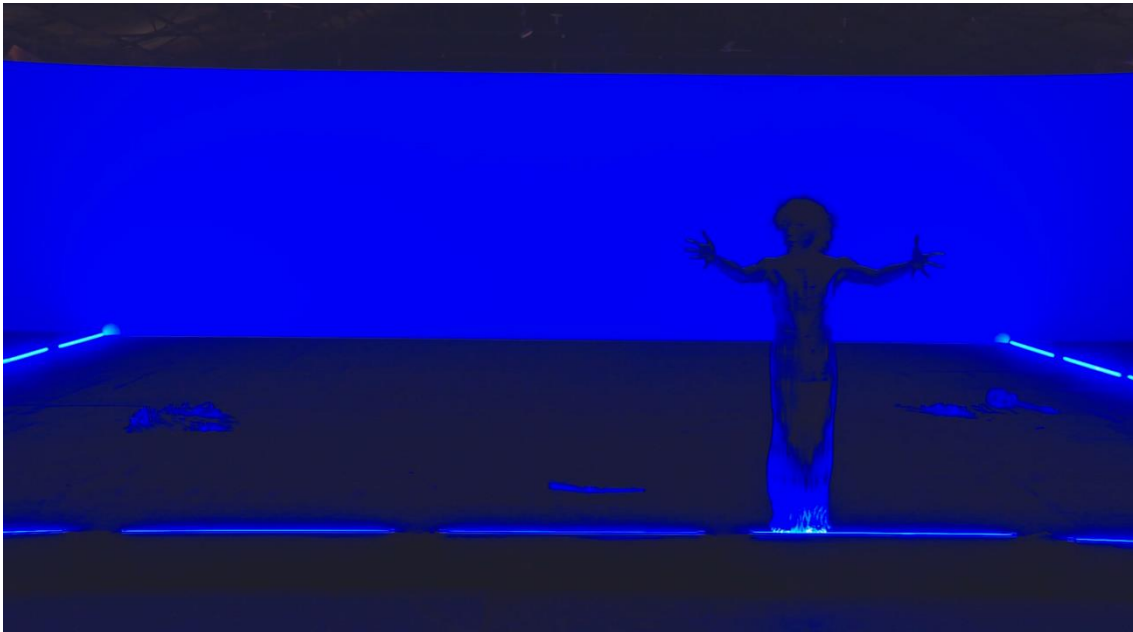


Figure 3. Darlane Litaay, "RIDER" at Jakarta Biennale, 2017
[Source: Author's documentation]

Loudspeakers delivered a repetitive sound, while the distance between the performer and the spectators gave an advantage to exploring the idea of tension. Without physical touch and prompts, the outcome of the interaction comes from the audience's gestures and expressions. They probably felt like they were in an interrogation because the performer's body confronting and gazes were staring at them, one by one, with unstoppable vibration movement while simultaneously delivering the sound "sscchh" repetitively. Some gestures of the audience members showed uncomfortably. Their distance was too close, almost reaching the audience's private space. Interestingly, the performer maintained endurance, and slowly, some moved back. The vibes grew intense, facing the audience like a terror. In light of this, what drives performers to stay intense? The simple answer is that the ocean waves' unstoppable spirit produces vibration. Oliver continues,

What does it mean to put one's own body on the line and to do so as public spectacle? Artists who create this type of performance challenge the expectations of viewers. Whether presented in a formal context or thrust upon an unsuspecting public as guerrilla actions, such performances implicate and engage audiences as collaborators and, in doing so, often break down barriers not only between participant and spectator but also between art and life [10].

3. 2018, Eta Kenere Hills, "RIDER", East Flores

It can be determined that this occasion was a community-based event, the Nubun Tawa Festival in Larantuka, East Nusa Tenggara. The community engagement empowering themselves was activated. Flores residents contribute togetherness to organizing the festival pieces of equipment. The light and sound system were carried manually without tools from the village, uphill to 500 meters above sea level, and to the peak of the hills. Some other village members volunteer to collaborate as dancers, being part of the Rider piece. It emphasizes the ritual in the sense of togetherness. The design of a floor pattern for the show concerns the circular shape. In this geographically opposite landscape, the choreographer's (the writer's) idea was to activate the body to become the vehicle, observing how they carried the festival equipment and, most importantly, bringing the ocean into the body. In performance [11], Jennifer Parker-Starbuk and Roberta Mock stated,

Body are the material through which theatre researcher most often discuss performance, they are scrutinized, critiqued, displaced, transformed, gendered, controlled and determined in critical review historical accounts and theorizations of performance practices such as theatre, live art and dance.



Figure 4. Darlane Litaay, "RIDER" at Larantuka, East Flores, 2018
[Source: Author's documentation]

Even though that event was performed at the peak of the hills, outdoors, and under the night, the essence of the underwater world organism was expressed in the robust reflection. It projected the arrangement of how the writer choreographed the dancers like a group of fish swimming in the circle shapes and transformed into the floor pattern. Fascinatingly, with several torch fires held in their hands, they guided the audience from one space to the open main venue.

4. RIDER spirit in the previous experimental social media, with unpredictable audience interactions

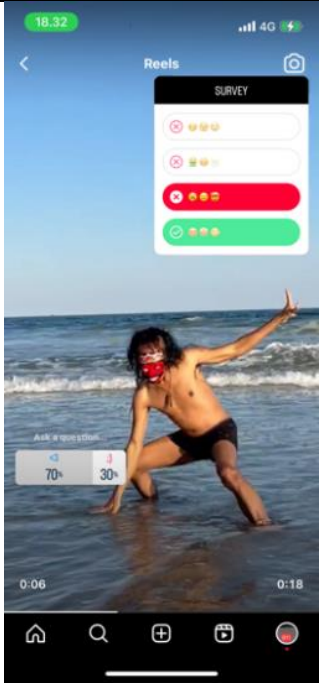
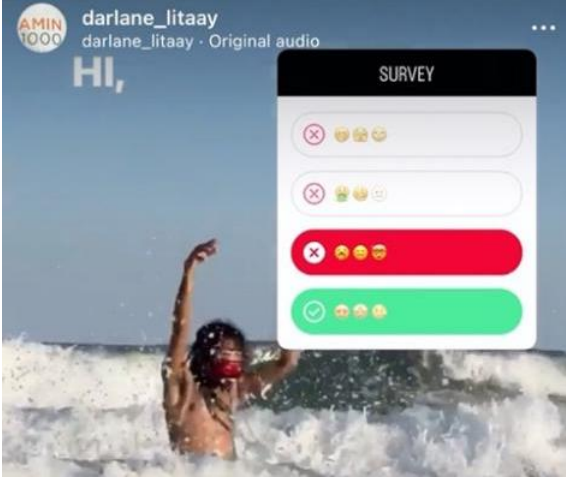
The last installment of the Rider experiment involved shifting the idea from the live performance to using the iPhone 13 mini screen as a framed stage. This shift incorporates three key elements from Rider scenes: the movement of crashing waves, a prop involving mask dances with other characters, and an interaction mode. A brief recording captured the dancing on the beach, expressing the gesture of free crashing wave motion, jumping around, and encountering gravity. This content will remain accessible to the general public. Consequently, the target viewers could shift. It could encompass various groups, such as Instagram followers or non-followers, unknown users, or even artificial audiences represented by bot accounts. This experiment extends plenty of possibilities about the definition of the "audiences" since it has been developed from the "receiver" to the "target" [12]. McQuail perspective in Zhao, explain the typical role that audience plays as passive listener, consumer, receiver, or target have ceases. Instead, the concept of audience will encompass any of the following: seeker; consultant; interlocutor; or conventionalist [12].

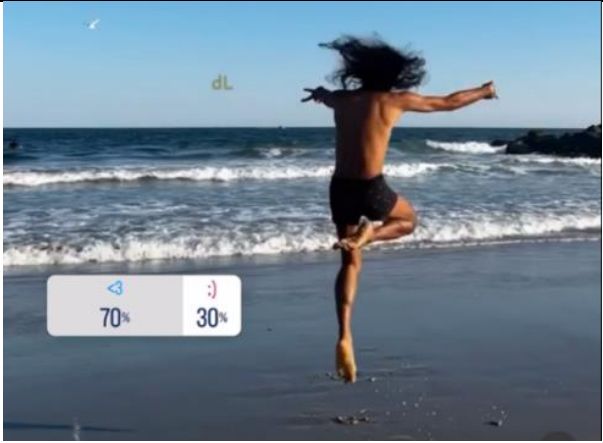
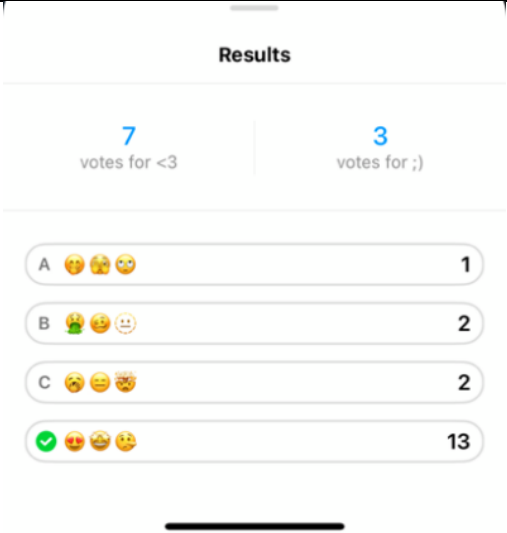
Besides, a red mask Kelana is a performance apparatus worn by the writer as a performer and expresses its original character: suffering from anger, greed, and injustice [13]

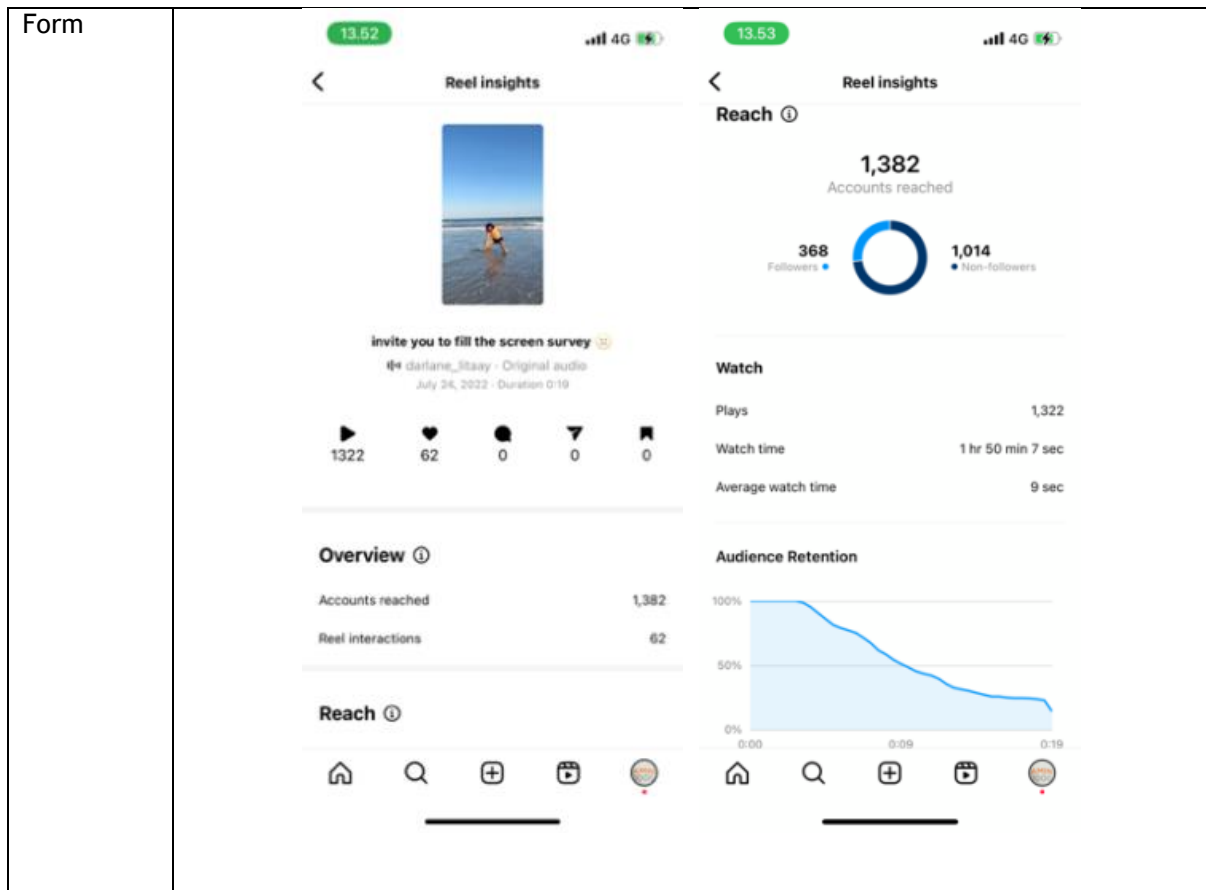
described by Yuniarto and Sahidin. Inequality has become a pressing issue within marginalized communities [10], and its people include an artist (the author). For these reasons, the artist seeks to express their voice through experimental artistic medium. This experimental video art examines the possibility of multiple stages. Two interactive questions were available online 24/7 in Quiz and Poll stickers on that Instagram reel's smartphone screen. Any Instagram user's account can constantly interact with those two multiple-choice questions as long as this platform is available. The viewers could watch only a second per post, or probably more, and scroll to the next one. Reel Insights shows the average watch time is 9 sec. The table below provides the author's Instagram account results, with 1322 plays and 62 Reel Interactions.

Table 1. Instagram Reels screenshot
 [Source : Author's documentation]

Screenshot	01
Content	Reels status at the author's Instagram account
Context	An invitation to fill out the survey
Form	
Screenshot	02
Content	Pose with no moving
Context	The performer was connecting a mask apparatus with the beach elements.

Form	
Screenshot	03
Content	Interactive survey invitation
Context	Pool SURVEY provides multiple choices of random emoticons.
Form	
Screenshot	04
Content	Interactive survey invitation
Context	The quiz providing two options: <3 (love) and :) (smile)

Form	
Screenshot	05
Content	Result (on going)
Context	The Quiz and Pool has been receiving amount of votes
Form	
Screenshot	05
Content	Reels Insights
Context	The estimate of account reach and the interaction metrics form unique user accounts.



Some Instagram users have been interacting with plenty of possibilities, such as watching the reel with no reactions, clicking likes, viewing for a second, scrolling, repeating the reels, muting the account, sharing, commenting, following, and unfollowing. Some of these reactions might happen in the live performances. However, it is tough to activate the unfollow mode in real life.

Back to the live performance, in the Jakarta Biennale, Rider engages in immediate presence and face-to-face interactivity with a live audience, while in this Instagram reels limited by the screen, networking, balance, and the body presence are replaceable. Nonetheless, both versions deliver different impressions of the movement of the crashing wave. Although it expresses the release and tension motions performed by the artist, it does not guarantee that the audience experiences the same emotions while viewing the work. That underscores the irreplaceable nature of immediate presence. Nevertheless, the participatory mode is always possible.

Lastly, another experiment with social media platforms from those three events is here. The author developed the Rider documentation, adding a *Party Lights Boom* Instagram effect. As a consequence, it is producing moving the frame on repetition beats. That post reaches 111 likes and 6.593 plays.



Figure 4. Darlane Litaay, “RIDER” at Instagram post, 2023
[Source: Author’s documentation]

Refer to the sentence in the other paragraph: as long as Instagram is available, any user account can interact with those two multiple-choice questions. It brings a question: who are the users of these reels among the netizen community? Are they audiences or public? Concerning these questions, a book by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) written by Sonia Livingstone:” The analysis of ‘audience’ and ‘public’ draws on distinctive bodies of theory, prioritising different issues. But they do not refer to wholly separate realities. In a thoroughly mediated world, audiences and publics, along with communities, nations, markets and crowds, are composed of the same people. In both popular and elite discourses, audiences are denigrated as trivial, passive, individualised, while publics are valued as active, critically engaged and politically significant [14].

This research has redefined the concept of accessibility, the evolution of art, and its ability to reach a wider audience. Technology’s rapid growth has exceeded human predictions, permeating the lives of individuals and communities. Some of these technological advancements serve the purpose of simplifying tasks, provided they do not disrupt human behavior. Therefore, maintaining a consistent approach to training is essential. Ultimately, art can play a significant role in this regard. When people have easy access to and experience art as naturally as they do with nature, it can lead to enhanced problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, the convergence of art, nature, and technology unlocks fresh opportunities for creative endeavors. For instance, the internet and social media allow people to experience art.

Conclusion

The investigations of the trilogy of Rider and the social media experiment reflect these several questions:

Is the relationship between body and ocean provided in the trilogy performances?

To what extent does this work hypnotize the folk's audience members? Would it influence their behavior?

While watching Rider, what kind of imagination was provided on the stage, and how intensely did the spectators experience the mini screen as an intermedia stage?

How far do digital media reach the immediate presence? In this case, if the audiences are unlimited, unpredictable, or unknown.

Could artist activate their artwork to reflect humanity's awareness, much like a mirror?

There is an expectation that the content presented in this paper will respond to those inquiries. As well as being an artistic-based research experience, the Fluxus dramaturg would probably adjust the spaces for future performances, but still with the simple drive repetitions as the signature. The more awareness is activated, the more the body becomes centered. Again, that idea would magically bring the spectators to the other world, and the interactivity mode could be extended. Moreover, of course, it requires a certain amount of training. This practice aims to increase the sensitivity of self-awareness, not only for the one itself but also for social circumstances, environmental issues, global conflicts, and more. How do these habits remind us of the organic relationship between human-human, human-nature, or human-non-human? On top of that, the author strongly believes that the future of tradition is a repetition, still the same.

Acknowledgements

Folks of these events: Witch Dance Festival, Jakarta Biennale, and Nubun Tawa Festival.

References

- [1] G. Brantner and O. Khatib, "Controlling Ocean One: Human-robot collaboration for deep-sea manipulation," *J Field Robot*, vol. 38, Jun. 2020, doi: <http://doi.org/10.1002/rob.21960>.
- [2] L. Candy and E. Edmonds, "Practice-based research in the creative arts: Foundations and futures from the front line," *Leonardo*, vol. 51, no. 1, pp. 63-69, Feb. 2018, doi: http://doi.org/10.1162/LEON_a_01471.
- [3] B. W. Andaya, "Seas, oceans and cosmologies in Southeast Asia," *J Southeast Asian Stud*, vol. 48, no. 3, pp. 349-371, Oct. 2017, doi: <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463417000534>.
- [4] P. Hansen, "The Dramaturgy of Performance Generating Systems," in *New World Choreographies*, Springer Nature, 2015, pp. 124-142. doi: http://doi.org/10.1057/9781137373229_7.
- [5] A. Collins, "Dread Scott_ Goddam - The Brooklyn Rail," *The Brooklyn Rail*, 2023. Accessed: Oct. 16, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://brooklynrail.org/2023/06/artseen/Dread-Scott-Goddam>
- [6] A. Breel, "Audience agency in participatory performance: A methodology for examining aesthetic experience," 2015.
- [7] T. Cerratto-Pargman, C. Rossitto, and L. Barkhuus, "Understanding audience participation in an interactive theater performance," in *Proceedings of the NordiCHI 2014: The 8th Nordic Conference on Human-Computer Interaction: Fun, Fast, Foundational*, Association for Computing Machinery, Oct. 2014, pp. 608-617. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1145/2639189.2641213>.
- [8] E. Kilpinen, "Human Beings as Creatures of Habit," 2021. Accessed: Oct. 16, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/14924805.pdf>
- [9] E. W. Averett, "Masks and ritual performance on the island of Cyprus," *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 119, no. 1, pp. 3-45, Jan. 2015, doi: <http://doi.org/10.3764/aja.119.1.0003>.
- [10] O. Valerie, "Radical_Presence_Black_Performance_in_Contemporary_Art_2013," *Contemporary Arts Museum Houston*, 2013, [Online]. Available: https://monoskop.org/File:Radical_Presence_Black_Performance_in_Contemporary_Art_2013.pdf
- [11] J. Parker-Starbuck and R. Mock, "Researching the Body in/as Performance," Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

- [12] T. Zhao, "Analysis of the Concept of Audience in the Digital Age," 2019.
- [13] Bambang Yuniarto and Fia Fauziyah Sahidin, "The Meaning of Bandopati Losari Mask dance as a Symbol of Cultural Expression," *Formosa Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, vol. 2, no. 7, pp. 1233-1248, Jul. 2023, doi: <http://doi.org/10.55927/fjmr.v2i7.4678>.
- [14] S. M. Livingstone and European Science Foundation., *Audiences and publics: when cultural engagement matters for the public sphere*. Intellect, 2005.