

# Preserving Artwork and Traditional Values through Dance Film Adaptation

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## ABSTRACT

Artworks and tradition develop as an adaptation of phenomena occurring in the reality of society. As an adaptation, artworks and traditions hold the values and wisdom of the society. However, with the development of technology and lifestyles, the way people perceive the community's values and beliefs has also shifted. To keep the artworks and tradition relevant, as well as their values, a new medium that is more relevant to today's audience, especially the young one, is required. Such a medium must be able to preserve both the values of the artworks and their aesthetics. Dance films are one of the media that is up to the challenge. This article describes the process of adapting artworks into dance films by reviewing the archives of three dance films produced from artwork and tradition adaptation.

Keywords: value preservation, adaptation, artworks, dance films

## INTRODUCTION

Artworks and traditions develop in society based on the phenomena that occur and the values embraced by the community. For example, in the rural area of the slopes of Mount Lawu, there is a village ritual that aims to maintain the balance or harmony of community life with the surrounding environment. The tradition is called the *Ritus Dhukutan (Dhukutan rite)*.

*Ritus Dhukutan* is a tradition from the Hindu-Majapahit period that still exists in the Lawu indigenous community. This tradition is still maintained because of the relevance of its values, such as the values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, spirituality, and other local wisdom (Wirajaya et al., 2021). Another example is old literature such as *Serat Jayengbaya, a collection of Javanese rhyming songs written by Ronggowarsita*, which contains the values of Javanese people in living their daily lives. One of these values, justice, is represented in the rhyme *Dadi Jekso*, a song about being a prosecutor (Ardianto et al., 2022).

Along with the development of time and technology, traditional arts began to be abandoned because they were considered less relevant, especially in presentation (Kolay, 2016). A new presentation medium closer to today's society, especially its youth, is needed to preserve traditional arts and the values they teach. Presenting cultural heritage through new, more relevant media has proven effective in some cases in previous studies (Hani et al., 2012; Možina et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

To preserve traditional arts such as the *Dhukutan Rite* and *Serat Jayengbaya* and their social and ecological values, media adaptation is necessary to document and make them relevant to the present. Furthermore, a medium that is also artistic is needed to maintain its artistic and aesthetic value. Dance film is one of the new media genres that unite art and technology (Ardianto & Riyanto, 2020).

Unlike other movie genres, dance movies use dance movements to convey messages. Moreover, dance films require choreography and video shooting techniques that are different from film and dance in general (Ardianto & Dolah, 2018). The dance film approach to preserving traditional arts is interesting to discuss in more detail because it is a relatively new field: the intersection of art, dance, and film. The author, Deny Tri Ardianto, has directed and produced several dance films. Some are adapted from artworks and traditions, such as the films *Soekma*, *Risang Tetuka*, *Kalap*, and *Dadi Jeksa*.

This article explains the process of adapting several artworks and traditions into dance films.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

Art, in its nature, is an adaptation of actual phenomena. As the Greek philosopher Plato said, Art is by nature mimetic, a development of ideas that imitate reality (Nnamdi & Harcourt, 2022.). Another view by Aristotle considers that Art not only imitates but also uses mathematical ideas and symmetry to seek perfect, eternal forms and contrast with becoming (Al.Sobh et al., 2022). In this case, works of Art adapt phenomena, problems, and values in society and can be used as a learning tool from these values.

However, how society responds to phenomena and ideas constantly adapts to the times and technology. In terms of culture and values, lessons once conveyed through artworks and traditions may no longer be relevant to today's society, especially its youth. Adaptation of appropriate forms and media is needed to preserve artworks and tradition. Adapting means redecorating with variations without imitating or plagiarizing. Adapting means arranging, changing, and adjusting (Hutcheon, 2006: 7). Adaptation is the transition, transformation, or conversion process from one medium to another. In adapting, some parts need to be retained, such as the main values and messages, and parts that can be adjusted, such as the medium and style of delivery.

## METHODOLOGY

The source of data in this article is the archives of the production process for Deny Tri Ardianto's dance films that are adapted from artworks and traditions, namely the films *Soekma* (2008), *Risang tetuka* (2013), *Kalap* (2017), *Dadi Jekso* (2019), *Wisik* (2022). The discussion is focused on the adaptation process, particularly the film pre-production, production, and post-production. The archives of the five dance films were taken as a reference to draw their similar features and characteristics to highlight the general steps in adapting artworks into dance films. The findings are then described narratively to provide an understanding of the process. The flow of the adaptation process is presented in Image 1.

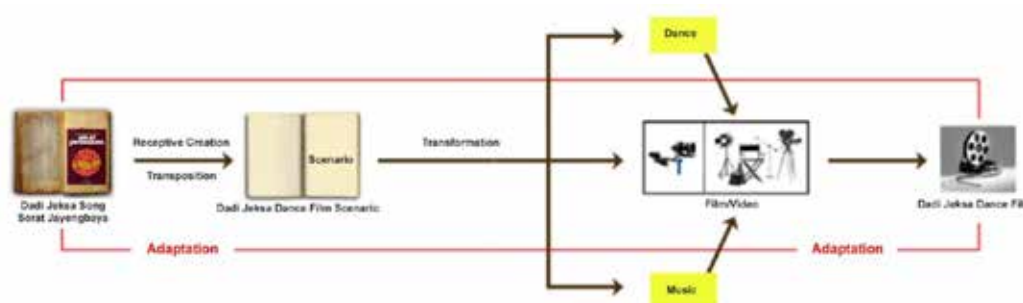


Image 1 Adaptation process of Artworks into Dance Film.

## DISCUSSION

### Pre-Production Stage

Pre-production is the initial stage of filmmaking. The pre-production stage includes initial research, conceptualization, script writing, and distribution of tasks for each division.

Due to the nature of dance films that use dance movements as a communicative language, script writing is more inclined to choreograph dance movements that can convey the message of the film to be made.

The division of tasks includes several divisions that must be harmonized, such as the choreography division, film/video shooting, sound and background music and accompaniment, and property to be used. In making a dance film, these components must have the same vision and be aligned because they are a unity different from when they were in their respective fields.

After the script preparation process is complete, the next step is preparing a film production support team, finding shooting locations, obtaining permits, creating dance choreography, determining illustrative music, and other things needed in shooting, editing, and distributing the final results.

### Production Stage

Production is the stage of taking videos and filling in background music and accompaniment. Here are some documentation of the movie production;



**Image 2 Production Process of the Film. (Source: Dadi Jekso, 2019)**



**Image 3 Production Process of the Film.**  
**(Source: WISIK - Bisikan Dari Lereng Gunung Lawu, 2022)**

### **Post Production Stage**

In the post-production stage, all video and audio materials that have been recorded are organized following the final script that has been designed. Editing consists of two phases: offline and online. In the offline stage, the priority is to manage the images and sound. After the director approves the editing arrangement, the final stage of editing is the online edit, where not only is the arrangement of images and sounds prioritized but also supporting effects, musical illustrations, color grading, and the agreed format for film distribution.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Through adaptation into relevant media, dance films, in this case, works of art, traditions, and values can be preserved. The adaptation process carried out systematically and strategically can maintain the value and aesthetics of traditional art. This adaptation automatically becomes a documentation of artworks, traditions, and learning media about their values. Dance film media that can be distributed in digital format can also be easily watched by audiences from within and outside the country.

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