



## A Practical Model of Urban Theatre Performance for Enhancing Contextual and Site-Specific Artistic Production

Deden Haerudin<sup>1</sup>, Ojang Cahyadi<sup>2</sup>, Fachri Helmanto<sup>3</sup>  
[dedenhaerudin@unj.ac.id](mailto:dedenhaerudin@unj.ac.id), [ojangcahyadi08@gmail.com](mailto:ojangcahyadi08@gmail.com),  
[fachri.helmanto@unida.ac.id](mailto:fachri.helmanto@unida.ac.id)

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Negeri Jakarta, <sup>3</sup>Universitas Djuanda

### ABSTRACT

*Urban theatre performance has emerged as a critical response to the need for socially engaged and spatially grounded artistic practices. Yet, the absence of a structured, replicable model often leaves such performances fragmented and unsustainable. This study aims to develop a practical model of urban theatre performance that integrates the performer's body, urban space, narrative construction, and ideological engagement as central components. The research employs a practice-based methodology, focusing on iterative creative processes, reflective documentation, and site-specific performance experiments conducted within dense urban environments. The model is structured into four practical stages: bodily exploration of public sites, development of action-based narrative modules, spatial rehearsal techniques, and site-responsive performances. The actor's body functions as a perceptive and expressive medium, engaging directly with the textures, pressures, and social dynamics of the city. Narratives are not pre-written scripts, but emerge situationally through the body's interaction with space and audience. Findings indicate that this model fosters performances that are not only aesthetically impactful but also ideologically resonant—revealing tensions, exclusions, and symbolic structures embedded in urban life. The model offers a transferable and context-sensitive framework for community-based artists and theatre practitioners aiming to create grounded, socially relevant performances in contemporary urban contexts.*

*Keywords: urban theatre; practice based research, site specific performance, embodied narrative, socially engaged art*

### INTRODUCTION

In contemporary performing arts, the role of theatre has expanded beyond the conventional stage to embrace urban spaces as sites of aesthetic, social, and political engagement. Urban theatre, often associated with postdramatic forms and interdisciplinary practices, provides a dynamic arena for negotiating cultural identities, addressing social inequalities, and reimagining the relationship between performers and audiences. This shift resonates with the global discourse on socially engaged art, where performance is no longer confined to aesthetic autonomy but becomes a vehicle for critical dialogue and civic participation.

In Indonesia, the integration of theatre with urban culture has been sporadic yet increasingly visible. Productions staged in public squares, abandoned buildings, and community spaces highlight the growing urgency to connect artistic practice with lived realities. However, many of these initiatives lack systematic frameworks that ensure both artistic coherence and social relevance. As a result, performances often struggle to sustain impact, either becoming overly didactic or failing to engage audiences meaningfully. The

absence of a structured model for contextual and site-specific production underlines the need for practice-based research that bridges artistic experimentation with academic rigor.

The emerging performance art model represents a stepwise approach to deeply engaging with the training of the body as a contemporary art form. This model positions bodily movement as the central medium for emotional exploration and social transformation (Couto & Fernández, 2022). It further integrates the interdisciplinary nature of performance—across theatre, visual arts, dance, and music—thus fostering dynamic interactions of artistic expression (Odier, 2023). Methodologically, the performance art model is constructed through comparative analysis and ontological frameworks that articulate diverse artistic components (Farenik, 2022). As Meliakova and Kovalenko observe, bodily expression serves as a vital channel for self-realization, reflecting the performative dimension of human existence within the complexities of modern life (Meliakova & Kovalenko, 2021).

These complexities are frequently foregrounded in performances that engage directly with social realities. For instance, Dalit community theatre in Mumbai mobilizes collective participation through dynamic intersections of research and practice (Busby, 2024). Yet, as Salgado (2023) observes, many activist-based performances operate outside established academic frameworks, which undermines sustainability. Similar issues arise in African village development projects, where performance has been used as a tool for social intervention but has struggled to create lasting impact on local needs (Chibueze & Okey, 2022). Benford (2022) highlights the limitations at the intersection of dramaturgy and social movements in mobilizing change, while Vella and Pulè (2022) emphasize ethical dilemmas surrounding power and responsibility in socially engaged performance. Taken together, these perspectives illustrate that productions addressing social issues often lack systematic and sustainable structures.

To address this gap, urban theatre has been conceptualized as an approach that integrates the performer's body, urban space, narrative construction, and ideological engagement into a structured and replicable framework. This framework is operationalized through iterative stages—Dig, Decide, Discover, Draft, and Do—that reconceptualize cultural and social spaces as public arenas of performance (Haerudin, 2019). Such dramaturgy emphasizes spatial experimentation (Starzyk et al., 2023), revitalization of urban environments (Campos, 2021), and the transformative role of audience participation (Yavo-Ayalon et al., 2020). For example, the East Java Theatre Parade 2022 brought together six theatre groups exploring social issues through site-specific productions (Ridho, 2022).

Practice-based research offers a methodological foundation for developing this framework into a robust performance model. The “Neurophysiology of Artists in Performance” project (Ciesielski, 2023) demonstrates how scientific methods intersect with artistic conventions to examine embodied and cognitive dimensions of performance. Vallack's Soliloquy Methodology, rooted in phenomenology, emphasizes aligning creative practice with academic rigor to validate performance as legitimate inquiry (Vallack, 2024). Ross (2022) expands this approach in music research, showing how collaboration between science and art can produce transformative creativity and translational knowledge. Prette and Braga (2020) further highlight embodied research, where the performer's body functions as both artistic and pedagogical laboratory. Collectively, these methods affirm the potential of practice-based research to bridge art and academia while generating new interdisciplinary insights.



Nevertheless, most performance models developed in Indonesia remain anchored in traditional forms, including the Communication Art Model (Jaeni, 2023), Wayang Cinema (Sunardi, 2020), normative frameworks (Bahar & Muchtar, 2021), and Wayang Wong Millennial (Made, 2021; Ruastiti et al., 2021). While valuable, these models rely on inherited conventions and do not sufficiently address urban realities.

This study develops an urban theatre-based performance model that not only integrates body, space, narrative, and ideological engagement but also advances the framework by incorporating the role of performance scripts, structured rehearsal processes, and pilot performances as core stages. In doing so, the model seeks to systematically address urban social issues—particularly those related to justice and peace—while ensuring both artistic coherence and social relevance. The central research questions guiding this inquiry are: (1) How is the rehearsal process of urban theatre-based performance structured? (2) How can pilot performances be developed and realized within this framework? and (3) How feasible is the model for replication in diverse contexts? The novelty of this study lies in proposing an urban theatre-based performance model supported by both embodied practice and performance scripts, thereby bridging creative experimentation, academic frameworks, and the social urgencies of contemporary urban life.

Recent scholarship has emphasized the significance of dramaturgy that foregrounds spatiality, embodiment, and interactivity as key components of urban theatre. Yet, existing models—such as normative performance frameworks, traditional forms like *wayang* adaptations, or community-based communication models—tend to rely on inherited conventions rather than site-specific strategies. To address this gap, this study proposes a practical model of urban theatre performance that is rooted in practice-based inquiry and tested through pilot production. The model emphasizes cyclical processes of theorizing, reflecting, experimenting, performing, and evaluating, thereby aligning with both artistic innovation and social responsiveness.

This article presents findings from practice-based research conducted at Sanggar Matara Art Production. The study explores how contextual dramaturgy, collaborative rehearsal methods, and body-space experimentation can be systematized into a replicable model. By foregrounding the interplay between creative practice and theoretical reflection, the research contributes not only to the field of performance studies but also to broader discussions on how theatre can foster social justice, community engagement, and sustainable cultural development.

## METHOD

This study employed a practice-based research (PBR) design, positioning artistic practice both as the object and method of inquiry. Data were collected through participatory observation in rehearsal processes at Sanggar Matara Art Production, in-depth interviews with directors and actors, documentation of rehearsal notes and scripts, focus group discussions with theatre practitioners, and audience surveys during the pilot performance.

The data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in rehearsal methods, body-space experimentation, and dramaturgical development, while a performativity approach was applied to evaluate how bodies, texts, and space conveyed issues of social justice. Model feasibility was assessed through triangulation of sources, member checking with participants, and peer review with theatre scholars. This methodological

framework ensured that the findings captured both the creative product (script and performance) and the conceptual outcome (a practical model of urban theatre performance).

## FINDINGS & RESULTS

### Findings

#### 1. Creative Process Description

The practice-based inquiry revealed that the creative process unfolded in a sequence of explorations and negotiations, as recorded in rehearsal observation notes and reflective journals. Initial theoretical mapping of urban theatre and social justice, documented in collective discussions, informed the selection of themes such as leadership, community participation, and environmental awareness. These themes were explicitly mentioned by participants during in-depth interviews, where one actor noted: *“We want to show how leadership can become oppressive if it ignores solidarity”* (Interview, Actor 3).

Subsequent stages involved systematic experimentation with body and space. Observational data from rehearsals showed that everyday gestures—such as walking, bowing, and handshakes—were transformed into symbolic expressions during improvisation. Actors actively co-created the dramaturgy, contributing not only through textual interpretation but also through embodied insights captured in rehearsal video documentation. Collaborative rehearsals generated a draft script that integrated traditional references (e.g., *punokawan*, *ketoprak*) with urban aesthetics. However, rehearsal field notes also highlight several challenges: differences in character interpretation between senior and junior actors, technical limitations of rehearsal spaces (e.g., narrow alleys, abandoned buildings), and ongoing negotiation of directorial authority. These empirical observations significantly shaped the creative outcomes.

#### 2. Practical Model of Creative Process

Analysis of rehearsal documentation, reflective journals, and focus group discussions confirmed the applicability of Haerudin’s 5D framework (*Dig, Decide, Discover, Draft, Do*) while also revealing the necessity of an additional sixth stage: *Evaluation*. This extension emerged consistently in both director interviews and FGD transcripts, where participants emphasized the importance of feedback cycles in sustaining artistic and social relevance. One practitioner remarked: *“Without structured evaluation, the lessons from each performance are easily forgotten and cannot inform the next cycle”* (FGD Participant 1).

The resulting model consists of six interrelated phases, all grounded in empirical data from rehearsal notes and participant observations:

- Theoretical Inquiry (*Dig*) – informed by mapping exercises where the collective identified conceptual and social issues; notes from group discussions recorded repeated emphasis on leadership, participation, and environmental awareness.
- Reflective Discussion (*Decide*) – observed in rehearsal transcripts as negotiation of ideas between practitioners and community representatives, often marked by debates on cultural references.
- Body–Space Experimentation (*Discover*) – documented in video recordings of improvisation sessions, where performers translated ordinary gestures (walking, sitting, greeting) into expressive vocabularies.



- Rehearsal and Script Development (Draft) – traced in annotated script drafts that integrated traditional idioms with urban aesthetics, evidencing hybrid dramaturgy.
- Pilot Performance (Do) – carried out in site-specific settings; audience surveys and field notes show strong engagement when performances took place in familiar community spaces.
- Evaluation – based on post-performance FGDs and audience surveys, where feedback on both artistic coherence and ideological clarity was systematically collected and reviewed.

By anchoring each phase in concrete data sources—whether rehearsal notes, interviews, or performance documentation—the model demonstrates that the creative cycle of urban theatre is not linear but iterative. The inclusion of Evaluation transforms the framework into a data-driven cycle where empirical feedback continually informs theoretical inquiry and future practice.

### 3. Pilot Performance Outcomes

The pilot staging of *Petruk Sang Dalang of the Soul* was evaluated through audience surveys (N=65) and focus group discussions involving community members, practitioners, and local students. Quantitative survey data indicated that 82% of respondents found the performance both entertaining and socially engaging. Audience responses highlighted the effectiveness of humor and character conflict in communicating issues of leadership, solidarity, and environmental responsibility. As one respondent commented in the open-ended survey: “*The character conflict made me reflect on how power often silences collective responsibility.*”

Observations from the research team also recorded moments of strong audience identification, particularly when traditional idioms were blended with urban theatricality. This hybrid dramaturgy was noted in FGD transcripts as “*a refreshing way to connect memory of tradition with today’s problems*” (FGD Participant 2). Nonetheless, feedback also revealed ambivalence toward the authoritarian tone of the main character, with several viewers expressing discomfort, as documented in post-performance interviews. These findings demonstrate that while the pilot succeeded in raising awareness of collective responsibility, the reception of its ideological stance was contested.

### 4. Model Feasibility

The feasibility of the proposed model was evaluated through triangulated data collected from audience surveys (N=65), focus group discussions with practitioners, and peer review with theatre scholars. Analysis of these sources suggests that the model is replicable in other urban theatre contexts, provided certain enabling conditions are met. Survey responses indicated strong audience receptivity when performances took place in familiar public spaces, while FGD participants emphasized the importance of active community involvement in sustaining long-term impact.

Documentation from rehearsal processes further revealed that flexibility in site-specific staging was essential; actors reported that unconventional urban locations required adaptive blocking and technical adjustments. Interdisciplinary collaboration across theatre, dance, and music was also repeatedly highlighted in peer review feedback as a strength that enhanced the model’s applicability.

Nevertheless, data also pointed to limitations. Observation notes and director interviews noted logistical challenges such as inadequate rehearsal time and restricted

access to urban performance sites. Audience surveys recorded initial resistance from viewers unfamiliar with experimental forms, with 28% of respondents expressing uncertainty about the hybrid dramaturgy. These constraints underscore, as one FGD participant phrased it, “*the need for cultural mediation strategies that help audiences decode new performance vocabularies.*”

Overall, empirical evidence from multiple sources supports the feasibility of the model while simultaneously highlighting the contextual adjustments required for replication in diverse urban settings.

### 5. Practical Model Synthesis

The practical model was synthesized by consolidating evidence from rehearsal documentation, actor interviews, audience surveys, and focus group discussions. Data from rehearsal notes and video recordings demonstrated how theoretical inquiry and reflective practice informed body–space experimentation, while annotated script drafts captured the transition from improvisation to structured textual development.

Survey results (N=65) and post-performance interviews revealed that audience engagement was strongest when performances integrated local cultural memory with urban aesthetics, a finding that directly fed into the *Pilot Performance (Do)* stage of the model. FGD transcripts further emphasized the iterative value of *Evaluation*, with practitioners insisting that systematic feedback loops should remain embedded in the creative cycle.

By aligning these multiple data sources, the model crystallizes into six interconnected stages: theoretical inquiry, reflective practice, embodied experimentation, textual structuring, performance realization, and evaluative reflection. Each stage is not an abstract prescription but a distillation of empirical evidence gathered across the research process. As one director noted in peer review, “*The strength of this model is that it grows out of what we actually did, not what we imagined artists should do.*”

Thus, the model positions urban theatre not only as an artistic event but also as a socio-cultural intervention. Grounded in empirical data, it offers a structured yet adaptable pathway for contextual and site-specific artistic production—ensuring that creative innovation, social relevance, and community participation remain central to contemporary urban theatre practice.

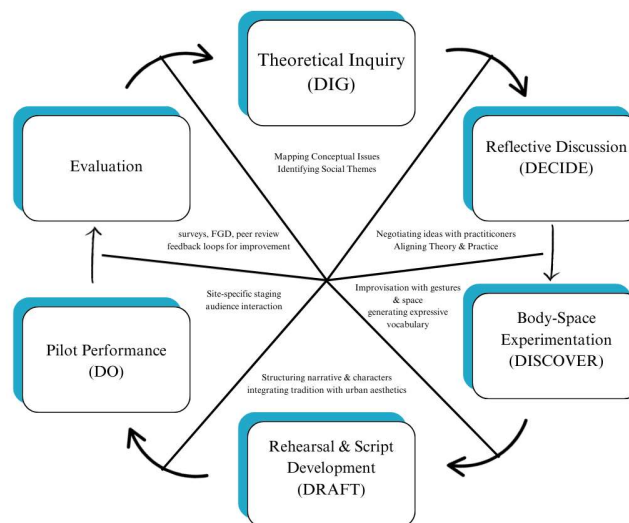


Figure 1 Practical model of urban theatre performance



## **DICUSSION**

### **Creative Process of Sanggar Matara Art Production**

The findings showed that the creative process unfolded through mapping of social themes, reflective discussions, and experimentation with body and space. Actors transformed ordinary gestures—such as walking, bowing, and handshakes—into symbolic vocabularies during rehearsals, while negotiations between senior and junior actors shaped the collective dramaturgical direction. These observations underline the role of embodiment as a generative principle in urban theatre practice.

Embodiment in performance emphasizes the centrality of the body, movement, and sensory experience within the creative process. In urban theatre, training methods, dramaturgical co-creation, and gestural improvisation become crucial for producing shared meaning and strengthening collaboration. This was evident in the Matara rehearsals, where actors did not merely repeat predetermined movements but continuously experimented with physical vocabularies in dialogue with the director and fellow performers.

Modern rehearsal practices highlight that gestures and bodily actions evolve through negotiation, exploration, and repetition. Certain gestures emerge as embodied solutions for aesthetic ideas, functioning as shared knowledge within the ensemble (Lefebvre, 2018; Lefebvre & Mondada, 2023; Norrthon & Schmidt, 2023). This dynamic was reflected in the ways performers tested different symbolic actions and collectively selected those that best communicated the themes of leadership and solidarity.

Dramaturgical co-creation further positioned actors as active creative agents, where dramaturgical decisions were not imposed externally but arose from embodied improvisation and ensemble dialogue (Kimmel & Hristova, 2021; Leander et al., 2023; Scialom, 2022). The hybrid dramaturgy—combining *punokawan* idioms with urban aesthetics—was a product of this process, discovered through iterative experimentation rather than designed in advance. Gestural improvisation created moments of “group flow” and affective attunement, enhancing responsiveness and cohesion within the ensemble (Deans & Pini, 2022; Kimmel & Hristova, 2021; Leander et al., 2023).

Thus, the creative process of Matara demonstrates that embodiment and co-creation are not supplementary techniques but methodological cores of urban theatre practice. The improvisational work with gestures served as a collective epistemic activity where bodily expression itself became a site of knowledge-making. This confirms that authentic urban theatre emerges not from scripted instructions alone but from embodied negotiations that transform lived gestures into shared artistic meaning.

### **Practical Model in Urban theatre**

The findings confirmed the relevance of Haerudin’s 5D framework—Dig, Decide, Discover, Draft, and Do—while also extending it with a sixth phase of Evaluation. This addition was not a theoretical assumption but emerged repeatedly from rehearsal documentation, focus group discussions, and peer review feedback. Practitioners and participants emphasized that systematic evaluation was essential to sustain artistic growth and to ensure that performances addressed social concerns effectively.

This cyclical structure demonstrates that the creative process of urban theatre is not linear but iterative, where each stage builds on empirical feedback from the previous one. In practice, the “Dig” phase was grounded in mapping conceptual and social issues

such as leadership, participation, and environmental awareness. The “Decide” phase involved reflective discussions among practitioners and community members, recorded in rehearsal transcripts as debates on cultural references and dramaturgical choices. The “Discover” phase unfolded through body–space improvisations, documented in rehearsal video recordings where ordinary actions were reshaped into expressive vocabularies. These embodied practices then converged into the “Draft” phase, where script annotations show how traditional idioms were hybridized with urban aesthetics. The “Do” phase was realized through the pilot performance, staged in community spaces, with audience surveys capturing immediate reception. Finally, the “Evaluation” phase emerged through structured feedback sessions, where FGD transcripts highlighted both the strengths and contested aspects of the production.

Placing evaluation as an integral stage resonates with the broader discourse on practice-based research. Vallack’s (2024) *Soliloquy Methodology* emphasizes the necessity of aligning creative practice with academic rigor, and Ross (2022) shows how iterative reflection fosters translational knowledge in music research. In both cases, evaluation is not merely a conclusion but an ongoing feedback loop. Similarly, in this study, evaluation transformed the model into a dynamic cycle where insights from audiences, peers, and practitioners continuously informed theoretical inquiry and future performances.

The integration of evaluation also strengthens the model’s contribution beyond artistic innovation. It operationalizes what Ciesielski (2023) calls the neurophysiological dimension of practice, in which reflection and feedback activate both creative and analytical modes of inquiry. By embedding systematic evaluation into the cycle, the model bridges embodied improvisation with conceptual reflection, ensuring that artistic exploration does not remain isolated but translates into structured knowledge.

Thus, the practical model developed in this research offers more than a set of creative steps. It crystallizes an iterative framework where body, narrative, and space interact with reflexive evaluation to generate performances that are both artistically coherent and socially responsive. This positions the model as an adaptable tool for theatre practitioners seeking to create sustainable, context-sensitive productions in contemporary urban environments.

### **Pilot Performance Outcomes**

The pilot staging of *Petruk Sang Dalang of the Soul* demonstrated that audiences perceived the production as both entertaining and socially engaging. Survey results and FGD discussions indicated that humor, irony, and character conflict were particularly effective in communicating themes of leadership, solidarity, and environmental responsibility. Observations during the performance also recorded moments when audiences strongly identified with the hybrid dramaturgy, which blended traditional idioms with urban aesthetics. At the same time, the authoritarian tone of the main character produced ambivalent reactions, as some viewers expressed discomfort with its confrontational style.

These findings align with scholarship on audience reception in socially engaged performance. Scholars such as Freshwater (2009) and Reason (2010) have shown that audience engagement is not uniform but shaped by cultural memory, social context, and dramaturgical strategies. The Matara performance exemplified this dynamic: humor opened channels of accessibility, but ideological critique invited resistance, producing a layered reception. Such ambivalence is not necessarily a weakness; rather, it reflects what



Fischer-Lichte (2008) describes as the transformative potential of performance, where conflicting responses activate reflection and dialogue among spectators.

The hybrid dramaturgy observed in the pilot further supports theories of *intercultural and urban performance*. By integrating *punokawan* figures into contemporary urban staging, the production illustrated what Schechner (2013) identifies as “restored behavior,” where traditional forms are recontextualized to address new socio-political concerns. Audience feedback confirmed that this blending of memory and modernity enhanced relatability while preserving critical edge. However, resistance from certain audience members also signals the need for cultural mediation strategies, echoing findings from Thompson (2009) that socially critical theatre requires scaffolding to help audiences interpret unfamiliar dramaturgical vocabularies.

Ultimately, the pilot performance outcomes highlight both the strengths and challenges of urban theatre practice. The strong engagement recorded in surveys (with more than four-fifths of respondents rating the performance positively) demonstrates the model’s potential for community resonance. Yet, the contested reception also underscores that socially engaged art cannot rely on entertainment alone but must actively negotiate ideological clarity. By foregrounding both acceptance and resistance, the pilot performance validated the importance of evaluation as a feedback loop within the model, ensuring that artistic innovation remains attuned to diverse audience perspectives.

### **Model Feasibility**

The findings suggested that the proposed model is feasible for replication in other urban theatre contexts, though its sustainability depends on several enabling factors. Audience surveys indicated that performances staged in familiar community spaces enhanced accessibility and resonance. Focus group discussions emphasized that active community involvement and interdisciplinary collaboration—across theatre, dance, and music—were critical to maintaining both artistic coherence and social impact. At the same time, logistical constraints, limited rehearsal time, and initial resistance from audiences unaccustomed to experimental forms emerged as notable challenges.

These conditions confirm broader observations in performance studies regarding the balance between innovation and cultural mediation. Kershaw (1999) and Thompson (2009) argue that socially engaged theatre is only sustainable when it incorporates local participation and addresses the interpretive needs of its audiences. The data from Matara align with this view, showing that while urban theatre thrives on experimentation, it also requires scaffolding to help communities navigate unfamiliar dramaturgical vocabularies.

The emphasis on community involvement also resonates with theories of participatory art, where audiences and practitioners co-create meaning rather than occupy passive roles (Bishop, 2012). In the Matara model, audience feedback and peer review served as integral evaluative mechanisms, highlighting that feasibility is not only a matter of artistic possibility but also of social negotiation. Interdisciplinary collaboration further strengthened this feasibility by broadening expressive resources and ensuring adaptability to diverse contexts, echoing what Ross (2022) calls the “transformative creativity” of cross-disciplinary practice.

Nonetheless, the observed constraints illustrate that feasibility is contingent rather than absolute. Logistical limitations and audience resistance suggest that the model requires ongoing adaptation, particularly through cultural mediation strategies. As one FGD participant noted, decoding experimental forms demands guidance that bridges cultural memory with contemporary aesthetics. This insight reinforces the necessity of the

Evaluation phase in the model, ensuring that feasibility is not presumed but empirically tested in each new context.

In sum, the discussion of feasibility shows that the model offers a transferable framework, but its success depends on contextual sensitivity. By embedding participation, collaboration, and mediation into its structure, the model positions itself not as a fixed formula but as a flexible tool capable of evolving with the social and cultural environments in which it is applied.

### **Practical Model Synthesis**

The synthesis of findings produced a practical model of urban theatre performance consisting of six interconnected stages: theoretical inquiry, reflective discussion, body-space experimentation, rehearsal and script development, pilot performance, and evaluation. Each stage was grounded in empirical evidence drawn from rehearsal documentation, audience surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. This structure highlights that the model is not a theoretical abstraction but a distillation of lived practice, where iterative cycles of experimentation and reflection generated a replicable framework.

The articulation of a cyclical model aligns with existing literature on practice-based research, which views creative processes as iterative rather than linear (Nelson, 2013). By embedding evaluation as a core stage, the model also resonates with Vallack's (2024) *Soliloquy Methodology*, which emphasizes reflective cycles that legitimize artistic practice as academic inquiry. Similarly, Prette & Braga (2020) stress that embodied research must incorporate pedagogical feedback to remain socially relevant, while Ciesielski (2023) illustrates how empirical reflection on neurophysiological responses enriches creative practice. The model developed in this study therefore consolidates these theoretical perspectives into a structured but flexible framework.

Importantly, the empirical synthesis underscores that urban theatre is both an artistic and socio-cultural intervention. Audience surveys revealed strong engagement when performances integrated cultural memory with urban aesthetics, while FGDs emphasized that ideological messages must remain open to negotiation. This duality reflects what Fischer-Lichte (2008) describes as the transformative potential of performance: its capacity to generate both aesthetic impact and social reflection. By capturing this through a data-driven model, the research demonstrates how theatre can systematically bridge creative innovation and community relevance.

The contribution of the empirical model lies in its adaptability. It provides a structured cycle that can be replicated in other urban contexts while remaining responsive to local needs. At the same time, it advances the discourse on performance models in Indonesia, moving beyond traditional or normative frameworks (Jaeni, 2023; Sunardi, 2020; Ruastiti et al., 2021) toward a contemporary model that integrates embodied improvisation, textual structuring, and evaluative reflection. This positions the model as a practical and theoretical tool for sustaining urban theatre as both an art form and a vehicle for social justice.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study developed and tested an practical model of urban theatre performance through practice-based research at Sanggar Matara Art Production. The model integrates six interrelated stages—Theoretical Inquiry, Reflective Discussion, Body-Space Experimentation, Rehearsal and Script Development, Pilot Performance, and



Evaluation—showing that creative practice in urban theatre is cyclical, iterative, and grounded in embodied collaboration. Findings demonstrated that embodied improvisation, dramaturgical co-creation, and site-specific performance are central to producing artistic works that are both aesthetically innovative and socially responsive.

The pilot performance confirmed that audiences resonated with hybrid dramaturgy blending cultural memory and urban aesthetics, while also highlighting ambivalent responses to ideological critique. These outcomes validate the importance of evaluation as a continuous feedback mechanism. Overall, the research contributes a replicable and adaptable framework that positions urban theatre not only as an art form but also as a socio-cultural intervention for community engagement and social justice.

Several limitations were identified during the research process. First, logistical challenges such as limited rehearsal spaces, time constraints, and restricted access to urban performance sites affected the smooth implementation of the model. Second, audience resistance to experimental dramaturgy revealed interpretive gaps, particularly among those unfamiliar with non-traditional forms. Third, while interdisciplinary collaboration enriched the performances, coordinating across artistic disciplines proved demanding in terms of resources and scheduling. Finally, the findings are contextually situated in one production setting, and further applications across diverse communities are needed to fully validate the model's generalizability.

The study offers important implications for both theory and practice. Theoretically, the model extends existing frameworks by embedding evaluation as a core stage, thereby strengthening the legitimacy of practice-based research in performance studies. It demonstrates how embodied practice and dramaturgical co-creation can generate not only artistic products but also structured knowledge.

Practically, the model provides a pathway for theatre practitioners and community organizations to design site-specific performances that are responsive to local issues. By emphasizing participation, collaboration, and evaluative reflection, the model supports sustainable cultural development and positions theatre as a tool for fostering dialogue, solidarity, and social transformation in urban contexts. The findings also suggest that future applications should incorporate cultural mediation strategies to bridge experimental forms with audience expectations, ensuring that performances remain both innovative and accessible.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bahar, M., & Muchtar, H. (2021). Model Normatif Kemasan Seni Pertunjukan Melayu Objek Wisata Candi Muarajambi. *Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 36(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v36i1.1322>
- Benford, R. D. (2022). Dramaturgy and Social Movements. In *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (pp. 1–2). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm075.pub2>
- Busby, S. (2024). Applied Theatre: Research-Based Theatre, or Theatre-Based Research? Exploring the Possibilities of Finding Social, Spatial, and Cognitive Justice in Informal Housing Settlements in India, or Tales from the Banyan Tree. *Arts*, 13(2), 63. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts13020063>
- Campos, C. L. J. (2021). A leitura do pedestre-espectador ou um corpo em meio à transitoriedade. *Urdimento: Revista de Estudos Em Artes Cênicas*, 2(41), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.5965/1414573102412021e0202>
- Chibueze, O. A., & Okey, O. U. (2022). Applied Theatre as an interventionist model for

- theatre for development projects: the Itchi-Agu experience. *IKENGA International Journal of Institute of African Studies*, 23(1), 1–15.  
<https://doi.org/10.53836/ijia/2022/23/1/009>
- Ciesielski, T. (2023). Difficulties in merging methodological demands and artistic conventions—"Artist's Neurophysiology in Performance" project case. *Avant*.  
<https://doi.org/10.26913/ava1202312>
- Couto, R. F., & Fernández, X. A. C. (2022). Exploración del arte de la performance como herramienta terapéutica emocional. *International Multidisciplinary Journal CREA*, 1(1), 9. <https://doi.org/10.35869/ijmc.v1i1.3893>
- Deans, C., & Pini, S. (2022). Skilled performance in Contact Improvisation: the importance of interkinaesthetic sense of agency. *Synthese*, 200.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-022-03629-7>
- Farenik, A. S. (2022). METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY OF PERFORMANCE AS AN ART FORM. *Articult*, 2, 6–32. <https://doi.org/10.28995/2227-6165-2022-2-6-32>
- Haerudin, D. (2019). *Dramaturgi Teater Urban Marjinal pada Pertunjukan Sirkus Anjing Teater Kubur* [Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta].  
<https://digilib.isi.ac.id/5655/>
- Jaeni, J. (2023). Arts Communication Model: The Development of Performing Arts through Empowering Cultural Art-Based Tourism. *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education*, 23(2), 318–332.  
<https://doi.org/10.15294/harmonia.v23i2.41463>
- Kimmel, M., & Hristova, D. (2021). The Micro-genesis of Improvisational Co-creation. *Creativity Research Journal*, 33, 347–375.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2021.1922197>
- Leander, K., Carter-Stone, L., & Supica, E. (2023). "We got so much better at reading each other's energy": Knowing, acting, and attuning as an improv ensemble. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 32, 250–287.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2022.2154157>
- Lefebvre, A. (2018). Reading and embodying the script during the theatrical rehearsal. *Language and Dialogue*. <https://doi.org/10.1075/LD.00015.LEF>
- Lefebvre, A., & Mondada, L. (2023). Interactional Contingencies in Rehearsing a Theater Scene: The Consequentiality of Body Arrangements as Action Unfolds. *Human Studies*, 46, 303–335. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-023-09669-3>
- Made, R. N. (2021). Catur Guru Dalam Seni Pertunjukan Wayang Wong Millenial. *Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 36(3), 334–341.  
<https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v36i3.1497>
- Meliakova, Y., & Kovalenko, I. (2021). SEMIOTICS OF GESTURE: PERFORMATIVE CONCEPTUALISM. *The Bulletin of Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University. Series: Philosophy, Philosophies of Law, Political Science, Sociology*, 2(49). <https://doi.org/10.21564/2663-5704.49.229776>
- Norrthon, S., & Schmidt, A. (2023). Knowledge Accumulation in Theatre Rehearsals: The Emergence of a Gesture as a Solution for Embodying a Certain Aesthetic Concept. *Human Studies*, 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-022-09654-2>
- Odier, F. S. (2023). Performance: um gênero indisciplinar na arte contemporânea. *Palíndromo*, 15(35), 288–312. <https://doi.org/10.5965/2175234615352023288>
- Prette, N., & Braga, B. (2020). Pesquisa Performativa: o corpo como meio de investigação. *DAPesquisa*, 15(esp.), 01–18.



- <https://doi.org/10.5965/1808312915252020e0029>
- Ridho. (2022). *Parade Teater Jawa Timur 2022; Tampilkan Enam Kelompok Teater Kontemporer*. Duta.Co. [https://duta.co/parade-teater-jawa-timur-2022-tampilkan-enam-kelompok-teater-kontemporer?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://duta.co/parade-teater-jawa-timur-2022-tampilkan-enam-kelompok-teater-kontemporer?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Ross, V. (2022). Practice-Based Methodological Design for Performance-Composition and Interdisciplinary Music Research. *Malaysian Journal of Music*, 11(1), 109–125. <https://doi.org/10.37134/mjm.vol11.1.7.2022>
- Ruastiti, N. M., Sudirga, I. K., & Yudarta, I. G. (2021). *Wayang Wong Milenial: Inovasi Seni Pertunjukan pada Era Digital*. Jejak Pustaka.
- Salgado, M. T. (2023). Performance Activism: Precursors and Contemporary Pioneers by Dan Friedman (review). *Theatre Topics*, 33(2), 111–112. <https://doi.org/10.1353/tt.2023.a901206>
- Scialom, M. (2022). Performer's dramaturgy: Developing dramaturgical thinking through choreological practice. *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 13, 573–586. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19443927.2022.2083668>
- Starzyk, A., Rybak-Niedziółka, K., Marchwiński, J., Rykała, E., & Lucchi, E. (2023). Spatial Relations between the Theatre and Its Surroundings: An Assessment Protocol on the Example of Warsaw (Poland). *Land*, 12(6), 1225. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land12061225>
- Sunardi, S. (2020). Model Pertunjukan Wayang Sinema Lakon Dewa Ruci sebagai Wahana Pengembangan Wayang Indonesia. *Gelar : Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 17(2), 140–150. <https://doi.org/10.33153/glr.v17i2.2748>
- Vallack, J. (2024). Soliloquy Methodology: a Cradle for Credible, Practice-Based Research. *European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies*, 23(1), 231–237. <https://doi.org/10.34190/ecrm.23.1.2301>
- Vella, R., & Pulè, M. (2022). Who is it for? Art and social practice in a time of slow burn crisis. *Routledge Open Research*, 1, 23. <https://doi.org/10.12688/routledgeopenres.17577.1>
- Yavo-Ayalon, S., Alon-Mozes, T., & Aharon-Gutman, M. (2020). The shape of theatre in the city: A theoretical and methodological approach for analyzing artistic activity in urban space. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 42(8), 1202–1221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2019.1654896>