Background of the Creation of Heri Dono’s Wayang Legenda as a Basis of Developing Local Resource-Based Creativity

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Abstract

The education of art and culture contributes to the development goals of the Indonesian nation in the form of collective art (integrated art) of the whole art. Concretely, traditional art form in Indonesia can be found in wayang art. Globalization and the development of ICT in the show world now have a negative impact on the lack of interest of the younger generation to recognize the performance of wayang art, especially Solo cultural city. The research on the background of the creation of the Heri Dono puppet legend involves the aspect of the idea (source of ideas) that underlies the artist in the wayang puppets' way of being a new wayang. This research uses qualitative-descriptive approach. The object of research is the process of making and events Wayang Legend show. Sources of research data are informants, places, events, and documentation. Data obtained through observation techniques, interviews, and content analysis to examine existing document study, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling. The validity of the data is tested by triangulation of sources and methods. Data were analyzed using interactive analysis technique. The background of the Wayang Puppet creation Heri Dono stood on the consciousness of presenting himself, turning to tradition, and beginning in the 1980s. Experiencing puppet characters is related to understanding puppet show stories. Heri Dono reaffirms his belief that art is not separated from culture. Underlying his art making, he feels the need to develop the sensitivity to listen to the sounds and music, the sensitivity to motion and the sensitivity of telling. Heri Dono created two series of Legend Puppet: in 1988 "Si Tungkot Tunggal Panaluan" based on the legend of Batak society of North Sumatra and in 1992 "Momotaro" which raised the legend of Japanese society. The Legend Wayang Series uses vernacular as a medium for the disclosure of contemporary art; universal language is used to build communication within the sphere of the modern world, which incorporates the image of cartoons and comics.

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INTRODUCTION

Education of art and culture can contribute to the development goals of the Indonesian nation and is a collective art (integrated art) because it embodies the entire existing branch of art. Collective art in the form of traditional art that includes art, dance, music, theater, and language. In concrete terms, collective art form (integrated art) can be found in the art of wayang in Indonesia as one of the most prominent Indonesian culture that developed rapidly in Java and Bali. This art has been acknowledged by UNESCO as an institution in charge of the culture of the United Nations on November 7, 2002 establishing wayang as the famous puppet show of Indonesia, a world priceless masterpiece of oral and intangible Heritage of Humanity (Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity). The recognition of this world is strengthened by the emergence of the idea that wayang is the result of Hindu creations or culture so that the use of foreign terms in it. However, such an opinion is erroneous. After a careful study, it turns out that wayang is the result of the original creation or culture of the Javanese (Metrosedono, 1986: 6). This is reinforced by the opinion of the Dutch cultural expert, Hazeau in his dissertation Bijdrage tot de Kennis Van het Javaanse Toneel (1987), which shows his belief that wayang is a genuine show of Java. Wayang it means carnival carved (skin carved) and the shadow is seen on the screen. Thus, the wayang in question is certainly the wayang kulit as we know it today (Hazeau in the National Encyclopedia of Indonesia Vol. 17, 1991, p. 274). Hazeau mentions that during the time of King Erlangga at the beginning of the eleventh century, puppets were performed in the kingdom of Kediri, which at that time experienced glory. The wayang thing can be known from the book of Arjunawiwaha and some inscriptions that mention the existence of wayang or aringgit which means dhalang (Hazeau in Metrosedono, 1986: 6). Soedarsono (1997, pp. 459-460) explains the term puppet literally. He said that wayang means "shadow show", which is referred to the forms of wayang that tell the ancient stories (purwa) (Mahabharata, Ramayana, Arjunasasrabahu and Javanese mythological stories), which are more often called complete as wayang kulit (wayang kulit purwa). Over the centuries, wayang culture has evolved into various types. The props develop into several kinds, including wayang made of paper, wood, leather, and cloth, and wayang orang.

Now as entertainment and traditional arts, puppet arts get extraordinary rivals from other performing arts with all the technological sophistication they possess, such as music performances (dangdut, rock, pop, and others) with stunning lighting arrangements; television entertainment such as soap operas and movies; mushrooming theater with various types of film. Especially now, many performance applications such as youtube audiovisual apps to watch movies and joox audio applications and spotify to listen to songs (music) via mobile devices. These devices provide convenience to young people to get cheap entertainment without having to go to the show. Today's young generation gets a lot of convenience from the sophistication of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that is integrated with their social life. They use ICT to meet, date, play, learn, and get to know each other. With just one touch of a finger, people get a lot of information. That's the state of the young generation now (kids now). The incredible globalization and development of ICT in the performing world now have a negative impact in the form of the lack of interest of the young generation nowadays to recognize the wayang art performances as a traditional art, especially in the Solo region which is considered a cultural city; this is a matter of concern.

Meanwhile, Solo is one city in Central Java that is identical with the cultural city with the slogan Solo The Spirit Of Java which means Solo is the soul of Java, meaning that the city of Solo is a representation of Java. The word Java is often identified with Central Java, especially Solo and surrounding areas. Solo symbol of this cultural city is firmly attached to the existence of Keraton Kasunanan Hadiningrat and Mangkunegaran located in the heart of Solo. In addition, Solo is also known as the city of Bengawan because of the existence of the river
Bengawan Solo, the longest river that flows on the island of Java. The Bengawan Solo river basin community has characteristics similar to those of other river banks, but has the ability to socialize with communities outside their community. They are not very good at socializing with the community. In addition, some of them often violate regulations, have unproductive activities, and some of them are street children. In addition, the Bengawan Solo river banks are often exposed to severe floods that displace their property. This makes psychic conditions vulnerable to criminality and lacks clear ideas for thinking ahead. Various forms of moral aberrations have a strong impact on the moral degradation of the nation. Their moral quality declined due to the lack of strength of the fortress from the influence of outside cultures that are not indigenous cultures of Indonesia.

One of the most crucial issues in society today is the psychological state and individual moral personality. In addition, character education is still a polemic in Solo society. Character education is considered less beneficial to all parties; only educated people perceive the importance and benefits of character education.

In the 20th century, performances of wayang performances undergo many changes. Many efforts are made to support the life of puppet art. One of them is the exploration of the form by making puppets as inspiration to create new puppets and using wayang as a medium of art creation by modern artists which is a conservation effort of artistic tradition and creative art innovation. Of the many examples of exploration to form traditional wayang into new puppets, the legendary puppets created by contemporary artist Heri Dono are interestingly studied because the potential in them can be the basis for the development of children's creativity in the present. This is in line with the conditions and situations of today's young generation (kids of the age) that are closely related to the ease of reaching the ICT sophistication that is integrated with their social life.

Based on literature review by some researchers who do quiet research of wayang theme, can be known position and position of researcher. 1) Ijah Hadijah (in Sabana & Syarief (Eds), 2014, p. 135) mentions that wayang acts as a heritage of the archipelago and the traditional arts that need to be maintained but can develop following contemporary culture without losing noble philosophical values. 2) Rofiqoh Djawas (in Sabana & Syarief (Eds), 2014, p.356) describes the process of puppet extinction caused by the intensity of modern entertainment that is increasingly prevalent in society and the factor of the community system. Some researchers do research by exploiting the potential of puppets (puppets) in art learning in children. Nikouei & Nasirabadi (2015, p.27-61) mentioned that puppet show participants had more positive attitudes, more accurate real-world knowledge about individuals with disabilities, and interventions that effectively changed their knowledge and attitude toward disability. Remer & Tzuriel (2015, p.356-365) mentions the effect of an intervention program that integrates puppets as a mediation tool with learning motivation and literacy grade achievement of regular and special kindergartens. In addition, Damajanti, et al (in Sabana & Syarief (Eds), 2014, p.76) conducted research on the influence of ethnic tradition as a fundamental concept in the artist's creative work (Heri Dono artist) in the creation of creative works. Heri Dono's works clearly show signs of ethnic traditions and phrases that highlight the daily life of the lower classes. The five researchers described the need for puppets to be preserved and developed. Factors causing puppet extinction, the potential use of puppets in learning in children, and the influence of ethnic traditions into concepts that underlie artists to work. Furthermore, how the position of researchers related to the results of the relevant research above. Based on the research roadmap and the researcher's concept before conducting this dissertation research, the researcher has done research on wayang and its potency (1. Potential study related to contemporary development concept and function of delivery of Suketet suket message by Slamet Gundono 2. Mapping of puppet show as a form local wisdom in Surakarta) as well as the potential use of puppets in learning in children (1. learning model of morality in primary schools based on oral tradition for the cultivation of moral values in nation character building 2. integrated
learning model between art and culture subjects and Indonesian language in the development of creativity based on local wisdom of puppet art in elementary school children. Also the researcher's concept of 1) the development of creativity through art learning based on the local wisdom of puppets with training through integrated workshop method, 2) preservation efforts and development of wayang art in Indonesian children that can be done by integrated into the learning of art so that it can grow feelings of pride and appreciation of the nation's own culture, and as an effort to develop children's creativity. The explanation of the research roadmap and the concept of the idea will strengthen the researcher's position in this research. The scope of the problem in this research is the potential in wayang legend created by contemporary artist Heri Dono and the background of the creation of wayang legend. In this article, the researchers describe the background of the creation of wayang legend by the artist Heri Dono. This is the aspect of the idea or the source of the idea that underlies the artist in expanding the puppet form into a new wayang. Ultimately, based on the background of creation and potential, Heri Dono's puppet legend is expected to be useful as a basis for creativity development for today's young generation (kids of the age), especially children on Bengawan Solo river banks so that they can create their own puppets and perform performances their puppets as the end result of their creativity.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative-descriptive method that refers to an embedded qualitative research or popularly termed case study (Sutopo, 1988, p 12). The problem solved is a single case with a research location in only one place, namely Surakarta as a center of Javanese culture that represents the growing place of today's young generation and Studio Kalahan as a place of artist Heri Dono works. Data collection based on research questions. The problem to be solved relates to the potential and background of the creation of the Heri Dono wayang legend, which is the aspect of the idea (the source of ideas) that underlies the artist in expanding the wayang form into a new puppet.

Research targets include the making process and events of the Heri Dono Wayang show. Data sources are dalang figures, art observers, and observers of puppets. The study was designed for eight months. The research sites are Surakarta and Studio Kalahan Gamping, Sleman, Yogyakarta. The selection of research sites is based on the consideration that Studio Kalahan is where the work of artists of Heri Dono and Surakarta is the center of Javanese culture where Javanese arts and culture grows for the young generation of today.

The main data source is the oral information of the informant recorded and recorded. The second data source is the places and events perpetuated through the camera. The third source is a written source, which is an additional material that comes from books, magazines, journals, archives, personal documents, and other sources related to the subject matter. Data were collected using observation, interview and content analysis method by reviewing existing documents. Interviews were conducted on key informants selected using purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques.

Validated data using triangulation of sources and methods by 1) comparing what people say in public with what is done personally about the potential of the Heri Dono legend as a basis for the development of child creativity based on local resources; 2) comparing data of observation result with interview result data; 3) compare the results of interviews with the contents of documents related to the potential of the Heri Dono legend as a basis for the development of child creativity based on local resources. Triangulation techniques are expected to improve and ensure the validity of data and research results.

Furthermore, the data were analyzed using interactive techniques (Miles & Huberman, 1992) which included 1) data collection, 2) data reduction, 3) display data, and 4) conclusion / verification). The potential and background of the creation of puppet legends as the basis for the development of child-based creativity based on local resources is
analyzed continuously from the beginning of data collection to conclusion. Verification lasts from start to finish. The process of analysis occurs interactively to test the relationship between components in a cycle that will take place continuously during the implementation of the study. By using such analytical techniques, the conclusions will be tested precisely and accurately.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kalahan Studio

Kalahan Studio is a representation of the place where the legend is performed, the wayang legend, and the place where Heri Dono works art. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation studies, in general, Studio Kalahan can be described as follows. Studio Kalahan is located on Jalan Patukan 50, RT 1 RW 20 Ambarketawan District Gamping, Sleman, Yogyakarta. The place is so unique and interesting that it becomes a studio where art works are named Kalahan. Defeat means always lose. The name is used because Heri Dono feels that not everyone should be a winner; he chose to be a loser. This critical thinking is conveyed by way of jokes, without having to be attacked. Heri Dono chose the term 'guerilla' for the attitude he took, including in the art. It is inspired by the movie Harry Callahan. The word 'Kalahan' is a play on 'Dirty Harry' Callahan, a fictional character played by Clint Eastwood. In the film, Callahan became an example for a new type of police film when the antihero figure did not hesitate across ethical and professional boundaries to achieve his personal vision of justice, especially when the law was not well run by the bureaucracy competently. Studio Kalahan is a reflection of Heri Dono's creativity that evokes the creation of diverse ideas in the works. In the approach of art psychology (Supangkat, Damayanti, & Kent, 2014, p. 133), the creation process of Heri Dono is known as divergent thinking characterized by three separate components: 1) fluency (fluency, ability to generate many ideas), 2) flexibility (flexibility, ability to use various approaches to overcome problems), and 3) originality (authenticity, ability to initiate original ideas). Easy to find traces of divergent thinking on works created for more than three decades as an artist. Heri Dono convey the creation process is like a well. To get clear water from the well, one must keep drawing, taking, and then distributing it to the people around it. Well water that is not ditimba over time will be poisonous. Similarly with the idea: like a well, an unrealized idea and shared will stop so that it does not arrive at the source of a pure idea, and ultimately it will only be toxic to creativity itself. Art work means an effort to share ideas and thoughts in order to always be able to find ideas that are pure, fresh, and inspiring.

Heri Dono's Studio Kalahan seemed to invite people to enter the creation chambers that never dry. The first time set foot in the front yard of the studio, guests will be greeted two dragon statues as a gatekeeper. The symbols of these two dragons are often found in temples.

Figure 1. Front Page and Gate of Studio Kalahan (Documentation: Agni Saraswati-Studio Kalahan, Endang Widiyastuti)

Passing through the gate, guests were greeted by a security post with a wooden sign saying "Compulsory Guests" at the top, as commonly found in various places. What distinguishes the place from other security posts,
however, is that the security post actually serves as a kitchen, right behind the sign saying "Who to report ...?" Here guests can feel the playful impulse of Heri Dono, laughter, and at the same time critical. Next in front of the security post there is a table to fill the guest book. Signing deeper into the Studio Kalahan area, guests are treated to a large number of Heri Dono creations that fill almost entire studios and barely spare space: paintings, objects, installations, work experiments, photographs and newspaper clippings, stacks of electronic parts, books, and collection of ancient items. The area of Studio Kalahan is clearly divided into three parts that can be read in Figure 2.

Figure 2. First-floor plan (Documentation: Agni Saraswati-Studio Kalahan)

On the first floor there is a living room (A1) which contains a rattan-style crowning chair with an ancient design that seems to depict the former master building of the Dutch police service house. In this living room, visitors find some works of Heri Dono both painting and installation. In some places, Heri Dono embraces quotations, among others the Javanese saying 'Ajining self ono ing lathi' which means 'the dignity of a person lies in speech and the word'. The saying is meant to keep people from speaking and speaking and speaking correctly.

Figure 3. Room A1 as a living room in the main building of the former Dutch police service house (Documentation: Endang Widiyastuti)

Go to room A2, visitors find a variety of reference books and documentation arranged neatly in the shelves. Likewise in room A3 there are a variety of reference books and documentation that is neatly arranged in rattan shelves and chairs with ancient design and a computer set. Room A3 also serves as a living room.

Figure 4. Room A3 as a living room in the main building of the former house of the Dutch police service (Documentation: Endang Widiyastuti)

The end of the main building which represents the former Dutch police service house is the A4 and A5 spaces. Room A4 is Heri Dono's workspace. Many worksheet references illustrate that artwork is an effort to share ideas and thoughts in order to always find ideas that are pure, fresh, and inspiring. Faced with room A4 is room A5 place to rest. After passing through the main building, visitors find a multi-storey building. Room A6 serves as a painting room, room A7 and room A8 as a display space a variety of works.
After passing through the rooms on the first floor, through the stairs in the corner of the visitors room will be directed to the collection of works of Heri Dono in room B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, and B6 on the second floor.

Visitors can go to C1, C2 and C3 spaces on the third floor of Studio Kalahan to view some of Heri Dono's collections. However, visitors can go down to the first floor through the stairs in the corner of room B5 on the second floor. At the end of the stairs visitors encountered some neatly arranged works on the shelves attached to the wall. Back to the first floor, visitors will meet the courtyard and main building. Here, visitors reach the basement which serves as a place to store chairs and a number of puppet works. The courtyard in front of the basement not only serves as an empty space but also a place to receive guests to discuss or organize other activities. In the courtyard, visitors end a series of incredible art appreciation activities at Studio Kalahan.

**Figure 5.** Room A6 is a painting room (Documentation: Agni Saraswati-Studio Kalahan)

**Figure 6.** Second-Floor plan (Documentation: Agni Saraswati-Studio Kalahan)

**Figure 7.** Third-floor plan (Documentation: Agni Saraswati-Studio Kalahan)

**Figure 8.** Student visits on art appreciation activities at Studio Kalahan (Documentation: Endang Widiyastuti)

**Background behind the Creation of Heri Dono’s Wayang Legenda**

The background of Heri Dono's legendary puppet creation can be described as follows. Creation of wayang legend can not be separated from the description of the journey of wandering Heri Dono (born 1960) trace identity in the process of work. In 1980 Heri Dono entered the fine arts education of Institut Seni Indonesia, Yogyakarta. Many things influenced the formation of Heri Dono's identity in the 1980s when a student like him witnessed the Indonesian New Art Movement brought on continuous controversy and conflict. He was impressed by a number of exhibitions of young
Yogyakarta artists showing that the influence of the movement is widespread among young artists resisting modern art. In addition, he was fascinated by a number of happenings that reflected the rebellion of young artists because they were dissatisfied with the development of Indonesian art, including art education.

The passion of the Indonesian New Art Movement extends among young artists. They are against modern art and rebellious because they feel dissatisfied with the development of Indonesian art, including art education. They questioned "why all isms in modern art emerge following the development of Western art, why there is no ism that arises in Indonesia, and the question of the identity of Indonesian art". It all gave birth to Heri Dono's attitude and decision not to follow any isms, but to display his own ism. The search for a dishonest identity is like a propaganda controlled by powerful governmental people.

As an artist of the 1980s, Heri Dono included his work on Biennal Jakarta IX and he was the first participant to bring his works from Yogyakarta. While still a student of the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, in 1983, Heri Dono worked on a painting entitled, "Eating Tokai" (Eating Shit). The teachers were offended. He is thought to be influenced by a young artist insurgency that resonates strongly outside educational institutions. Since then he was watched. In 1987, Heri Dono was supposed to prepare his final assignment to complete his studies. Some open-minded teachers suggest that he forget the final task because too many teachers see his work critically and he will face many difficulties to pass so Heri Dono did not finish his studies at the Indonesian Art Institute of Yogyakarta. As a student, Heri Dono witnessed how the art education he was endeavoring to stem the influence of the Indonesian New Art Movement and students was closely monitored.

Since the student Heri Dono has been interested in the New Art Movement and tried to deepen the Movement in Indonesia. The scope of his rebellion is not only art and art, but also culture. There is a view that sees the exclusion of local traditions due to Western hegemony. In its interpretation, the Indonesian New Art Movement actually has power but is not considered. Hegemony makes the artists feel no need to think. Through the statement, Heri Dono presents an unreal issue in the Indonesian New Art Movement, which is the position of tradition and ethnicity on the issue of hegemony. Heri Dono confirms this by lifting tradition and ethnicity into the concept of his expression. This concept shows Heri Dono's position on the emergence of early signs of contemporary art in Indonesia. The belief in prioritizing and avoiding perfection is reflected in his works which are now regarded as important works and are seen in works created between 1990 and 2000. Some of them have been part of the collection of museums worldwide, such as: Fermentation of Mind (1994), Flying Angels (1996), Clowns Politics (1999), Watching the Marginal People (2000), Museum of Ethnography (2001), and The Operation of Mind Control (2001).

Heri Dono has turned to tradition since the 1980s; he was interested in a wayang kulit show in classical Javanese culture that has some similarities to comics and cartoons. Wayang kulit that is part of Javanese classical art tradition has been known since the 1st century AD. Puppet serves as a medium to introduce the thinking and morality of Javanese society through various epic stories of Mahabharata and Ramayana. In Wali Songo's time, puppet shows are not just entertainment but are used to convey the teachings of Islam. Until now puppets are still a medium to expand moral teachings to the Javanese community. Shadow puppet performances experience various story changes. Almost all the dalangs are constantly actualizing reality and often incorporate social-political issues into the stories that are displayed. However, the change is not in the puppet shape; no dalang (shadow puppet maker) dare to change it because the form symbolizes the character of the characters in the wayang stories and symbols on every puppet puppet full of religious meanings. Some of the symbols are even believed to carry the mystical signs that are being sacrificed and the people regard them as masterpieces that are no longer possible to be developed. Heri Dono deepens the puppet characters that are related to the story on the
puppet show. He dug a variety of symbols on wayang to be developed in his disclosure. Through his paintings he began to leave graphic symptoms that prioritize the lines and become expressive and display pagan symptoms that show his belief in the natural energy. This tendency reflects a perception of spirit as part of nature and the belief that spirit is the main source of expression in art.

In 1987, Heri Dono went to a puppeteer and controversial leather puppet maker named Sukasman who lives in Yogyakarta. In the 1960s, Sukasman underwent art education at Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia (now the Indonesian Art Institute, Yogyakarta) but only briefly. As a controversial wayang maker, Sukasman changed some details of puppet shadow puppets by considering the design and anatomy of the body so that the puppet puppets become good. He is also based on philosophical reasons and this reason crashed into the already common understanding of the symbols on the puppet shadow puppets. In the end, Sukasman becomes the puppeteer to show the puppet series of his creation because no dalang is willing to use this puppet series for the show. Heri Dono learned how to make puppets on Sukasman and for several years worked together to make giant puppets, stealth, jinns and spirits of human bullies. In classical wayang stories, these creatures are considered low and have no symbols. Therefore, its manufacture is exempt from the provisions; the underlying benchmark is simply that they look evil, savage, crazy, weird, and frightening so that the puppet shapes show the creativity of the creator. Heri Dono feels liberated. Therefore, he immediately entered the image of cartoons and comics in the creation of the creatures. During the exhortation of the art of wayang performance, Heri Dono realizes the existence of art in ethnic culture (dance, music, theater and art) that come together and, as an expression, can not be separated. This awareness changes the fundamental view of the art making it undergoes. Heri Dono feels the need to develop the sensitivity of listening to sounds and music, the sensitivity of motion is not just the motion of animation, and the telling sensitivity that does not just rely on actors like in the theater. Based on the musings that Heri Dono believes that together art is a culture. If fragmented, art will be a specific issue that is specifically addressed and requires specific knowledge. He sees this kind of art one day will be totally separate from culture, to be esoteric, and not understood by society. Heri Dono reaffirms his belief that art is inseparable from culture.

**Heri Dono’s Wayang Legend**

Wayang Legenda by Heri Dono shows the existence of tradition and ethnicity that is widely known by the community closer to the legend (folk art). Wayang underlying the works of Heri Dono is a puppet known to the wider community, not a wayang as a classical Javanese arts that have a background of sophisticated thinking (sophisticated, luxurious, exclusive). Wayang Legenda by Heri Dono reflects the idea of using puppet shows as a medium of expression that can be presented outside the Javanese community because actually puppet shows can be presented anywhere in Indonesia that has 300 ethnic groups and has different traditions.


![Figure 9. Wayang Legenda “Si Tungkot Tunggal Panaluan” (Dokumentasi: Agni Saraswati-Studio Kalahan)](image-url)
The Wayang Legend series uses vernacular as a medium of expression in contemporary art. Heri Dono uses a universal language to build communication within the world (in the modern world). Heri Dono's efforts showed results. When displayed on various contemporary art events the Legend of Wayang series attracts the public's attention. His Wayang Legend (1988-1992) is categorized as an installation rather than a painting and not a statue. However, the legend of Wayang Legenda is not designed as an installation because the setting of the puppet shadow puppet show is no different from the actual shadow puppet show setting, complete with a performance screen and banana trunk where puppet shadow puppet. None of the puppets are made of cardboard similar to the leather puppets in the classical tradition of Javanese culture. All the hippo puppet legends Heri Dono's caricature creations carry a variety of messages that appear through symbols. In performance, according to the curator's observations, these symbols play a role in displaying cynicism that departs from a narrative of reality that is considered unreasonable.

CONCLUSION

The background of the creation of Wayang Legenda by Heri Dono is an aspect of the idea (the source of ideas) that underlies the Heri Dono artist in the wayang puppets to be a new wayang. Based on the awareness of wanting to show its own isme, in the decade of 1980s he began to turn to the tradition to deepen the puppet characters related to the story at the puppet show. The art making that he lived was based on the development of sensitivity to sounds and music, a sensitivity to motion that was not just motion in animation, and a sensitivity to stories that not only rely on actors as in the theater. Heri Dono reaffirms his belief that art is inseparable from culture. The Wayang Legend Series uses vernacular as a medium of contemporary art disclosure. Heri Dono uses a universal language to build communication within the world (in the modern world) and incorporates images of cartoons and comics. Heri Dono has been working on two legendary Wayang Puppet series, namely "Wayang Legenda" Si Tungkot Tunggal Panaluan "which lifted the legend of Batak society in North Sumatera, Indonesia and Wayang Legend" Momotaro "which raised the legend of Japanese society.

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