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THE CREATION PROCESS OF THE PELUK JIWA DANCE WITH DEAF CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Adopting a distinctive dance with movements and musical accompaniment to children with hearing impairments is exceptional. One can imagine the process and complexity that surrounds it. This article illustrates the *Peluk Jiwa* dance creation process by Jonet Sri Kuncoro and Wasi Bantolo with deaf children. This analysis employs a qualitative method by observing the creation and staging of the dance and conducting interviews with dancers, choreographers, and directors, which are then descriptively analyzed qualitatively. The analysis outcomes indicate that the process of creating this dance incorporates dance movement, theme selection, technique, exploration, organization, cohesion, and presentation. In addition, the performance conveys a message of social equality for deaf and normal children.

Keywords: dance; Peluk Jiwa; children; disabilities; hearing-impaired

ABSTRAK

Tari yang khas dengan gerak dan musik pengiring, ketika diterapkan kepada anak disabilitas tuna rungu, adalah merupakan hal yang istimewa. Bisa dibayangkan bagaimana proses dan kerumitan yang menyelimutinya. Artikel ini akan membahasa proses penciptaan tari Peluk Jiwa karya Jonet Sri Kuncoro dan Wasi Bantolo bersama anak disabilitas tuna rungu. Bahasan ini menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui observasi terhadap proses penciptaan dan pementasan tari, dan wawancara kepada penari dengan koreografer dan sutradara, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil bahasan menunjukkan proses penciptaan tari ini meliputi yaitu elemen gerak tari, pemilihan tema, teknik, eksplorasi, organisasi, kesatuan, dan penyajian. Dan, dalam tariannya memuat pesan kesataraan sosial antara anak disabilitas tuna rungu dan anak normal.

Kata kunci: tari; Peluk Jiwa; anak; disabilitas; tuna rungu

1. Introduction

The *Peluk Jiwa* (Hugging Soul) dance is the work of Wasi Bantolo (director) together with Jonet Sri Kuncoro (choregrapher). The steps of choreography creation include exploration, improvisation and forming (composition) (Hawkins, 1990)



(Yulianti, 2022). The choreography of *Peluk Jiwa* is composed based on traditional Surakarta style movements as a reference with simplified movements because it includes dancers of children with deaf disabilities, normal child dancer and singer with disabilities. The presentation of Peluk Jiwa dance is divided into two groups, namely normal child dancer and singer with disabilities as the main characters and children with deaf disabilities as supporting characters in the work. The *Peluk Jiwa* dance performance was supported by the songwriter *Peluk Jiwa* by Matheus Wasi Bantolo, Javanese music composer by Lumbini Tri Hasto, vocal and pentatonic music by Putu Indrati, and the Catholic church choir of Saint Antonius Purbayan as the backsong in this work. At the end of the round/scene the disabled singer by Agustinus Ari Haryanto sang the song *Peluk Jiwa* and all the dancers danced in sign language.

The structure of the *Peluk Jiwa* dance presentation is divided into four rounds, the first round displays normal child dancers who feel lonely, the second act normal children see deaf children enjoying their lives and starts to want to be friends with deaf children, the third round normal children begin to make friends with deaf children, the fourth round of disabled singer sang the song *Peluk Jiwa* and all the dancers danced in sign language.

This *Peluk Jiwa* dance work was created in the context of participating in the Nanyang Academy of Fine Art (NAFA) Dance Festival "A Life Well-Lived: Celebrating Wellness" which was staged Live Streaming on Youtube NAFA Studio Theater on 30 April 2021.

The idea for creation started with Wasi Bantolo, who had a dialogue with Jonet Sri Kuncoro. Wasi Bantolo and Jonet Sri Kuncoro have an uneasy relationship between deaf children and normal children, normal children do not feel happy with their lives, while deaf children live happily with their limitations. The song *Peluk Jiwa* created by Wasi Bantolo describes the acceptance of the soul for people who feel incomplete in life, embracing the soul is the same as acceptance or inner peace. Inner peace can embrace and push aside the barriers between people who have

limitations and normal people.

The *Peluk Jiwa* dance work departs from the song *Peluk Jiwa* which was composed in 1999. The song Peluk Jiwa was only used and performed for the first time in January 2020 at the theatre hall (Teater Besar) ISI Surakarta. Along with the process of developing dance works, the song *Peluk Jiwa* experienced developments in terms of story, dancers, and music (Matheus Wasi Bantolo, interview, 9 June 2021). Meanwhile, Jonet Sri Kuncoro, apart from being a lecturer, he is also a teacher for children with special needs at a Special School so that he is used to interacting with disable children. The interesting thing about the *Peluk Jiwa* dance is the choreography. Then, Wasi Bantolo and Jonet collaborated to make this dance.

Work on the choreography using simplified traditional Surakarta style moves and sign language moves for people with disabilities. In addition, using deaf child dancers, disabled singers, and normal child dancers. The working concept used in this work is musical dance drama. Work on music that uses pentatonic and diatonic music.

Based on what has been described above, the author would like to know more about the process of creating choreography and the choreographic form of the *Peluk Jiwa* dance.

2. Literature Review

This problems discussion uses several theories to solve regarding choreography. The discussion on the process of creating choreography uses the theory of Sri Rochana Widyastutieningrum and Dwi Wahyudiarto in the book Pengantar Koreografi (Introduction to Choreography). The process of creating choreography has seven stages, namely elements of dance movement, selection of themes. techniques, exploration, organization, unity and presentation (Widyastutieningrum, Sri Rochana; Wahyudiarto, 2018).

The form of dance presentation in which there are basic elements that support a single unity in a dance performance. The analysis of the choreographic elements of



the *Peluk Jiwa* dance uses the theoretical basis according to Y. Sumandiyo Hadi. Describe the form of the work of *Peluk Jiwa* by outlining the various main elements. According to Sumandiyo Hadi, it consists of dance titles, dance themes, types or kinds of dance, modes or ways of presentation, dancers, motion, space, dance music, makeup and clothing (Hadi, 2014).

The discussion on choreography also uses Howard Gardner's theory which discusses the problem of the process of creating a choreographer in creating works. He, initially formulated seven intelligences based on the human cognition and Mous and the dancers addressed to all: the Bodily-kinaesthetic-(physical), Linguistic-(spoken and written word), Spatial-(space & patterns), Musical-(musicality), Interpersonal-(understanding intentions & motivations of others), Logicalmathematical-(logic analysis) Intrapersonal (understanding and oneself) intelligences (Gardner, 1983) (Clifford, 2013). Gadner only focuses on discussing intelligences including bodily kinesthetic intelligence, linguistic (oral) intelligence, spatial intelligence (space and musical intelligence, patterns), interpersonal intelligence (understanding the intentions and motivations of others (Gardner, 1983). And according to research results said that dance and music are positive mediums that contribute significantly to the learning experience of children with intellectual disabilities (Surujlal, 2013). Furthermore, one type of art therapy is dance therapy, which activates a person's body movements and emotions .(Khudoinazarova, ClassesShahzoda; Gofurov, 2023).

3. Method

The discussion on the process of creating the *Peluk Jiwa* choreography by Jonet Sri Kuncoro and Wasi Bantolo uses qualitative research methods. According to John W. Creswell (1998) "Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analizes words, report detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting" (Creswell, 1998).

Interviews with resources during the Covid-19 pandemic were carried out via online video calls via WhatsApp. In the following year, the authors have the opportunity to meet the resources face-to-face. The resource persons included: Jonet Sri Kuncoro (53) as the choreographer in the dance work *Peluk Jiwa* who is very familiar with the dance creation process from start to finish; Matheus Wasi Bantolo (47) as the director of the dance work *Peluk Jiwa*; and Poernami Sari Dewi (40) as a companion teacher for children with deaf disabilities in the dance work *Peluk Jiwa*.

Observations were made by observing directly the process of creating the *Peluk Jiwa* dance on April 4 2021 at the theater hall (Teater Besar) ISI Surakarta (Indonesian Institute of the Arts Surakarta) and 1 April 2021 at the Special School "Hamong Putro" Sukoharjo. Observations can also be made indirectly by viewing and observing video recordings of dance performances in the Disability Dance Festival on 30 April 2021 on the Nanyang Academy of Fine Art (NAFA) Youtube channel.

Data analysis uses qualitative data analysis as a result of collecting empirical data which later functions to obtain more accurate data both in terms of classification and identification. This model is used because it reduces data and its conclusions so that the collection is more effective.

4. Discussion

4.1. Finding Idea

The *Peluk Jiwa* dance was worked on by choreographer Jonet Sri Kuncoro. Many creative ideas emerged from Jonet's activities with deaf children who were limited to listening to music. Creative ideas emerged from Jonet's inspiration, starting from a dialogue with the director (Wasi Bantolo). The initial idea started with the storyline of a deaf disabled child who wanted to be a normal child in general without any physical deficiencies. The idea that the director gave was different from Jonet's. He gave an idea of how the situation was reversed, a normal child felt that there was an empty space in his heart and saw children with deaf disabilities feel happy in the life he lived along with the deficiencies that exist in a deaf disabilitie.



Children with deaf disabilities invite normal children to join them, but normal children feel doubts. From this idea, a joint agreement was reached between Jonet and Wasi to work on the *Peluk Jiwa* dance (Jonet Sri Kuncoro, interview, 24 January 2022).

Jonet as a choreographer is not the first time he has worked on works by children with deaf disabilities. Jonet also knows children with deaf disabilities at the SLB B-C (Special School) "Hamong Putro" Sukoharjo, because they have previously created a dance, namely the *Kami Tak Berbeda* dance. Jonet already knows the capabilities of deaf children with disabilities. Jonet decided to use simple movements, such as *tanjak kambeng*, *pencak silat* (Javanese traditional self-defense) movements, stepping and moving places, sign language hand gestures, children with hearing impairments can follow these movements. This *tanjak kambeng* movement is taught to children with hearing impairments first and it turns out that children with hearing impairments can follow it. The motive for self-defense has broken character, it can be got when Jonet orders children with disabilities to move in a broken way, then Jonet sees a movement that can be assembled, arranged and beautified the dance. The broken movements of *pencak silat* show the enthusiasm of the children with disabilities themselves and also to encourage normal children.

Jonet's inspiration for using sign language gestures started when Jonet had a dialogue with Dewi, handing over the lyrics of the song *Peluk Jiwa* to be made in sign language. Children with disabilities participate in making daily sign language movements, assisted by accompanying teachers (Jonet Sri Kuncoro, interview, 24 January 2022).

4.2. Concept of Dance Artwork

Choreography is defined as the art of arranging and changing dance movements (motions). The equivalent of the word choreography that is often used in Indonesia includes: the word "garap" or "work on", means to change something into something else. Working on motion means changing motion, so that it becomes a

form of dance work (Widyastutieningrum, Sri Rochana; Wahyudiarto, 2018).

The concept of working on the *Peluk Jiwa* dance uses simplified Surakarta dashing traditional movements. Deaf children have a disability in hearing sound, and Jonet as the choreographer is very aware of this. The concept of working on the motion used does not choose a good shape, but is more concerned with the comfort of deaf children in moving their bodies. The dance work *Peluk Jiwa* was created in the form of a group dance drama consisting of six deaf children, one disabled adult, and one normal child. It is conceptualized as a theater dance and can also be developed into a mini opera or musical dance.

The dance moves used in the *Peluk Jiwa* dance are very simple, because the dancers are children with hearing impairments. Work on movements such as self-defense motifs, free movements, using *ogekan* gestures, stances, and sign language hand gestures.

This dance is accompanied by the Purbayan Church choir singing the song *Peluk Jiwa*. Music uses gamelan and tembang. There is a scene where a disabled child (Ari) also sings the song *Peluk Jiwa* followed by hand gestures in sign language by children with disabilities and normal children showing that children with disabilities and normal children can live side by side equally or without differences for a better future.

4.3. Choreography Creation Process

The *Peluk Jiwa* dance is the result of the creativity created by Jonet Sri Kuncoro as a choreographer who pays special attention to children with disabilities and puts his creativity into dance works. According to Robert E. Franken creativity is to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others (Franken, 1993). Robert E. Franken's opinion is in line with what Jonet does in communicating and collaborating with others. The director and choreographer brought together new ideas from each individual in order to realize the creation of



the *Peluk Jiwa* dance. In expressing ideas, choreographers consider aspects of entertaining themselves and others.

The process of creating the *Peluk Jiwa* dance went through several stages and considerations which were adjusted to the abilities of dancers with hearing impairments. The deaf cannot hear sounds, communicate using sign language, so they must be patient with the characteristics of deaf children. The accompanying teacher says that children with hearing impairments are selfish, so the accompanying teacher must be firm in dealing with their attitude (Poernami Sari Dewi, interview, 9 September 2021). Because the ability of deaf dancers is limited, Jonet chose simple movement vocals according to the abilities of children with disabilities.

The reforms carried out by Jonet are the same as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's theory that "Creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one.... What counts is whether the novelty he or she produces is accepted for inclusion in the domain" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Jonet uses a new motion vocal for choreography for children with hearing impairments. Jonet's previous works tended to have no storyline and freed deaf children to move more freely, but this *Peluk Jiwa* dance work uses a storyline. Jonet's creativity in making movements is very varied. When practicing with children with disabilities, Jonet often changes the movements to be more varied.

1). Elements of Dance Motion

In the choreography process there are elements of the form of motion, namely space, line, tempo, pressure and so on. These elements are the parts that are used as objects to work on. In the form of motion, the size of a shape can be seen, which is called volume. Volume is the range of motion that can be seen. The process of creating choreography cannot be separated from body movements. Jonet as a choreographer in finding movement for children with disabilities goes through several stages. In the early stages, Jonet asked deaf children to demonstrate games that children usually do. At school such as hompimpa games, *petak umpet* (hide and

Vol. 4 No. 1 April 2023 DOI: 10.33153/artistic.v4i1.5069

seek), and other children's games.

Departing from a deaf child imitating something, Jonet got the idea in the first scene. Children who are deaf have fun playing with their friends by dividing the numbers into two groups on the right and on the left. Normal children are the same way, Jonet asks normal children to demonstrate slow movements with vocals for the gagah (dashing) movements of the Surakarta tradition. In the second stage, Jonet arranged the movements that he had obtained from the search for the movements of deaf children and normal children. Jonet arranges the movements based on the purpose of the message he wants to convey to the audience by considering creativity, aesthetics and innovation. The form of movement for deaf children is adjusted to the abilities of deaf disabled dancers.



Figure 1. The motion of *jengkeng* in the *Peluk Jiwa* dance (Photo: Smirna Wardanny, 2021)

In the third stage, Jonet unites all the movements into a series of dances with connecting movements such as *jangkeng* movements, running, free movements, self-defense motives and sign language movements. The fourth stage is the stage of motion which can live with expression. The deaf children dances with a cheerful



expression, depicting the joyful atmosphere of the deaf children. Normal child with sad expressions can describe a different atmosphere from deaf children. The volume of movement carried out by boys is wide and large, while the range of motion for girls is narrower.



Figure 2. The volume of movement in the *Peluk Jiwa* dance (Photo: Smirna Wardanny, 2021)

Movement with different volumes can differentiate the characters and roles of each. Boys use the dashing movements of the Surakarta tradition with the upper level and girls use the same movements, but the volume is narrower by kneeling at the lower level. Normal child is at the forefront to give examples of deaf children's movements.

2). Theme Selection

Themes according to The Liang Gie, in general, themes are the main ideas at issue in works of art (Gie, 1976). The main idea of a work of art can be understood or recognized through the selection of subject matter and the title of the artwork. The subject matter can relate to aesthetic values or life values. Themes are divided into two, namely literal and nonliteral themes. Non-literal themes are themes that do not have a story in the artwork, while literal themes are themes that have a story in the

Vol. 4 No. 1 April 2023 DOI: 10.33153/artistic.v4i1.5069

artwork.

The value of life from the dance work *Peluk Jiwa* that creator want to convey to the audience is the harmony of normal children and children with disabilities being able to live and be happy side by side in life. Peluk Jiwa is included in the literal group that has a story. Normal children feel that their lives are unhappy, while deaf children are very happy living their lives even though they have obstacles (disable). A normal child wants to feel happy, so he decides to be friends with a deaf child. The message the choreographer wants to convey to the audience is social equality between normal children and children with disabilities. Then compiled a synopsis, as follows.

The *Peluk Jiwa* dance tells the story of social equality between normal children and humans who have physical disabilities (deaf and disabled). This normal child feels that his life is lonely and sad. He feels that there is no happiness in his life, but the deaf disabled child feels happy with the life he is living. Many friends who are close to him make him feel happy. Once upon a time this normal child saw a child with a hearing impairment playing with his friends. Looks very happy, joking around with friends. Normal child try to approach them and start joining, but there are still doubts in him joining children with hearing impairments. Deaf children with disabilities persuaded normal child to join them. Normal child finally made up his minds to join in and joke around, suddenly there was a disable one trying to give advice and encouragement to all children to live side by side in peace. Finally, all the children coexist peacefully.

3). Technique

Techniques are ways to carry out dance movements precisely so as to achieve the desired shape and style. The technical aspect concerns proper body posture. Precise in the sense of measurements that must be felt as something appropriate within a certain dance framework. The dancers' techniques in motion in the *Peluk Jiwa* dance are adapted to their abilities, for dancers with hearing impairment



children. However, for normal child dancers, technique is still considered. The dancers in the *Peluk Jiwa* dance are deaf and normal children. Deaf children have no dancing base. Jonet as the choreographer said "I don't want to make these deaf children become dancers, they just move is enough for them to show their courage" (Jonet Sri Kuncoro, interview, 7 September 2021).

Jonet does not demand that deaf children perform movements in a good shape in accordance with the aesthetic aspects of movement. For example, in the second round, a deaf child uses self-defense motion. This self-defense movement is classified as very simple, such as parrying, hitting, and punching. The technique that Jonet teaches to deaf children is to imitate the movements of people in front of them. Children with disabilities are accompanied by an accompanying teacher, Poernami Sari Dewi, as a translator to communicate between Jonet and children with disabilities. Jonet was also accompanied by a student from the Surakarta Indonesian Institute of the Arts, namely Divani Fitria Nuraini, who, when shooting the video at the theatre hall (Teater Besar) ISI Surakarta, Poernami Sari Dewi and Divani Fitria Nuraini demonstrated the movements in front of the stage for the song Love so that there are no wrong moves and in accordance with the rhythm of the music.



Figure 3. Jonet Sri Kuncoro practicing with children with disabilities (Photo: Smirna Wardanny, 2021)

Normal children have certain dance techniques, because normal children can hear music. The movements used by normal children are the basic movements of gagah (dashing) dance Surakarta style tradition, such as the tanjak kambeng. The technique for getting the tanjak kambeng motion, the arms are bent 90 degrees and the wrists are bent inward, the legs are opened wide, the left toes are bent outwards 45 degrees and the right toes lunges to the right with a combination of ogekan. The ogekan is the motion of the stomach being pushed to the right and to the left.

4). Exploration

Exploration is the stage of composing a dance, looking for new forms of movement through perception, starting with knowing oneself, then observing others. Jonet can understand the characteristics of deaf children by observing deaf children and looking for ways to approach deaf children. The choreographer and the dancers will be able to influence each other in the process of creating (c). Jonet uses a play approach, in which the deaf child feels comfortable and enjoys practicing with the choreographer. While playing with the deaf children, Jonet observed the deaf children and assessed the abilities of the deaf children. Jonet can decide or determine what kind of movements a deaf child can do. In the second round, normal child dance in the middle of the right side groups of the deaf children. The motion used is not using the hand to close the eyes, only the hand to be raised high above, but as the practice progresses, Jonet gets an idea.

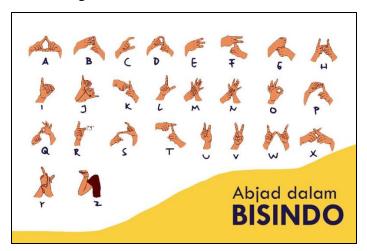


Figure 4. Sign language of the Basindo alphabet in the *Peluk Jiwa* dance (Photo: Smirna Wardanny, 2021)



Jonet uses the gesture of closing his eyes which symbolizes an invitation from people to ignore those around him. Jonet provides free movement for deaf children, so that they can create freely, because deaf children who have hearing impairments can do free movement. The gestures performed by the deaf children correspond to the song *Peluk Jiwa* itself and are guided by the normal children in front of them. The idea of using sign language gestures involved teachers of Special School "Hamong Putro" Sukoharjo in the process of making this work. Jonet performs motion exploration for normal children. The early stages of normal children do not use lanterns, but in the process to symbolize a sad atmosphere using the properties of lanterns.



Figure 5. The sign language "hugs your soul" in the *Peluk Jiwa* dance (Photo: Smirna Wardanny, 2021)

Normal children become guides for moving the moves to the next moves, with more front and center positions, for the same dance moves and sign language moves in the third act to match the rhythm of the *Peluk Jiwa* song. Jonet asked normal children to move in accordance with the atmosphere of the song *Peluk Jiwa*. Normal children were also given freedom to explore the movements.

5). Organization

Organization is the stage of arranging dance according to a predetermined dance theme. The theme of the Peluk Jiwa dance raises social issues between

normal children and children with hearing impairments. The first round of the *Peluk Jiwa* dance presented a normal child with a sad mood. It wasn't long before he saw children with deaf disabilities playing with a happy mood. Normal children are reluctant to join with children with disabilities. In the second round, normal children began to dare to make their choice to join with children with deaf disabilities. Normal children are doubtful so children with disabilities convince normal children to fight their doubts. In the third round, normal children start to dare to play with children with disabilities and feel happy. The fourth round, is the final round with the climax of the story like this where there is a disabled person giving motivation or advice to deaf children and normal children to coexist peacefully. The emphasis in the Peluk Jiwa dance is on the song *Peluk Jiwa* sung by the disabled Augustine Ari Haryanto.



Figure 6. The compactness of kneeling movements in the *Peluk Jiwa* dance (Photo: Smirna Wardanny, 2021)

6). Unity

Unity is part of the choreographic process. The process carried out by a choreographer in uniting dance movements and dance music which are elements of dance into one unit. Aspects of motion, space, tempo, dynamics, music all of which become one. This process must have foresight (carefulness in work), especially in the part of the continuous motion towards the next motion. Jonet unites the motive aspects of self-defense movements, free motion, and sign language movements into one unified movement. The space or floor pattern is divided into two groups on the



right and left sides. The tempo is 4/4 and the music is always updated.



Figure 7. Movement of the free sign language alphabet in the *Peluk Jiwa* dance (Photo: Smirna Wardanny, 2021)

In his initial creations, he only used the piano and saxophone, but in this *Peluk Jiwa* dance, a musical renewal was carried out by combining diatonic and pentatonic musical instruments. The continuous motion used in this work is the last movement made by a normal child to indicate the next movement for a children with deaf disabilities. In the process, the *Peluk Jiwa* dance follows the music recording given by Wasi Bantolo.

7). Performance

The presentation stage is divided into two, from physical and non-physical. Jonet during the process of creating and practicing with normal children and children with deaf disabilities, he used a playing approach that had an impact on both the physical and non-physical dancers. Jonet gave motivation to deaf children to be more confident and not afraid to move. Deaf children and normal children really enjoyed their appearance on stage.

The message that Jonet wants to convey to the audience is that in the *Peluk Jiwa* dance there are two scenes depicted. First, from children with disabilities who really enjoy their lives, are enthusiastic, friendly with new people, but children with disabilities have a disadvantage, namely being unable to hear is manifested in the natural movements of the body that come out of children with disabilities. These

natural movements are in the form of playing and talking with friends, simple broken self-defense movements, and sign language movements. The second atmosphere described by normal children is feeling empty in their life, unenthusiastic, ungrateful, hesitant in starting relationships with new people. This is manifested in normal children's movements which are in accordance with the atmosphere of the song, using more traditional vocals such as *tanjak kambeng*, *capengan*, and *ulap-ulap*.



Figure 8. The *Peluk Jiwa* dance performance (Photo: Smirna Wardanny, 2021)

5. Conclusion

The creation of the dance *Peluk Jiwa* is inseparable from Jonet's experience as a choreographer in creating several dance works so far. Artistic experience in producing dance works for children with disabilities totaling 5 dance works and for normal children totaling 21 dance works. Wasi Bantolo's artistic experience has resulted in 5 dance works for normal children and 1 dance work involving children with hearing impairments.

Based on the case studies that have been described, the process of creating the *Peluk Jiwa* dance with children with hearing impairments considers elements of dance movement, themes, techniques, exploration, organization, unity, and presentation. The process of creating the *Peluk Jiwa* dance with hearing impairment requires a special approach and treatment according to the abilities and needs of these children. The content of the *Peluk Jiwa* dance work is to talk about the social equality of children with hearing impairments and normal children.



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