



Masak, Macak, Manak Nowadays through Challenge-Based Research on Nol Dance Creation

Yulela Nur Imama^{a,1,*} Michiyo Yoneno Reyes^{b,2}

^a Pascasarjana Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta, Indonesia

^b Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia (IASA), University of Tokyo, Japan

¹ yulelanurimama@yahoo.com * ² michiyo@yahoo.com

* Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

Patriarchy in Javanese culture gives birth to gender stratification between women and men. This attitude has an impact on the work delegated to women. This stigma requires women to fulfil cultural values that include 3M, namely *masak*, *macak*, *manak*. This study aims to find out the existence and relevance of the values of *masak*, *macak*, and *manak*, in the form of dance works, and to find out how these values must be maintained. The method used is the method of creation based on the concept of art-based research. This research on the creation of dance works is based on challenges, namely through the process of creating challenges. The study was conducted by challenging ten participants to communicate and do several things intensely, both personally and communally, for seven days online through the "7 days cooking" challenge. The results of this study are in the form of dance performances containing messages of *masak*, *macak*, and *manak* which are displayed live streaming on the Youtube social media channel.

KEYWORDS

Masak, macak, manak;
Existence of cultural values;
Challenge-based research

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1. Introduction

The value of *Masak, macak, manak* is a cultural value that is identified in Javanese women (Riany, Meredith, and Cuskelly 2017; Fitrianggraeni 2019). This value refers to a patriarchal culture that is passed down from generation to generation (Goa, Rachmawati, and Ungsianik 2021; Little and Winch 2017). *Macak* means a woman must make up, dress up and dress well to look beautiful. This is done in order to serve the husband. *Manak* is meant as conceiving, giving birth, breastfeeding, to the stage of educating and caring for children. Meanwhile, *masak* means taking care of kitchen matters. *Masak* in this case not only provides food and drinks, but also manages the monthly budget properly. This is a form of devotion for a Javanese woman to her husband. A Javanese woman must be good at *masak, macak, manak* (Mawaddah, Suyitno, and Suhita 2021; Retnaningsih 2013). If these three things fail to be carried out, he is considered of no value both in the family and in society and becomes a family disgrace (Widayati et al. 2018). Over time the value of *masak, macak, manak* experiences a shift in meaning. Emancipation and globalization have steadily shifted the status of married women in Java, transforming them into *garwo – sigaraning nyowo* (half of the husband's life), who play an equal and essential part in realizing the concept of *dadi wong* in society (Muhmad Pirus and Nurahmawati 2020). From a traditional idiom agreed upon by the Javanese people, it becomes a wind that blows in the subjectivity of each community's instincts. Like *foklor* but still exist, it is applied non-verbally and conspicuously. The existence of these values is very interesting because of the diversity of appreciation, interpretation and application in society, especially Javanese women today.

Along with the development of the era and the level of intellectuality in which there has been a social change in society, it has given rise to several new patterns of thinking about cultural values (Rioufol 2004). Many research results show that patriarchal ideology is increasingly giving space for the existence of women as an important subject (Greene and Kahn 2020; Bannerji 2020). This is the momentum that becomes the entry point for the idea of creating works. The creation of Nol dance works through strategies and creative processes aims to find the existence and relevance of the values of *masak, macak*, and *manak* today, how these values should be maintained or not and how to see, respond to, and treat these values if they are associated with an achievement of quality of life today. This process is useful for reflecting on cultural values, especially *masak, macak, and manak* which

are not intensely aware of and building this awareness in each person for the present and the future with rich and appropriate interpretations. As a way to achieve the expected goals, Nol dance uses a strategy of creating works that are discovered and applied by the authors, namely “challenge based research” (Chen and Eisenberg 2020). Through this strategy, the authors challenged ten participants to undertake several challenges related to the research achievements of Nol dance creation.

2. Method

Nol dance uses the terminology of creation based on the concept of art based research (Bakirova et al. 2021). Where the author conducts art research using perspective and involves developing sensitivity in art all the time in an effort to generate and present data. This is supported by conducting research on the public space on the cultural values of *masak*, *macak*, *manak*. Terminology of art based research, art work is made through a process that reflects the process of investigation in other fields; ends in a product affixing the process through which the information is generated, analyzed, and interpreted (McNiff 2011). To support the art-based research, the author takes several steps as a strategy for his creation. The first step, the authors conduct research ethically with an emphasis on the cultural philosophy of *masak*, *macak*, *manak* in Javanese society until its development and a contextual view of these values. The next stage is emic research by directly plunging into the public space to conduct a research which gives birth to a neutral interpretation regarding the cultural values of *masak*, *macak*, *manak*. The next stage, the writer takes an approach to the culture space that will be specifically processed, the approach taken is an approach to the social environment, the cultural environment, and the spatial environment. Next, the final exploration and formation is carried out. Nol dance is born as an embryo that continues to develop through ongoing experimental work connecting the public as its neutral object. This work Nol dance has been carried out through five stages of work until now.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Visualization of *Masak*, *Macak*, *Manak* Value in Nol Dance

Nol dance adopts the cultural values of *masak*, *macak*, *manak* which have a wealth of value interpretations. Nol is associated with a number that refers to a void or the beginning of before the "being". Nol also refers to a circular, round, round shape which the worker correlates with the symbol of womanhood. Nol is interpreted by a woman who becomes the media to transfer the new human life from nothing to being. Nol is also synonymous with the mortar/ *cobek*/ *ulegan* shape used as a form of interpretation in this work. In the shape of the round mortar, the processing of spices, the process of working, the process of mixing, adding and subtracting is born, giving birth to a new taste. The object of the mortar is closely associated with the value of *masak*, *macak*, *manak* carried in the work of Nol. This is because the *masak* value contained in the mortar is an object used to process the spices to be cooked or an object used to process food making. Furthermore, the correlation of the value of *macak* is adopted from the term taken from the author's father perspective, namely that a woman will radiate an aura of beauty when using a mortar. Finally, it is associated with the value of the *manak* that gave birth. Primamona explained that Alu and lesung are symbolized like *lingga* (male sex) and *yoni* (female sex) who work together to carry out their duties in processing to produce something new, the results of refined spices are likened to children or the new work they produce. The meeting of the two (*linga* and *yoni*) is a very clear picture of the sexual relationship between men and women, which is interpreted as a symbol of fertility (Gottowik 2019). After going through a long work journey, the values conveyed in Nol works have become so rich, coupled with the limitations of pandemic conditions and situations, which have created gaps and new strategies and resulted in flexible and rich values (Coyne et al. 2021). The value of *masak*, *macak*, *manak* is not only related to gender and its existence today as cultural values only. This value is considered to be a vital value if it is associated with achieving the quality of life during a pandemic. Just like *masak* is not only associated with the activity of women to process food to be served in their family, but an activity that is needed by every human being to survive without depending on other humans. *Macak* is associated with a product that is created by yourself for yourself in any form, not just physical but can include brain, beauty, behavior. Furthermore, *manak* is related to how we can make achievements or give birth to a value for ourselves in this limited time. There are still many interpretations of the value of *masak*, *macak*, *manak* which are considered to be stereotyping for certain people, which are very relevant to the

present and can be applied in any form and in any intensity. So, the value of *masak*, *macak*, *manak* is not just for women in Javanese society, but for all people who are aware of and need it.

3.2. Research as an Art Process

Nol's dance work goes through a long journey with research both epic and emic. The research involved several personalities with different backgrounds in several public spaces such as traditional markets, cafes, parks, car free days. In Figure 1 is the research process of Mrs. Sutarni at Pasar Gede Surakarta.



Fig. 1. The research process of Mrs. Sutarni in Pasar Gede Surakarta (Source: Ardho Kalis. 2020)

The form of this research is to conduct interviews related to the cultural values of *masak*, *macak*, *manak* according to the perspective of each person. During the interview, the process of *nguleg* or mashing the spices according to each personal version was also carried out and told about it. First, the authors conducted interviews in Pasar Gede by obtaining several samples and backgrounds. Both interviews were conducted at Gendon Humardani Park at ISI Surakarta, and the last research interview was conducted at Slamet Riyadi Car Free Day (CFD) Surakarta. Interviews conducted at Car Free Day (CFD) Slamet Riyadi Surakarta, shown in Figure 2.



Fig. 2. The research process of Riska at Slamet Riyadi CFD Surakarta (Source: Ardho Kalis. 2020)

The results of this research, the authors found some data on the response of the *nguleg* to the body with different backgrounds. There is a boy who gets cultural values from a grandmother and produces very subtle spices, there is also a career woman who has never been subject to cultural values and produces harsh spices.

3.3. Work in Progress Based on Experimental Performances

Nol dance works is a work that grows. Therefore, this work is a work that has gone through several work processes, from research to work in progress. From the research that had been done previously on Nol works, several work in progress was carried out as well as a research medium for further works. The work in progress continuously finds new discoveries on the cultural values that develop in society. The first work in progress was carried out in Rumah Barata Art Space. Appreciators witnessed firsthand how the research process was carried out by interviewing resource persons and relating them

to the issue of *manak* from the perspective of Javanese women today. In Figure 3, is the process of work being compiled by Yulela Nur Imama.



Fig. 3. Work in Progress by Yulela Nur Imama (Source: Yusak Risal. 2019)

Work in progress was then performed at the Gendon Humardani park of ISI Surakarta, through a *ulegan* response to the body by presenting the results of research through video as an appreciative interpretation medium, as can be seen in Figure 4.



Fig. 4. Yulela's Work in Progress (Source: Yusak Risal. 2019)

The next work in progress was carried out at Feodal Art Space. In this work in progress, it emphasizes the experimental social environment of the show in spontaneous *nguleg* activities with the audience. This *nguleg* activity can be seen in Figure 5.



Fig. 5. Work in Progress by Yulela (Source: Mega Yunita. 2019)

3.4. Challenge based Research

As a further form of research in Karya Nol as well as to create an alternative in the creation strategy during a pandemic period, a new strategy was created which was possible to be implemented indirectly. The strategy is challenge based research, which is challenge-based research that enables a creation study of participants to interact and perform the artistic process indirectly. The strategy is carried out online or utilizing social media channels as a medium for the art creation process. This strategy was created by creating a platform that invites participants who are interested in the issue of

the existence of cultural values of *masak*, *macak*, *manak*, to then carry out a challenge and online discussion together. In Figure 6 is a model of challenges and online discussions provided in the form of a platform whose contents are respondents' responses to the 7 Day Cooking Challenge.

The image shows a Google Docs form titled "NOL 'MASAK' PERLU?". The form is in Indonesian and contains the following text:

HALO SAYA YULELA, SELAMAT DATANG DI LAMAN SAYA TERIMAKASIH TELAH MENYAKSIKAN VIDEO SAYA DAN BERATENSI UNTUK MEMBUKA LINK INI. SAYA SEDANG MEMBUAT SEBUAH CHALLENGE BAGI ANDA YANG BERMINAT MEREKAM FLUKTUASI 7 HARI "MASAK PERLU?" UNTUK BERSAMA-SAMA BERDISKUSI MENGENAI NILAI KUALITAS HIDUP DAN BEBERAPA HAL LAIN, MEREKAM SERTA MENYADARI LINGKUNGAN SEKITAR DALAM KONDISI SEKARANG INI, BILA KALIAN BERKENAN SILAHKAN MENGISI FORM INI:

* Wajib

NAMA *

Jawaban Anda

Minta akses pengeditan

Tanggapan tentang introduction video (masih pentingkah/ relate kah nilai masak, macak, manak bagi anda? Jelaskan!)*

Jawaban Anda

Apakah anda sanggup dan berkenan mengikuti MASAK PERLU? CHALLENGE ini selama 7 hari dengan beberapa tantangan *

☐ Ya

☐ Tidak

Bila IYA, rt

Minta akses pengeditan

Fig. 6. Platform for filling out respondents' responses to 7 Cooking Days Challenge

The stages in the research process are divided into several stages; First, make an introduction video containing an issue raised by the author in his challenge based research. In the video, the author invites all groups regardless of gender, background, and age to join together to take part in the challenge called "challenge 7 days Masak Perlu?". The challenge refers to a question of reflection about whether we still need the value of *masak*, *macak*, *manak*, in this time, as well as having an interpretation whether the ability to *masak* or process a food is still needed today. The video introduction directs anyone who wants to respond and provide feedback to fill in the form provided in the author's Instagram bio. Post in the Introduction videos on Instagram and Youtube, can be see on Figure 7.

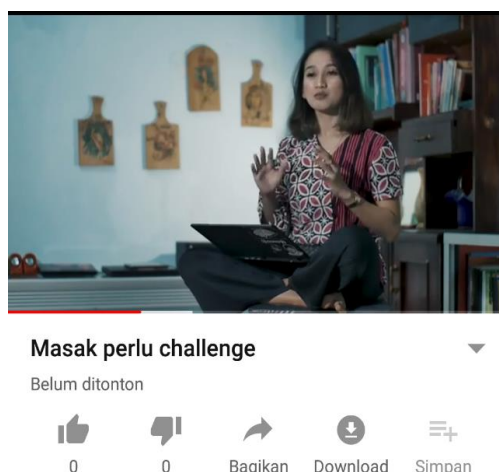


Fig. 7. Post in the Introduction videos on Instagram and Youtube

The second stage in this research process is, after making introduction videos that are posted on Instagram and YouTube and shared online, the authors select respondents who want and are interested in the issues raised and are willing to take part in the 7 day challenge Masak Perlu? After selecting based on answers and several considerations, the employee contacted the potential participants one by one by sharing technical instructions and a two-way agreement made by the working team. As for the challenge-based research process in the "7 Days Masak Perlu" challenge. these include;

- Day 1 (11th June 2020) – Challenge of *Siapa Aku?* On this first day, participants started with an introduction of themselves, the introduction included name, age, occupation, regional origin, daily activities, telling about how they view the cultural values of *masak, macak, manak* today, and several things discussed. both ways related to identity and background. On the first day of this challenge, the authors tried to dig up personal backgrounds related to their respective cultural values which were linked to a personal view of themselves. The author asks participants to write five sentences that represent a description of themselves related to cultural values. Then the writing is placed in the place that participants see and read most often (on the desk, on the bed, etc.). The challenge on the first day emphasized more on each person as a reflection of his own perception of himself and questioned whether those assumptions were really a description of him. After doing the challenge on the first day, the authors found a very rich interpretation of the cultural values of *masak, macak, manak*. Many views emerged from each participant regarding a cultural value that is self-respecting (Figure 8).



Fig. 8. VC Challenge Day 1, Cook?

- Day 2 (12 June 2020) – *Mari Ber cerita*; On the second day of this challenge, video calls were held collectively, namely bringing together ten participants in a discussion forum room regarding self-opinion and efforts to achieve quality of life associated with the values of *masak, macak, manak*. On this second day the participants read out their respective descriptions of "siapa aku" that had been written in the previous challenge. Lots of new things to be obtained and shared in the forum on the second day. Especially regarding a cultural value perspective of *masak, macak, manak* which is associated with efforts to achieve quality of life. Especially in this time of limitation, with their respective worries, participants can provide fresh air for others regarding alternatives in survival.

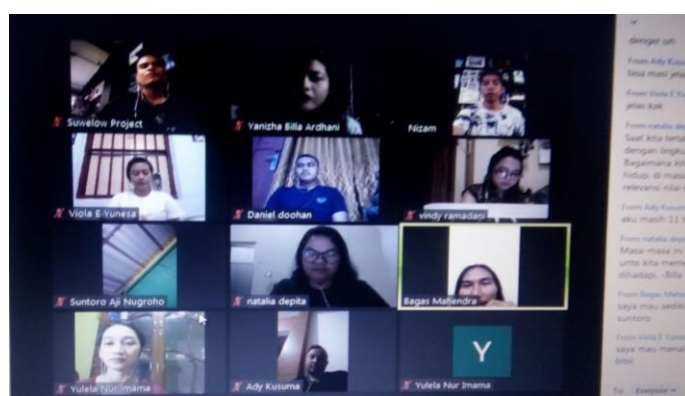


Fig. 9. VC Challenge Day 2

- Day 3 (13th June 2020) – *Melihat Sekitar*; The challenge on the third day was to record the environment around each participant that they found interesting for three minutes. On the 3rd day we discussed our awareness of the values we already have towards the environment at this time (pandemic). On this third day of challenge, it gave birth to a new reflection about the slightest concern of the personal to the surrounding environment that may not have been thought of at all. Because, with this pandemic, each person is busy with confession (how to

survive, how to live, how to stay safe) and so on. In this challenge, the authors tried to invite participants to tap and bring up just a little of what was happening around us. Because, paying attention to an object for three minutes will make participants think there is another life that is happening in harmony in their present life.

- Day 4 (14 June 2020) – *Masak Iya?* On the 4th day, the authors challenged the participants to make a spice that is mashed with a mortar / *ulegan* (it is up to the spices or the composition) which according to the participants is the best composition and composition (for example, using bay leaves and ginger in cooking. soup to produce a certain quality). Then the participants told when they made a video call about the technique of making spices, the dose of spices, the taste to be obtained, and the name of the spice as an interesting new discovery in the participant's life. This challenge on the fourth day gave birth to a value of appreciation for any small process in any form. By analogizing the process of processing spices that goes into a private space, people usually don't see the processing process but the result (except for the chef), with this online *nguleg* challenge, participants are appreciated for showing each process in any form. See Figure 10.

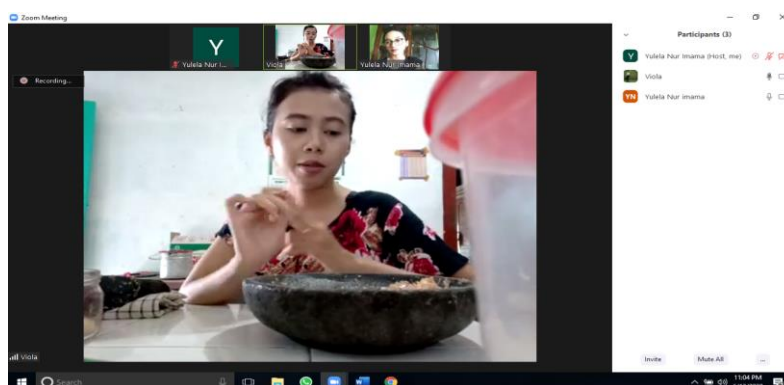


Fig. 10. VC Challenge Day 4, Masak Iya?

- Day 5 (15th June 2020) – *Macak*; On the 5th day, the participants were given the task to prepare the five most favorite clothes according to their respective versions. Then, when VC, participants introduced one by one their clothes the reason they liked these clothes see Figure 11. Then the participants were asked to mix the five clothes into three styles according to their version. Of the clothes worn, participants are required to state the reasons why they wear this style, then what they feel when wearing it, where the clothes are usually used. Then the latter questioned again what is the value of *macak* for each person.

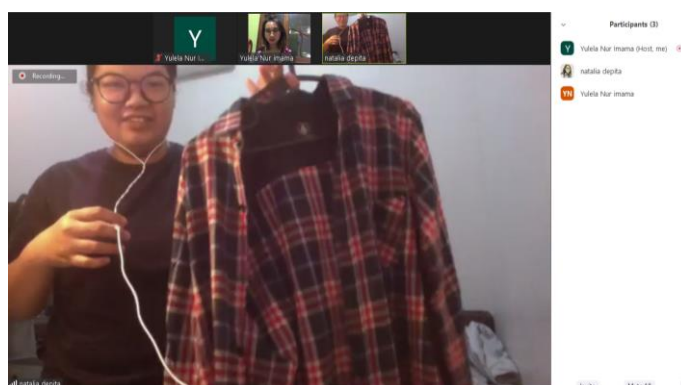


Fig. 11. VC challenge day 5, Macak

After the challenge takes place there is a value that can be drawn that the value from the outside is meaningless until the self respects his own judgment in any form. The interpretation of the value of *macak* becomes very rich and does not lead to a literal meaning when faced with various persons with different backgrounds. Some of the personalities consider the meaning of

macak as a stigma in oneself, giving an identity in any form, and a journey to improve according to their respective versions.

- Day 6 (16 June 2020) – *Cobek Adalah*; In this sixth challenge, see Figure 12, the author invites the participants to communicate through *ulegan* media. By answering every question the author gave through clapping, rubbing, and body gestures to each participant, which represented the expression of their hearts. These questions include; (1) what is the *manak* value for you?; (2) what *manak* value applications have you lived through so far?; (3) have you always wondered how a long process in life ends?; (4) with whom do you want to live in the moment?; (5) As a human being, is sexual activity at this time a natural activity for you?; (6) If the meaning of *manak* is as small as containing and giving birth, which makes you think that the value of *manak* is an important value besides continuing the generation yourself?; (7) What are you going to do and want to do in the next five years or so regarding the value of *manak*?; (8) What makes you feel the most meaningful as a human being?; (9) Tell me something that you always keep tidy, and you don't want to tell anyone, but today you want to tell me! The sixth day of the challenge relates to something that is conveyed using a feeling that will also be accepted by taste. On the sixth day, the authors tried to get all the participants to be honest about what they felt, especially regarding the value of *manak* which is literally difficult to explain to just anyone.

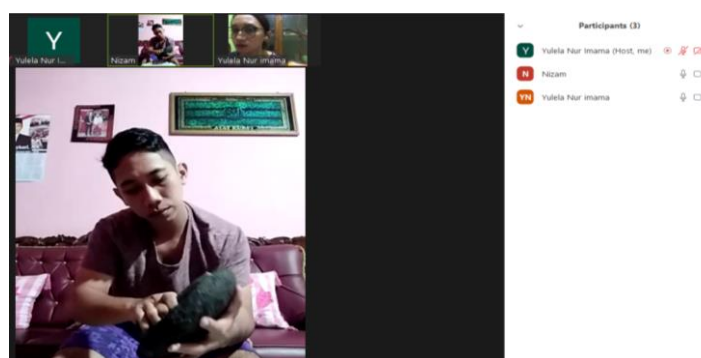


Fig. 12. VC challenge day 6, *Cobek adalah*

- Day 7 (17th June 2020) – *Masak Perlu?*; see on Figure 13. On the seventh day of the challenge, each participant collected a video recording of efforts to achieve the quality of life version of each participant during the pandemic. Then we made a video call collectively and played each other's videos through the share screen video call zoom. After that on the seventh day we appreciated each other about the achievements of each participant in any form. In this challenge, an explanation is given about the achievements made in the 7 day *Masak Perlu* challenge. In this challenge, it focuses on cultural values that affect each person that is learned through several discussions and the ways a person carries out activities, especially in limited times in this pandemic era.



Fig. 13. Video call for the 7th day of the *Masak Perlu* challenge

The last day of 7 days *Masak Perlu* challenge generating a perception about the smallest achievement is an achievement that must be appreciated, which must be conveyed through positive energy, and the perception of value is only a value. The most important thing is how to interpret a

value. In human age it is very limited to do whatever this is, the only thing that can be counted on is oneself with the values in it. *Masak, macak, manak* are not as small as the definition, but more than that, *masak, macak, manak* is an effort to achieve a very meaningful quality of life. Not only for women, especially Javanese women. *Masak, macak, manak* is a value for living humans who are able and willing to do and realize it.

4. Conclusion

The creation of Noli's dance works is a strategy and creative process that has succeeded in finding its relevance in the midst of society affected by the pandemic. The current values of *masak, macak, and manak* can be related to the achievement of the current quality of life. This work is useful for reflecting on the values of patriarchal culture, as well as providing benefits for others in building self-awareness, that everyone has their own role without negating the others.

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