

DESIGN, TECHNOLOGY AND CONTEMPORARY DANCE CASE STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE WORKS TALE TALE SCENOGRAPHY DESIGNER'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This research raises a case study of the contemporary dance work Tale Tale by choreographer Sherli Novalinda, a contemporary work rooted in body archives and tales which is an oral tradition of the ancestors of the Kerinci community. This work combines traditional elements executed with a contemporary style to create a dialogue between dance art, design, and technology. The main focus of the research is to reconstruct the scenography from the perspective of a designer who plays a role in designing a dynamic stage space that not only supports the movements of the dancers but also reinforces the messages and emotions that the choreographer wants to convey. Using a qualitative approach and case studies, this study explores the creative process behind scenography design and the application of technology in Tale Tale's contemporary dance works. Technologies such as animation and visual projection are used as iterative elements that respond to dance movements in real-time, creating an immersive visual experience for the audience. The results of this study show that the collaboration between design, technology, and contemporary dance not only enriches the expression of movement, but also enriches the living space, where dancers and audiences are emotionally and visually involved, and can create a more interactive, deep, and meaningful art experience. This researcher emphasized that the synergy between design, technology, and contemporary dance can enrich the aesthetic dimension of performing arts. This study is expected to be a reference for the development of innovative scenography designs, as well as encourage further exploration in cross-disciplinary collaboration in the field of performing arts.

KEYWORDS

Design, Technology,
Contemporary Dance
Tale Kerinci

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Introduction

Performing Arts is a type of artwork that focuses on the visual or spectacle aspect that is presented to the audience. This art is closely related to a variety of complex issues, especially related to how the performing arts can develop, survive, and remain relevant in the future, as an art form and as part of a collective art community [1]. Contemporary dance is an element of artistic exploration that integrates various

elements through tradition and technology[2]. One of the works that reflect this blend is Take Tale, by Sherli Novalinda, sherli Again meets Tale on her journey to investigate the traces of her body. The tale, which is an oral tradition of the people of Kerinci, has become an inseparable part of their lives[2]. Since childhood, I have been familiar with rhymes that contain fairy tales and prayers that are chanted in various important moments in the life of the Kerinci people, such as at the departure ceremony of the Hajj community, medical rituals, working in rice fields and fields, to taking care of children. The rhythm and verse of the tale flowed inside him, and he continued to live on until now[3].

Seeing the body as a dynamic archive, Sherli seeks to re-narrate the oral tradition of the tale that forms his identity. His body becomes a medium to understand and describe his culture, kerinci not only as a geographical location but also as a cultural space that lives and influences the humans who live in it [4].

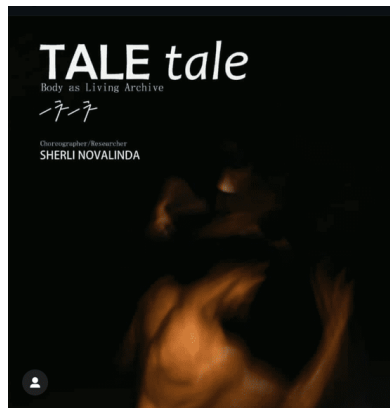


Figure 1.

[Source: Sherlilab Documentation (2020), Padangpanjang, West Sumatra, the first show held at Blackbox Tv Film ISI Padangpanjang]



Figure 2.

[Source: Indonesian Dance Festival Documentation (2022), Second performance At the 30th IDF event at the small theater of Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta]



Figure 3.

[Source: West Sumatera Performing Arts Market Documentation (2022),
Ladang Nan Jombang, West Sumatra]

"Tale Tale" is the third work in the trilogy created by Sherli, which is a follow-up to the previous works, *Meniti Jajak Badan* (2016) and *Memoirs* (2017). Both works also explore the body as an archive and its spectrum of identity. Research for Tale Tale's work began in 2020, this work has been staged three times until now, the first at ISI Padang Panjang with a limited audience (2020), then at the 30th Indonesian Dance Festival at the Taman Ismail Marzuki Small Theater (2022), and finally at Ladang Nan Jombang (2022). Tale describes how traditional rhymes and poems remain alive as archives within their successors.

Tale is an oral tradition of the ancestors of the Kerinci people since ancient times, which is chanted with a distinctive melody [5]. The tale carries out storytelling activities, *petale* is a call for the person who sings the tale. Tales were initially chanted personally for personal interests, such as when putting children to sleep, then over time *tale* were also used on occasions involving many people. The emotional satisfaction and aesthetic value that the audience feels through interaction in a performance is often a factor that affects the sustainability of the production of the show [6] Design in Schenogarafi is very important in creating a space that is not only a background for the appearance but also a lively and interactive element in the context of this design. The application of technology, such as animation and visual projection, gives a new dimension to this contemporary dance work. Technology plays a role in creating a dynamic space that interacts directly with dance movements and then creates an era of relationship between visual and performing arts. This research aims to explore the creative process behind the design process of Tale Tale scenography design from the designer's perspective and how the role of technology in strengthening the emotional narrative in this work.

Method

This research and design are carried out using a qualitative approach, utilizing case studies that focus on case studies of Tale Tale's contemporary works. This approach was chosen to delve deeper into the creative process and design aspects that make up the show. The data collection process is carried out through various techniques, including direct observation of the performance to understand the elements of dance, scenography, and technology used in this work. In addition, an in-depth interview was conducted with choreographer Sherli Novalinda to gain a deeper insight into the creative process and design decisions taken in this multi-disciplinary collaboration on this work. Interviews also involve petale or tale actors as the main source of inspiration in the process of transferring oral literary media into movement and visuals, as well as other parties who contribute to the production process. This combination of observation and interview techniques forms a broader understanding of cross-disciplinary collaborations that shape this work as a contemporary work rooted in tradition.

This approach not only focuses on the descriptive data collection process, but also analyzes the relationships between the various elements that support the work, such as the relationship between dance movements, scenography, and techniques used to create an immersive visual experience for the audience [7]. Through this research process, it also identifies how the oral tradition of the tale is translated into contemporary mediums through creative and innovative approaches.

Discussion

The design in Tale Tale's scenography is designed to create a space that can change according to the needs of the dance narrative. Visual elements such as digital projection and animation become an integral part of the design, which not only supports motion but also creates an emotional atmosphere, by combining oral narrative tales with scenography exploration with the use of modern technology. As an artwork inspired by the oral traditions of the Kerinci people, this work not only presents a deep cultural narrative but also explores how traditional heritage can be adapted and translated into modern art mediums.

The tale tradition is a form of oral cultural heritage of the Kerinci community that contains profound historical, moral, and social values[5]. In *Tale Tale*, this tradition is reinterpreted through gestures, visual elements, and choreographic narratives. This transformation aims to preserve the essence of the culture while making it relevant to the context of contemporary art. However, this process presents significant challenges, especially in maintaining a balance between the preservation of authentic values and the exploration of modern aesthetics. This research shows that the innovative approach in this work not only enriches contemporary dance art, but also opens up a discussion about how performing arts can be an adaptive medium without losing its cultural roots.

The scenography design in *Tale Tale* not only serves as a stage setting but also as a narrative element that conveys emotional and aesthetic messages. Through the use of technologies such as visual projection, dynamic lighting, and animation, scenography can create immersive and interactive stage spaces. The perspective of the schematic designer is crucial in ensuring that every visual element is in harmony with the dance narrative and can support the message that the choreographer wanted. Moreover, the dynamically designed stage space allows for dialogue between the dancers, visual elements, and the audience, creating an experience that is not only aesthetic but also emotional. This confirms that scenography is not only a supporter but also a major actor in contemporary performing arts.

The integration of technology in *Tale Tale* brings a new dimension to the performing arts. The use of iteratively designed animations and visual projections provides the ability to respond to dance movements in real time. This interaction creates a dynamic relationship between the dancer and the visual element, resulting in an immersive and artistic experience for the audience. However, this process requires intense technical collaboration between choreographers, cinematographer designers, and technologists to ensure that technology does not dominate but complements other elements of art. The study shows that technology is not only a supporting tool but also a creative medium that expands the possibilities of performing arts expression, making it more relevant and interesting in the context of modern culture.

The creative process in *Tale Tale's* work is based on an in-depth exploration of *tale* traditions and intensive cross-disciplinary collaboration. This process begins with cultural research involving the actors of *the tale tradition* (petale) to understand the meaning, symbols, and essence of the oral story. Choreographer Sherli Novalinda then worked closely with the scenography designer to transform these narrative elements into a supporting stage and visual space. The iterative process is carried out through experimentation with various lighting, projection, and space design techniques to create harmony between dance movements, visual elements, and technology. Dancers are also involved in the process of exploring movement to create choreography that is organic and integrated with the design concept. This process not only produces works of art but also becomes a space for dialogue between tradition and modernity, between local values and global aesthetics.

1. Performance Concept

Understanding the themes and concepts that the choreographer wants to convey is a very important first step in the scenography design process. As a scenographer, the role is not only limited to accepting the concepts given by the choreographer but also involves the effort to immerse oneself in the essence of the work so that it becomes an integral part of the creative process rather than just a visual designer. In addition, the

process also includes the identification of the technical and artistic requirements needed to create an atmosphere that matches the narrative and emotions that are intended to be conveyed in the performance.

The next stage involves research and reference collection aimed at ensuring that the scenography design is in harmony with the story and atmosphere of the show. Visual references, such as photographs, paintings, videos, or other visual materials, are used to understand the desired aesthetic and create harmony between scenography design and other visual elements. In addition, the research also includes the study of historical, cultural, or geographical contexts that are relevant to the story setting. This approach ensures that the scenography design not only supports the narrative visually but also reflects the cultural and aesthetic values that underlie the performance.

As part of the research process, field interviews were conducted with *petale* or tale tradition actors who live in Sungai Panjang, Jambi. This interview aims to explore a deep understanding of the oral tradition of *tale* that is the main inspiration for *Tale Tale's* work. In this interview, *petale* shares stories about the values, symbolism, and meaning contained in *the tale* tradition, as well as how this tradition has been passed down from generation to generation. This information is an important basis for understanding the narrative elements that the choreographer wants to convey and how they can be visually translated into scenography design. In addition, this interview also provides insight into the cultural context and life of the Kerinci people, which is then used as a reference to create an authentic and relevant scenography design with the roots of local traditions. Direct interaction with *the petale* in the location of the origin of this tradition enriches the creative process and ensures that each element of the design retains the cultural essence raised in the performance.



Figure 4.

[Source: Sherlilab documentation at the time of the research (2022), Sungai Full, Jambi]



Figure 4.

[Source: Sherlilab documentation at the time of the research (2022), Sungai Full, Jambi]

The next stage after the field interview is an intensive discussion with the creative team involving choreographers, dancers, musicians, dramaturgs, and other parties involved in the production of the work. This discussion aims to synchronize the findings from the interviews with the artistic vision that Tale Tale wants to embody in the performance. In this session, the results of interviews with *petale* and other cultural studies were presented as a basis for designing relevant visual, narrative, and musical elements. Choreographers usually explain their interpretation of the work's grand theme and how the dance movements will reflect the tradition of *the tale*. Dancers provide input regarding their movements and interactions with the stage space, which is crucial to determining a dynamic scenography design. Musicians and dramaturgs contribute to enriching the atmosphere by providing input on the rhythm, melody, and narrative structure that will support the work as a whole. This discussion process also includes brainstorming creative ideas to bring together artistic elements in the performance. Each member of the creative team has a role to play in ensuring that the elements of scenography design, technology, dance movements, and music are not only harmonious but also mutually reinforcing each other.



Figure 4.

[Source: Sherlilab Documentation (2022), Padangpanjang, West Sumatra]



Figure 5.

[Source: Sherlilab Documentation (2022), Padangpanjang, West Sumatra]

After an intensive discussion with the creative team, the next stage is the process of sketching and scenography design by the designer. This stage aims to transform the concept and input from the creative team into an initial visual representation that can be used as a guide in the production process[8]. The scenography designer starts by creating a rough sketch that reflects the main ideas that have been agreed upon, including the stage layout, visual elements, and the potential interaction between the dancers, the space, and the technology. In this process, designers consider various aspects, such as technical (stage size, lighting, visual projection) and aesthetic (color, texture, and shape). Each element designed aims to support the narrative of the performance, create an atmosphere that matches the theme, and reinforce the emotions that the choreographer wants to convey. This initial sketch often serves as a communication tool to get additional feedback from the creative team before the final design is made.

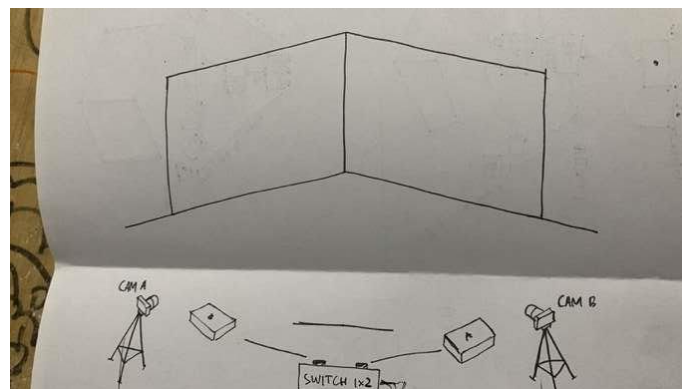


Figure 6.

[Source: Documentation of Cindy Fadhila Sara (2021), Padangpanjang, West Sumatra]

Once the sketch is approved, the designer proceeds to the stage of creating a more detailed scenography design, including a three-dimensional model or mockup to provide a clearer picture of how the stage space will look. The design also includes plans for the use of technology, such as the placement of projectors for animation visualization

and lighting that will respond to dance movements in real time. This process is iterative, allowing revisions based on additional input from the creative team until the scenography design reaches a final form that is ready for production.

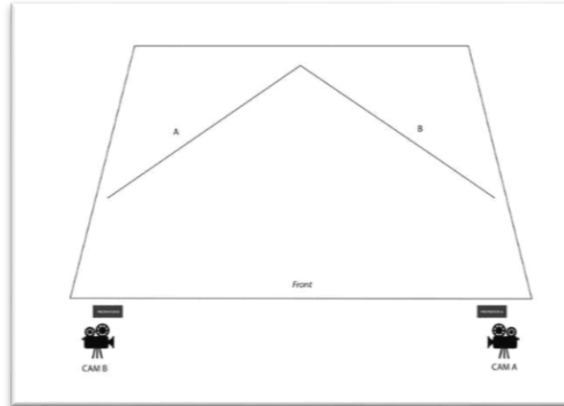


Figure 7.

[Source: Documentation of Cindy Fadhila Sara (2021), Padangpanjang, West Sumatra]

After the sketching and scenography design stages were completed, the process continued with the visual and technical testing phase to ensure that all the designed elements could function properly on stage and optimally support the show's narrative. This stage involves simulation and hands-on experimentation in the performance space or production site using technologies that will be used in the actual show, such as lighting, visual projection, and animation elements. Visual trials aim to verify whether visual elements, such as colors, textures, stage shapes, and visual projections, successfully create the desired atmosphere. Projectors and animation devices are tested to ensure that images or visual effects are displayed with precision in the planned area, whether on the backdrop, floor, or other moving elements. The process also tests how the visual interacts with the dancer's movements and whether the desired message or emotion is conveyed clearly.

Technical trials involve testing lighting, sound devices, as well as stage mechanisms, if any. Technicians and creative teams work together to ensure the lighting can dynamically follow the dancers' movements and support transitions between scenes. In addition, synchronization between technological elements (such as real-time animation) and the dancers' performance is tested to ensure there are no delays or interruptions during the performance. This stage is also used to identify potential technical or aesthetic issues that may arise and find solutions before entering the full production stage. Creative teams, including scenography designers, technologists, choreographers, and dancers, typically do several iterations during the trial to refine visual and technical elements. The results of these trials became an important foundation to ensure that all design and technology elements not only function technically but also support the overall artistic vision of the show.



Figure 8.

[Source: Sherlilab Documentation (2022), Padangpanjang, West Sumatra]



Figure 9.

[Source: Sherlilab Documentation (2022), Padangpanjang, West Sumatra]

After the visual and technical testing phase is completed, the process continues to the production and installation stage, where all the elements of the designed scenography design begin to be physically realized and adapted to the stage conditions at the performance location. This stage involves intensive collaboration between designers, technicians, and production teams to ensure that all elements can be installed safely, on time, and in accordance with the established artistic plan. At this stage, production includes the manufacture of physical elements such as stage structures, settings, properties, and technological devices, such as projection screens or lighting. The installation of these elements is carried out on the stage location for each performance, taking into account the differences in space characteristics, such as size, acoustics, layout, and technical facilities in each venue. Adjustments are often necessary to ensure that the scenography design can function optimally in a variety of field conditions without compromising the artistic vision of the performance.

In this case, design flexibility becomes an important factor. The modular or portable scenography elements make it easy to adapt to meet technical needs in three different locations. For example, visual projection may require adjusting the angle or intensity based on the lighting of the space, while the physical structure of the stage may have to be modified to fit the available dimensions of the space. Additionally, the installation involves backtesting to ensure that all technological devices, such as projectors, lighting, and sound devices, are functioning properly in field conditions. The process also involves a short simulation with the dancers to check if all the stage elements and technology support their movements safely and effectively. The production and installation stages focus not only on the technical aspects but also on artistic adjustments, ensuring that the atmosphere and message they want to convey remain consistent across each performance location. After the installation is complete, a dress rehearsal is usually conducted to integrate all elements in a full simulated performance, providing a final opportunity for the team to make improvements before the actual show begins.



Figure 10.

[Source: Dokumentasi Sherlilab Festival Sumate, Ladang Nan Jombang Sumatera barat]

After the production and installation stages are completed, the process continues with the rehearsal and adjustment phase, which aims to integrate all artistic, technical, and performance elements into a harmonious whole. This stage involves all team members, including dancers, choreographers, scenography designers, technicians, musicians, and dramaturgs, to ensure that each element works synchronously within the context of the performance. The technical exercise began with a focus on technical aspects, such as lighting, visual projection, sound, and stage mechanisms. The entire device was retested in a full rehearsal scenario to ensure that synchronization with the dancer's movements went smoothly. For example, pre-installed animations or visual projections are tested alongside the dancer's movements to check if the visual elements respond to the movements in real time and fit the designed concept. In this exercise, scenography designers and technicians often make small adjustments, such as

repositioning lights, modifying color intensity, or correcting visual projections, so that the effect is maximized in the stage room.



Figure 12.

[Source: Sherlilab Documentation, Padangpanjang, West Sumatra]

The next exercise involves dancers adapting to the stage space that has been installed with scenography elements. Dancers are trained to understand the limitations and opportunities provided by space, such as interaction with visual elements, lighting, or stage properties. Choreographers often take advantage of this stage to adjust the movements to better match the stage layout and ensure safety during the performance, especially if there are elements that involve changing the stage position or interacting with technology. At this stage, dramaturgs, choreographers, and musicians are more intensely involved in combining the narrative, emotions, and atmosphere they want to convey. Adjustments were made to ensure that every artistic element supported the main message of the show. Musicians and sound technicians adjust the volume, rhythm, or transitions of the music to align with the desired mood, while dramaturgs provide input to reinforce the narrative through visual and motion elements.

As the culmination of the rehearsal stage, a full rehearsal was held, which was a complete simulation of the performance. At this stage, all elements, including costumes, makeup, lighting, projection, sound, and choreography, are integrated with a performance scenario that is close to real conditions. Rehearsals provide a final opportunity for creative teams to identify and fix potential issues, both technical and artistic, before the show. The rehearsal and adjustment stage is an important process to ensure that all elements of the show run in harmony and without a hitch. Through intensive practice, each team member was able to understand their respective roles in supporting the show's narrative and aesthetics. The adjustments made at this stage ensure that the works presented not only meet artistic expectations but also provide an immersive and meaningful experience for the audience.



Figure 13.

[Source: Sherlilab Documentation, Indonesian Dance Festival 2022]



Figure 14.

[Source: Sherlilab Documentation, Ladang Nan Kombang, West Sumatra]

The process continues to the execution and maintenance stage, namely the implementation of the performance in front of the audience while ensuring the smooth running of each performance session. This stage is the culmination of the entire production process chain, where all the elements that have been designed, tested, and customized are executed in real life. In addition, this stage also involves operational and technical management to maintain quality consistency from the beginning to the end of the show.

The execution began with the opening of the performance session according to the schedule that had been set at three stage locations. All technical and artistic elements that have been designed and tested before are seamlessly integrated into live performance. The production team and technicians play a key role in ensuring synchronization between lighting, sound, visual projection, and dance movements throughout the performance. This process requires close cooperation between the technical team behind the scenes and the performers on stage to maintain the narrative flow and the atmosphere that has been planned. In each location, the execution of the

show also requires final adaptation to the specific conditions of the space, such as resetting the lighting intensity or the angle of visual projection if there is a change in the stage layout. A team of scenography designers is often present during the initial execution to ensure that visual elements remain optimal in creating an immersive experience for the audience.

The maintenance stage aims to maintain the quality of the show from one session to the next, especially if the show is performed in different locations. This process includes regular checks of all technical devices, such as projectors, lighting systems, and sound devices, to ensure that they are all in good working order before each session begins. If there is any damage or adjustment required, the technical team is responsible for repairing it quickly so as not to interfere with the course of the show. In addition to the technical aspects, maintenance also includes the management of stage and costume properties. Properties used during the show are inspected to ensure there is no damage from intensive use, while costumes are inspected and maintained to keep them in top condition. This is important to maintain a consistent visual aesthetic throughout the performance session.

At this stage, the creative and production teams also began to collect feedback from the audience, both in person and through observation during the show. This feedback can be used to make minor adjustments if needed in the next session. In addition, the team conducts internal evaluations after each performance session to ensure that all technical and artistic aspects go according to plan. The execution and maintenance stage is a crucial phase that combines all the work from the previous stage into a real and meaningful performance experience for the audience. Careful maintenance ensures that artistic and technical quality is maintained throughout the series, even in different space conditions. This stage not only demands high focus and coordination from the entire team but also flexibility to face challenges that may arise, so that the work can be displayed consistently and optimally in each session.



Figure 15.

[Source: Sherlilab Documentation, Indonesian Dance Festival 2022]

The *Tale Tale* show is the culmination of the entire creative, technical, and collaborative process that has been carried out. This work is presented as an immersive art experience, combining elements of dance movement, visual narrative, technology, music, and scenography in a harmonious whole. Through choreographic interpretation by Sherli Novalinda, this performance expresses the story and tradition of *tale* as the cultural heritage of the Kerinci people, as well as connecting it with the perspective of contemporary art. Each element of the show serves to reinforce the narrative and create an emotional and aesthetic atmosphere. Dancers not only drive the narrative but also interact directly with visual elements such as animated projections and dynamic lighting that respond to their movements in real time. The dynamically designed stage space provides flexibility for dancers to explore movement, creating a visual layer that deepens the message of the story.



Figure 16.

[Source: Antarafoto, Indonesian Dance Festival 2022]

The music in this performance, composed with a contemporary approach, presents a dialogue between tradition and modernity[9]. Compositions that blend traditional and digital sound elements enrich the atmosphere of the show and strengthen the emotional experience for the audience[10]. The dramaturgy applied connects each scene narratively, maintaining the continuity of the story while emphasizing the cultural messages raised. This performance not only serves as an art spectacle but also as a space for cultural dialogue between local traditions and modern art. The audience is invited to not only witness, but also feel and reflect on the values conveyed through a combination of movement, visuals, and sounds. By utilizing technology, this work takes the performing arts to a more interactive and immersive level, creating an experience that is not only visually captivating but also leaves a deep impression.

Overall, *Tale Tale* is not only a show but also a representation of cross-disciplinary collaboration that successfully bridges tradition and innovation. By presenting this show in three different locations, the piece demonstrates great design flexibility and adaptability, ensuring that the message of art and culture remains consistent, regardless of differences in space and technical conditions. *Tale Tale* is proof that

contemporary performing arts can be a powerful medium to preserve, transform, and celebrate the richness of cultural traditions.



Figure 16.

[Source: Photographer Richardvans (2020), Padangpanjang, West Sumatra the first show held at Blackbox Tv Film ISI Padangpanjang]



Figure 16.

[Source: Photographer Richardvans (2020), Padangpanjang, West Sumatra the first show held at Blackbox Tv Film ISI Padangpanjang]



Figure 16.

[Source: Photographer Richardvans (2020), Padangpanjang, West Sumatra the first show held at Blackbox Tv Film ISI Padangpanjang]

The technology is used in visual projections and animations to create a responsive background for the dancers' movements[11]. Animations designed in real time give the impression of a constantly changing living space, thus reinforcing the visual experience and emotions of the audience [12]. This technology allows for audience engagement on a deeper level. The collaboration between designers and choreographers is the key to the creation of *Tale Tale*, Design elements not only serve as a support for the dancers' movements but also become an equal mantra in conveying the narrative. This creates a historical art experience, where space and motion complement each other.

One of the main strengths of *Tale Tale* lies in the intensive cross-disciplinary collaboration between choreographers, scenographer designers, technologists, dancers, and traditional performers. This collaboration allows for the creation of complex works, where every element—whether dance movements, visual design, or technology—plays an integral role in building an artistic narrative. This collaboration also opens up opportunities to integrate various perspectives, create synergies between tradition and innovation, and present artworks that are not only aesthetic but also meaningful. This study confirms that successful contemporary performing arts are the result of a creative dialogue involving a variety of disciplines and approaches.

Conclusion

This research highlights how cross-disciplinary collaboration between design, technology, and contemporary dance can open up new opportunities in artistic exploration. *Tale Tale's* case study shows that scenography not only serves as a supporting visual element but also becomes an interactive "living space" where dancers, audiences, and visual elements connect to each other to create an immersive art experience. Technology, particularly in the form of visual projection and dynamic lighting, provides an additional dimension that enriches narrative and emotion, expanding the traditional boundaries of the performing arts. This confirms that the integration of technology and art can give new depth to artworks, creating a stronger emotional connection with the audience.

The conclusion of this study underlines the importance of close collaboration in the creative process, from in-depth research, design, and testing, to execution. Each stage plays a crucial role in ensuring that each artistic element is not only aesthetic but also functional and relevant to the narrative being carried. The study also confirms that the success of the performing arts depends on effective communication, detailed technical planning, and comprehensive testing to produce cohesive and meaningful work. The study concludes that *Tale Tale* is a clear example of how the performing arts can serve as a medium to transform local traditions into modern contexts, without losing the essence of their original culture. Through cross-disciplinary collaboration, performing arts not only succeed in bridging tradition and innovation but also present artistic

experiences that are relevant to the development of contemporary art. With a similar approach, future artworks can continue to push the boundaries of creative exploration, creating immersive, innovative, and more meaningful experiences for audiences.

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