

FROM THE EDITORS

The papers found in volume 7 of the *Malaysian Journal of Performing and Visual Arts* (MJPVA) range from the performing arts, arts education, to material culture, as well as important works on research by practice.

The first paper is an interesting exploration of artistic practices in the performing arts during the Covid-19 pandemic while everyone was locked inside. The artist-researcher explores positionalities in screendance, where film and dance, cinematography and choreography, merge into a unique performing art. The research-artist looks at the process entailed in the artistic project where she takes different positionalities — dancer, choreographer, and video editor — and how each, though differently, assumes surveillance. Using Foucault's panopticon, the research-artist then investigates and analyses the concept of self-surveillance as a form of power negotiation specific to screendance as an art form. The paper is an insightful and important work of research by practice as we believe it shows a growing trend in such exploration where artists use their artistic processes as source material for academic and theoretical exploration and research.

The second paper in this volume explores artistically and musically talented students' self-concept. The importance of this paper is to be noticed, as it brings new perspective and a new reading of artistically talented students' self-concepts. Indeed, artistically gifted students had been previously identified as suffering from social awkwardness to social-behavioural problems and to have low self-concepts. Yet this study shows that the 232 Malaysian students sampled had moderately high self-concept overall, but found important and potentially troubling variations between gender, as well as between the artistic majors of the students. The interesting variations found within the data as well as between this research focusing on Malaysia and other research begged to be analysed and research in a subsequent paper.

The third paper reviews, critics, and analyses the literature and the performances of contemporary dance choreographies with objects, focusing on Asian regions, specifically East and Southeast Asia. The authors look at how objects are important performative elements of contemporary dance choreographies as they offer an interesting and important artistic investigation of materiality. In this paper, the authors analyse the function of the stage objects of five contemporary dance choreographies presented between 2015 and 2019 from East and Southeast Asia. As indicated by the authors, this paper is calling for "choreographic discourses of Asian practice" and serves as foundational work for future practice-based research on contemporary choreography.

The fourth paper explores cultural representations of Anshun Dixi Opera as part of Tumpu Culture. A dynamic and character focused traditional opera, the author explores the specific symbolic meaning that the Dixi Opera gains as part of the local Tunpu culture. The paper explores how Anshun Dixi acquired specific meaning in

MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS

VOLUME 7, DECEMBER 2021, ISSN 2462-1900, eISSN 2462-1919

Tunpu culture by exploring the migratory history of the region as well as the local military-influenced lifestyle.

The papers in this volume of the journal reflect the interest of the MJPVA as well as of the Faculty of Creative Arts of Universiti Malaya as a centre of research through artistic practices and academic exploration using research by practice. As more and more artists are called to research making as part of their academic duties, research-by-practice, although still debated, even controversial for some, is fast becoming an important field of exploration where artistic processes encounter academic analyses and research practices. We welcome papers engaging with research-by-practice as well as debating its place within academia.

The papers in this volume also show the wide range and diverse topics the MJPVA covers, from material culture, to music education, psychology of the arts, as well as qualitative and quantitative research. We are looking forward to having more submissions next year.