

Hybrid Culture and Digital Innovation in Contemporary Performing Arts: A Case Study of Enda Walsh's Disco Pig Performance at Brotherhood Bunker Bandung

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the contribution of video mapping technology and the use of non-conventional performance spaces in generating hybrid theatrical experiences in Enda Walsh's *Disco Pig*, staged at the Brotherhood Bunker, Bandung. This production provides a significant case for examining the intersection of technology, spatial change and audience engagement as digital media gains a greater foothold in live performance in contemporary theatre. Data were collected through performance observation, visual documentation, and analysis of dramaturgical elements within a qualitative phenomenological approach. The results show that video mapping is not only a visual enhancement, but also a dramaturgical device that constructs memory, psychological landscapes and narrative transitions. In addition, transforming a nightclub basement into a performing space produces a hybrid spatiality that conflates entertainment, social interaction, and theatrical representation. The production also engages with broader concerns of urban identity, class relations, and spatial politics in contemporary digital culture. This study adds to theatre and performance studies by showing how digital technologies can extend dramaturgical practices and generate immersive experiences for the spectator in alternative performance settings. The findings provide theoretical insights into hybrid theatre and practical implications for artists and directors exploring digitally mediated performance.

Keywords: hybrid culture, contemporary performing arts, non-conventional space, video mapping, spatial dramaturgy, artistic body, digital innovation, political theatre, dialogical space, immersive experience.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary theatre scene in Indonesia has seen significant changes in the past decade particularly regarding performance venues, artistic media and audience participation. Although theatre has traditionally been associated with

institutional spaces such as the theatre and auditorium, contemporary practitioners are increasingly working in alternative sites such as galleries, warehouses, cafes and nightclubs. This shift implies a change in the attitudes towards the production and reception of art, where performance is no

longer limited to formal cultural institutions but is increasingly embedded in the everyday urban landscape (Setiawan, 2022; Fatrizal, M. P., & Fussalam, Y. E., 2025).

The emergence of alternative performance spaces has also fostered new modes of interaction between artistic expression and social experience. Far from being passive sites for the presentation of theatrical performance, these spaces are frequently active agents in the production of meaning through the manipulation of audience perception, movement, and engagement. These developments mirror broader discourses of hybrid culture in which the boundaries between high art and popular culture and between the physical and mediated realities are becoming more porous (Kusuma & Taylor, 2023; Kamil, F. I., Bwastap, J., & Fussalam, Y. E., 2026).

Alongside the transformation of spaces for performance, digital technologies have increasingly been made visible in contemporary theatre practices. Projection mapping, interactive media and digital scenography are often used not only to enhance the visual presentation, but also to influence narrative structure, spatial perception and audience experience. In this context, digital media can play an active role in dramaturgical construction mediating relationships between performers, space and spectators (Rani & McKenzie, 2022; Nurhaetin, F., 2025). This means that, in contemporary theatre, physical presence and digital representation often coexist in the same performative space.

One such example of this development is the Bandung production of Enda Walsh's *Disco Pig*, staged in the underground

nightclub, the Brotherhood Bunker. The venue's selection places the show in a context typically associated with leisure, nightlife and commercial entertainment. But the nightclub context is a site of intersection of performance, social interaction and audience experience in different ways through theatrical adaptation. As Siregar (2023) states, the recontextualization of familiar urban spaces can change the way audiences perceive the performance and the setting in which it takes place.

The production is also distinguished by the use of video-mapping technology projected on the architectural surfaces of the venue. Visual layers interact with performers, spatial arrangements and plot development through the projections. Video mapping not only allows for scenic composition, but can also affect the perception of memory, time and psychological space, helping to create an immersive theatrical atmosphere. The co-existence of corporeal performance and digital imagery creates a space for investigating how meaning is constructed through the interaction of multiple performative elements in a non-conventional venue.

Recent years have seen a proliferation of scholarly conversations on hybrid theatre. Research has focused on the integration of digital technologies in live performance, the emergence of immersive spectatorship and the alteration of the relationship between audiences and mediated environments (Ahmed, 2023). Performance practices in Southeast Asia have also been discussed in relation to cultural adaptation, technological experimentation and the negotiation of local

and global influences in contemporary artistic production (Tan & O'Sullivan, 2022).

Previous studies in the Indonesian context have discussed various forms of digital and experimental theatre including online theatre performances, multimedia theatre productions, and documentary-based theatre practices (Utami, 2021). These studies are important sources of information on performance technology innovation. Nevertheless, debate on the relationship between digital projection technologies, alternative performance venues and the socio-cultural meanings that emerge from their convergence remains somewhat limited. Likewise, the use of commercial urban spaces as sites of theatrical production in the field of contemporary Indonesian performance has been relatively under-researched.

These developments provide a context for the Bandung production of Disco Pig to examine the relationships between space, technology, corporeality and audience engagement. The performance offers a non-conventional space, digital projection, and embodied acting as one theatrical event, which creates the conditions for a discussion on spatial experience, identity formation, and the cultural meanings of contemporary urban life.

Therefore, this study examines the Disco Pig production at the Brotherhood Bunker focusing on three aspects: (1) the nightclub space reconfigured as a performative environment; (2) the role of video mapping in the construction of memory, spatial perception and dramaturgical experience; and (3) the interactions between performers, audiences and digital media in the framework of contemporary urban culture.

Through these perspectives, the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of how contemporary theatre practices negotiate the intersections of space, technology and performance in Indonesia.

METHODS

The present study is within a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of the Disco Pig performance in Brotherhood Bunker, Bandung. The study aims to investigate how meaning is constituted through the interaction of performers, audiences, spatial configurations and digital mediation within a non-conventional performance environment. Phenomenology is considered an approach that investigates the lived experiences of participants as they are expressed and perceived by them, emphasizing the nature of phenomena prior to formal interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2021). The interpretive orientation, following Moustakas (2020), implies remaining close to participants' descriptions of experience while allowing meaning to emerge from the interaction of perception, corporeality, and environment as interrelated dimensions of performance.

The research took place at Brotherhood Bunker, an underground nightclub in Bandung that has been transformed into a space for a performance by Disco Pig. The site was chosen for its spatial liminality, for the intersection of entertainment culture and experimental theatre practices. The venue was not only a physical place but an active spatial condition affecting proximity, sensory engagement and audience orientation throughout the performance during field

engagement. Such spatial arrangement is of interest in relation to the experience of hybrid performance in non-institutional contexts.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the performance process, both in production and reception. The selection aimed to include multiple experiential positions within the performance ecosystem. A total of twelve participants were involved, consisting of one director, two actors, two visual designers, two theatre practitioners or scholars, and five audience members. This composition allowed the study to access layered perspectives of experience rather than generalizable representation.

Data were generated through field engagement during rehearsals and live performances of *Disco Pig*, with data collection unfolding iteratively across multiple encounters with the performance context. In order to capture the multidimensional nature of the performance environment, several complementary techniques were employed:

1. Direct observation of rehearsals and live performances, with a focus on spatial arrangements and movement of actors, placement of the audience, and the visual and aural interaction created by the integration of video mapping into the performance setting.
2. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in depth to explore participants' perceptions of space, technology and embodied experience as they emerge during and after performance interactions.

3. Audiovisual material comprising (where applicable) recordings of performance, field notes, rehearsal records and curated social media archives relevant to the creative process.
4. Script and projection analysis, with special attention to the search for dramaturgical patterns, visual symbolism and the role of digital projection in the production of multi-layered performance meaning.

All of these methods involved observation and interviews focused on phenomenological description, with emphasis on lived experience as expressed by participants before analytic categorization (Vagle, 2021). The data gathered were then clustered into meaningful units of recurring experiential dimensions such as spatial immersion, corporeal engagement, digital mediation and audience reception. The data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), which included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analytical process began with repeated visits to the field materials to gain a holistic sense of the context of the performance. From this process, relevant segments of data were identified and gradually refined into meaning units. These meaning units were then grouped to form thematic structures reflective of relational dynamics between body, space and technology in the performance environment. Interpretation took place through an iterative movement between empirical materials and emerging meanings such that themes developed gradually in relation to the

phenomenological orientation of the study.

The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured by several strategies. The triangulation was done on observation, interviews and documentation to make sure the interpretation was consistent. Member checking was performed by giving select interpretive summaries to participants to verify that their experiences were accurately contextualized. Thick description was employed to preserve the richness of performance context (Geertz, 2020), particularly in terms of spatial atmosphere, bodily presence and audience interaction. Reflexive engagement was also maintained throughout the research process to acknowledge the researcher's interpretive position within the field, recognizing that meaning construction is shaped through situated engagement with performance phenomena (Finlay, 2021). Ethical considerations were followed through informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and respect for the semi-public nature of the venue, with appropriate academic sensitivity being applied to the treatment of both participants and performance conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Observations revealed that the staging of Disco Pig at Brotherhood Bunker Bandung, a former nightclub, was profoundly aesthetic and political. The director's choice to transform a place of leisure into a place of performance was a conscious conceptual act of spatial resistance that challenged the conventions of theatricality. Using Bhabha's (1994) terminology, this site becomes a third space,

where cultural negotiation occurs between high art and popular urban experience

In an interview the director said (Sept 7, 2025): *"I wanted to bring theatre to places people least expect it. Theatre should go to the audience, not the audience to the theatre. The basement has its own personality. It breathes, it smells, it remembers."*

The venue thus acts as an active dramaturgical element. Hybrid performance sites, Tan and O'Sullivan (2022) argue, create participatory dramaturges where the audience co-authors the text through spatial closeness and sensory immersion. In Disco Pig the audience is amidst the actors, beams of light and projected images; the traditional division of stage disappears.

This spatial hybridity creates dramaturgical tension between the real and the fictive. The audience's physical bodies enter the projected images, creating a wordless conversation between social and aesthetic realities. Hence, the unconventional space functions not only as a setting but also as a political strategy to blur the line between art and lived experience (Kusuma & Taylor, 2023).

The actors' bodies are the focus of the aesthetic and existential framework of Disco Pig. They don't just play the characters Pig and Runt but also converse with the digital space, negotiating between physical movement and the surrounding visual projections.

One performer said: *"Sometimes, my shadow on the wall feels more alive than I do on stage."*

This statement captures Sartre's (1943/2020) notion of existential ambiguity, a consciousness split between freedom and

alienation. The performer's body becomes a "thinking body" (Hansen, 2022), fluctuating between biological reality and digital mediation.

Field observations suggest that the interaction between the corporeal and the digital presence creates a dual narrative layer: the actor's body represents the personal self, whereas the projected images reflect the collective urban consciousness trapped in cycles of consumption and desire. Thus, Disco Pig transcends the narrative and becomes a meditation on the existential anxiety of the digital age.

The technique of video mapping functions as a dramaturgical bridge between memory, space and time. Each projection, city lights, fragmented political texts, distorted faces, acts as a mnemonic layer, triggering emotional associations. These visuals often coincide with Pig's monologues, as observations showed, and create a visual flashback that intensifies temporal perception.

"The visual designer explained:

"We didn't want the projection to be a background; it had to be alive, to disturb both the body of the actor and the comfort of the audience."

As Causey (2022) suggests, digital media in contemporary theatre is a 'virtual actor' that mediates meaning between human and machine. In Disco Pig projection pushes perceptual limits to create a synesthetic dramaturgy in which light, sound and motion become embodied emotion.

One of the most compelling aspects of the Bandung adaptation is the way it reworks local political discourse in context. The director has added new dialogues that refer to class disparity and city disillusionment

post-pandemic. In a climax scene, Pig shouts through the pulsating club lights:

"We're all dancing under another man's spotlight!"

The moment delivers a social critique that transforms spectatorship into a shared consciousness. Such acts are, as Butler (2021) describes them, performative resistance, embodied gestures that reveal the politics of visibility and privilege.

The convergence of body, space and technology therefore constitutes a hybrid cultural form, one that surpasses the distinctions between art and lived politics. Disco Pig demonstrates that digital performance in Indonesia can function as a cultural strategy that integrates aesthetic experimentation with social intervention (Rani & McKenzie, 2022). Interviews with the audience showed a change in perception. One viewer commented:

"I didn't feel like I was watching it. I felt like I was in it."

The immersive combination of space, light and video projection encourages an affective participation in which the spectators are part of the story. This aligns with Prasetyo's (2023) findings that digital theatre in Indonesia generates embodied spectatorship; spectators experience space through bodily, rather than visual, distance.

Another respondent commented that Disco Pig "turns entertainment into reflection" and demonstrated how theatre can reclaim public, non-institutional spaces without sacrificing intellectual rigor. Bringing the findings together, Disco Pig becomes a performative hybrid culture, combining non-conventional space,

existential embodiment, and digital innovation. The performance expands the aesthetics of theatre and promotes socio-political thinking.

Through a phenomenological lens, hybrid theatre's multidimensionality is evident as audiences not only see but inhabit the performative world. This affirms that modern digital theatre in Indonesia has the potential to operate as an artistic experiment and a cultural discourse, re-assembling the body-technology-social consciousness nexus.

This research is expected to add considerably to the academic discourse on contemporary theatre and hybrid culture in Indonesia. First, Disco Pig shows how Homi K. Bhabha's (1994) third space concept can be localized within Indonesian performance contexts, particularly in alternative venues such as Brotherhood Bunker Bandung. It is in this space that the divide between high art and popular culture blurs, resulting in cross-class, cross-media performativity. This finding extends the theoretical understanding of hybrid performance as an urban cultural expression entangled with digital modernity.

Second, the study contributes to the theoretical dialogue about spatial dramaturgy and artistic embodiment (Hansen, 2022; Lefebvre, 2020), showing how non-conventional space is not merely a backdrop but an epistemic actor in the making of meaning. The dynamic interaction between body, space and digital projection constitutes a co-creation of reality, in resonance with phenomenological perspectives in performance studies (Finlay, 2021).

Third, methodologically, the research consolidates the phenomenological-descriptive approach in artistic inquiry, combining observation, interview and performative interpretation. It advocates for a performance analysis that moves beyond textual or aesthetic critique to embodied and spatial experiences as empirical data, advancing qualitative research paradigms within Indonesian art scholarship.

From the social perspective, Disco Pig is a model of contemporary theatre which links art and urban public life. By transforming a club venue, typically a place of fun and entertainment, to a place of contemplation, the production is making the artistic experience more accessible to all (Rani & McKenzie, 2022). This blurring of boundaries between leisure and art redefines theatre as a participatory social dialogue rather than an elitist institution.

In this interactive environment the use of video mapping increases audience agency: spectators are not passive consumers but co-creators of meaning. This aligns with Butler's (2021) notion of the performative body as a site of resistance; a body that is political in its very presence and movement.

At the socio-political level, Disco Pig generates a reflection on class disparity and spatial politics in the urban digital era. The performance juxtaposes corporeal and digital imagery to disclose the alienation of contemporary subjectivity in a consumerist culture. It thus operates as a sort of performative social critique, blending aesthetic consciousness and social awareness in collective experience.

From a decolonial perspective, this research proposes hybrid theatre as a

decolonial epistemic strategy. Western models of theatre, including proscenium stages, institutional environments, and linear narratives have long dominated Indonesian theatre education. *Disco Pig* subverts this hierarchy by appropriating local urban spaces and digital media as instruments of critical reflection. According to Mignolo (2020) this practice is epistemic disobedience, creating alternative performative knowledge based on local experience.

Findings have important implications for arts education as well. The article calls for a digital-participatory pedagogy that invites students of theatre to experiment with space, community, and media technologies. This model promotes creativity that is socially engaged, technologically literate, and critically aware, aligning with Tan & O'Sullivan's (2022) vision of co-creative learning environments for contemporary performance.

The research also has practical implications for the creative industries and cross-disciplinary collaboration. The *Disco Pig* project exemplifies the convergence of performing arts, multimedia design, and communication technology, providing a prototype for collaborative creativity in the digital age. Such networks constitute a creative ecosystem where interdisciplinary exchange leads to innovation (Giannachi, 2021).

Additionally, the use of video mapping under restricted spatial and financial conditions demonstrates that low-cost digital adaptation can result in profound artistic results. This model can enable independent theatre practitioners to sustain production despite limited resources, reinforcing the

resilience of Indonesia's creative ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This study suggests that the Bandung adaptation of *Disco Pig* is significant not merely because it incorporates digital media into theatrical performance, but because it reconfigures the relationship between performance and its urban environment. The use of a former nightclub as a performance venue appears to blur established distinctions between theatrical space and everyday social space, allowing audience members to encounter the performance through proximity, immersion, and sensory engagement. Within this setting, body, space, and video mapping do not operate as separate theatrical components; rather, they become intertwined conditions through which the performance is experienced and interpreted.

Beyond the specific production examined, the findings point to a broader shift in how contemporary theatre may function within increasingly mediated urban cultures. What emerges from this case is not simply a hybridization of artistic forms, but a negotiation between spatial memory, embodied presence, and digital intervention. This perspective extends discussions of hybridity beyond questions of form and adaptation, suggesting that hybrid theatre can also be understood as a way of producing new modes of cultural experience within spaces not originally intended for performance.

The study is limited to a single case and therefore does not seek to generalize all forms of Indonesian digital theatre. Future research could examine how similar spatial and

technological negotiations operate across different cities, communities, and performance traditions, particularly as emerging technologies continue to reshape audience participation and urban cultural life.

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