



Is Rumenteng Siang The Future of Public Space Performing Arts in West Java?

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
<p>Performing arts venues are one of the public spaces essential to developing the human spirit. Almost all performing arts buildings in Indonesia are old Dutch heritage. One of the public spaces for performing arts in the city of Bandung is the Rumenteng Siang building. This place was previously the old building of the former Rivoli Cinema, which was later used as an arts performance space. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, which discusses the facilities and existence of this public space. The result of this research is the discovery that Rumenteng Siang has experienced a decline in the number of viewers. One of the leading causes is the lack of quality art performances presented in the building. Apart from that, the lack of adequate facilities for art presenters is also an obstacle. Inadequate facilities can reduce the performance quality and the audience's interest in attending the event. Not only that, the lack of comfortable facilities for visitors also reduces the existence of this public space. Therefore, efforts are needed to improve facilities and the quality of performing arts presented at Rumenteng Siang. It can be done through collaboration between management, government, and the arts community to improve facilities and present quality arts performances. In this way, it is hoped that Rumenteng Siang can maintain its existence as an essential public space in developing the human spirit through art.</p>	<p>Article History: <i>Submitted/Received 27 Apr 2021</i> <i>First Revised 27 Apr 2021</i> <i>Accepted 30 Apr 2021</i> <i>First Available online 5 May 2021</i> <i>Publication Date 11 May 2021</i></p> <hr/> <p>Keyword: <i>Public space,</i> <i>performance hall,</i> <i>performing art,</i> <i>Rumenteng Siang,</i> <i>West Java.</i></p>

1. INTRODUCTION

Maslow's theory, the "hierarchy of human needs," explains human needs into five stages: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization (Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017; Afif & Amelia, 2021). In fulfilling social needs by interacting with other people, humans need public spaces that can accommodate all community activities, both individually and in groups. The shape of this public space is very dependent on the pattern and structure of the building mass, and public space can also function as a place for humans to develop and channel their creativity (Amin, 2008). One of the public spaces that can be used as a forum for channeling creativity is the performing arts public space, which is a place for developing the creative imagination of art workers (Schuermans, et al., 2012) and also allows art lovers to indirectly interact with art. which will ultimately open the door to the formation of a person who is creative, challenging, has high insight, is independent, has self-confidence, empathy and especially increasingly feels ownership of his art and culture.

Based on the Medium-Term Development Plan report from the Bandung City Regional Culture Service for 2014-2018, it was recorded that in 2011 the number of Art Environments and Art Community Forums was 876, and it held 2438 performances during 2011. It shows that the art community in the city of Bandung has good values and can also support the development of art and cultural appreciation in the city of Bandung. They can move independently with their creativity to advance arts and culture in Bandung.

One of the public performing arts spaces in Bandung is Rumenteng Siang, which is usually used by the arts community to display works of art, especially music, dance, and theater. This public space needs to be managed well so that its development and existence can result in a behavioral transformation for art lovers toward appreciating artistic performances. It will undoubtedly force the performing arts group community to think about collaborating with sponsorship, philanthropy, and the local government to be actively involved in developing the city of Bandung from an arts perspective.

2. METHODS

The research method in this study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method, which contains theories that are relevant to the research problem. The key to understanding qualitative research is that meaning is socially constructed by individuals interacting with their world (Crotty, 1998; Merriam, 2002). Researchers do this by searching and collecting literature from scientific articles and reviewing it. Research using the literature review method examines the concepts and theories based on the available literature, especially from articles published in various scientific journals (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013). Therefore, the primary data sources used in this research are literature from journal articles, books, theses, and relevant written sources. The data results are then presented descriptively by a qualitative approach.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Public Space

Public space serves as a venue for many community activities, both individual and group. The design and layout of the building greatly influence the form of this public space (Mitchell, 1995; Ridlo & Yuliani, 2018). Apart from buildings and structures, public space is an element of urban space. It is essential in various aspects of Warta's life and environment (Fajri et al., 2020). Apart from understanding public space as space that can be viewed from various

angles, we understand public space as free space in urban areas (Németh & Carver, 2017). According to several researchers, prioritizing security and personal interests can limit the freedom and diversity of activities that occur in public spaces. Providing a guardrail for security reasons can make it difficult to access public spaces (Hantono & Ariantantrie, 2018; Hasana, 2018). The community's need for public spaces to carry out various activities is realized through social interactions accommodated in public spaces so that learning occurs between people, one community and another, and continues until a unified understanding exists. The heterogeneity in one city is an inevitability that must be lived and accepted together. Therefore, public space becomes a space of freedom for people to carry out activities visually and physically (Malik, 2018). Ideally, public space has an extensive scope and is formed from the natural process of individual interaction and the accumulation of public groups (Cattell, et al., 2008). Therefore, the state's role is to provide public space that can become a space where members of society as citizens have full access to all public activities; they have the right to carry out them independently, including developing public discourse such as expressing opinions verbally and in writing (Mitchell, 1995; Malik, 2018).

There are three public space principles: 1) Easy access to information. Today's technology allows members of society to gain access to information. In the early days when public space developed, this access was only owned by a small group of people, in this case, the bourgeoisie; 2) There was no special treatment (privilege) for discussion participants (participants). The absence of preferential treatment means that every member of society has equality in the speech process. No group is more dominant over other groups; 3) Participants put forward rational reasons in discussing to seek consensus. Rational reasons are an essential requirement for the realization of suitable public spaces. Rationality in the debate will ensure that the ongoing debate is a debate that can be accounted for with correct and appropriate information sources so that it can avoid the occurrence of coy debates or emotional battles between participants (Carmona, 2019; Malik, 2018).

3.2. Performance Hall

A performance hall is a designated place expressly designed to support the artistic activities of performers and maybe some forms of visual arts and recorded media (Throsby, 1994). Hence, the performance area must be structured to accommodate at least two or more activities within the performance space (Mitchell, 1995; Ferdman, 2013).

A *performance hall* is designed to exhibit artistic works, particularly in music, dance, and theater. In order to ensure optimal performance quality and audience satisfaction, it is essential to meet the space needs that correspond to the function of the presentation. It will enable the presenter's message to be effectively captured by the audience (Clements-Croome, 2011). The events encompass artistic performances by artists and the audience's participation in appreciating these acts. Similar to the enduringly utilized public entertainment venue in Amsterdam, which was established in April 1888 and remains in operation. Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, which means 'Concert Hall' in English, is often regarded as one of the top three concert halls globally (Peters, 2016; Postma & Katz, 2020). The venue possesses exceptional acoustics and serves as the residence for the esteemed Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. This orchestra has garnered high acclaim and was bestowed the prestigious title of the world's finest orchestra in a survey of classical music reviewers conducted by the renowned British magazine Gramophone in 2008 (McVeigh, 2013; Hurwitz, 2012).

According to the Time-Saver Standards for Building Types, a performance building is categorized into three zones: the building lobby, performance space, and backstage area

(Chusid, 1991). The lobby of the performance building serves as an interim space between the main auditorium and the front entrance of the structure. This space is partitioned into two primary sections: the lobby and parking. The lobby area serves as a space for purchasing admission tickets, accessing spectator bathrooms, and buying concessions. It also functions as a sociability area for the audience. Therefore, this area needs to be designed to promote visitor awareness of the space and provide easy access to all the facilities. In addition, the parking facility, comprising drop-off points and parking lots, should have convenient accessibility, cater to all motorists attending the event, and offer protection from inclement weather conditions (Diehl, et al., 2021). It is essential to consider that this region mainly focuses on visitor activities. Hence, the arrangement of areas must be unambiguous and distinguished by optimal flow to facilitate effortless navigation (Natapov, et al., 2020).

The primary section of the performance facility is the auditorium, referred to as the performance space. The auditorium must ensure visual and acoustic comfort for the audience as it showcases art (Radbourne et al., 2009). Several principles influence visual quality. These include maintaining a minimum distance of 1.5 meters between the stage and the first row of seats, ensuring a stage height of 75-100 centimeters, setting a minimum height of 24-30 centimeters for each row of audience chairs with increasing distance towards the back, and implementing a shaped seating design. Tanaya, et al. (2016) proposed a radial arrangement to ensure the viewer's view is not obstructed. Audio quality is achieved through an acoustic design that considers sound's reflection and absorption qualities (Lee, et al., 2019). Sound reflection occurs when waves bounce off hard surfaces like building ceilings.

On the other hand, sound absorption happens when soft and porous materials absorb sound waves, typically found on building walls (Amran, et al., 2021; Echeverria, et al., 2019). For a performance venue to effectively communicate messages to its audience, the musical tones and lyrics must be heard clearly by both artists and listeners. It requires sound clarity, which can be achieved in rooms with minimal echo (Tjokronegoro, et al., 2017). It could vary if the theater employs advanced electronic equipment that is more intricate in its operation. The challenge in "miking" performance is not in determining the required loudness but rather in finding the optimal balance between the voices and instruments to connect successfully with the audience (Théberge, 2004). According to Beranek (1992), if we talk clearly and at a regular volume from the center of the stage in a well-designed hall, the audience should be able to hear the sound comfortably, provided that there are no other sounds in the room. Nevertheless, when combining instruments, it is frequently essential to employ a body microphone or shotgun microphone to ensure that the sound can be audibly discerned amidst the presence of the instruments (Barnicle, 1994).

The backstage area is a designated space within the performance building where performers engage in various activities. This area comprises segregated dressing rooms, including main dressing rooms with private bathrooms for individual use and standard dressing rooms for multiple individuals, which may or may not have a bathroom. Additionally, performer toilets are located behind the stage, which are easily accessible from the stage and dressing rooms. The area also includes storage space for equipment, a loading dock with direct access to the stage, hidden from the audience, and a production office for organizing production elements such as lighting and sound. Due to the intended purpose of this area being for performers, the space arrangement must prioritize the performers' movement and be near one another to enhance mobility during activities.

3.3. Performing Arts

Art is acquired through engagement in creative endeavors, the experience of emotions, and the deliberate purpose behind it (Arnheim, 1958). While distinct from science and technology, artistic creativity involves the fusion of creativity, exploration, and drive, which are heavily influenced by emotions (Meusburger, 2009). Art encompasses any form of human creation that satisfies or expresses a perception of beauty (Nehamas, 2000). Art is a product of various components of human civilization, precisely taste (Munsi, 2018). The term "performance" refers to a demonstration or spectacle, such as those found in film or wayang (Erandaru, 2013; Wang, 2013). Art manifests human emotions with an inherent aesthetic quality conveyed through a tangible medium, such as sound, shape, motion, or language, and can be perceived by the five human senses (Hospers, 1954; Kemp, 2021).

Performing arts is a multifaceted art form that encompasses a variety of artistic expressions, including theater performances (Shrum, 1991). The art showcased includes not only acting but also incorporates music and the skillful application of make-up to enhance the costumes and appearance of the performers. Performing arts are inherently interconnected and dependent on other art forms, thus making it a multifaceted art form. This artistic genre is commonly associated with conceptual art, which originated in fine art but has more recently expanded into contemporary art (Fajri et al., 2020).

4. DISCUSSION

The Rumentang Siang Building was established on January 16, 1975, at Jalan Baranangsiang, Kebon Pisang Sumur Bandung, Bandung City. In 1975, the Governor of West Java Solihin G.P through West Java Governor Decree No. 13/A.1/2/SK/Kesra/75 stipulates that this art deco style building is an arts building. The building on Jalan Yun Liong (now Jalan Baranang Siang) was previously a cinema; it started with the Dutch government, called "Rivoli," then changed its name after Indonesia became independent in 1945 to become a cinema. The Rumentang Siang Building is one of the results of the cultural management policy by the previous government. Since colonial times, the management of this art building has been compartmentalized according to its main area of work.



Figure 1. Rumenteng Siang arts building

Rumentang Siang is most proud of the historical activities of the Sundanese Basa Drama Festival, which started in 1990. Hundreds of people were educated indirectly by the Sunda Kiwari Theater. The Rumentang Siang Arts Building is used to increase public appreciation of the arts and artists, especially artists who present performance works. Viewed from a human resources perspective, this should be done, apart from appreciating works of art from local

artists, but also to fulfill the entertainment and educational needs of the community, especially students. One of the outcomes is that the public art performance space in Rumentang Siang has produced many well-known artists from Bandung.

As time goes by, this public space begins to lose prestige, so visitors who watch the performance begin to decline yearly. The facilities in this building are still inadequate and seem poorly maintained, such as many audience seats and the lighting on the stage is inadequate, both on stage and behind the stage. Likewise, air conditioning facilities still rely on rudimentary ventilation, with some ventilation resulting in noise from motorbikes and sound pollution from outside, which disrupts performance, not to mention the parking facilities and toilet space that are inadequate for the audience or presenting artists in this building.



Figure 2. Interior of Rumenteng Siang

In 2013, Rumentang Siang was taken over by the Culture and Tourism Office of the West Java Provincial Government, so its management has become the government's responsibility. However, with the issue of the building being taken over, several managers of this place who had previously worked for decades were dismissed without any official notification or severance pay. In fact, since then, the State Civil Apparatus has been stationed in this building. However, because many people opposed it, in 2016, the management was returned to the previous management, but only the management. From there, there is still disagreement between the management and the Culture Service. Therefore, it would be better if management collaborated with the local government and the arts council to develop this public space for performing arts as it should. Moreover, elements of the arts community are also involved to feel like they belong.

Building management and facility services at the Rumentang Siang Building have many components that must be fulfilled like someone who is an expert in show production management, which includes cleanliness of the building environment, lighting control, electrical room, dimmer room, manager's room, scenery dock, rehearsal room, as well as several controls for stage doors which are very necessary when a show is in progress. The Bandung city government should have thought about something like this by inviting the arts council, arts actors/groups, and also the arts community to produce public spaces for arts performances that are quality and friendly for visitors. In the future, this public space will not only be a place for entertainment but, more than that, it can become a place for arts education and also an arts laboratory for performing arts practitioners.

5. CONCLUSION

The Rumentang Siang performing arts public space is located in Bandung, in the province of West Java. This building has significantly diminished in its attractiveness despite its considerable utility for the common populace. This structure serves as a public venue for the presentation of artistic performances. Additionally, it functions as a facility where artists can experiment and learn and as a center for arts education within the local community. Nevertheless, throughout time, this communal area has experienced a decline in the number of onlookers. The absence of visitor and performer amenities, poorly maintained old performance venues, and a shortage of skilled personnel to manage public performing arts spaces are the primary causes. The administration is undoubtedly concerned about the future viability of this public area, as seen by the annual fall in the number of spectators. There must be a mutual understanding between the management and the Culture Service. It would be advantageous for the management to collaborate with the local government and the Bandung City Arts Council to explore enhancing public spaces for the performing arts. It would result in higher quality venues that are more welcoming to the audience, meeting the standards expected of a performance hall. Furthermore, if members of the arts community are actively engaged in developing this public space, it will foster a feeling of pride and ownership.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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