



VOLUME 16 ISSUE 1

The International Journal of  
**Visual Design**

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**Transformation of Traditional Arts into  
Entertainment Arts**

A Case Study of Acting Aspect and Performance Packaging

INDRAYUDA INDRAYUDA AND AZRUL AZIZI BIN AMIRUL

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**THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF VISUAL DESIGN**

<http://designprinciplesandpractices.com>

ISSN: 2325-1581 (Print)

ISSN: 2325-159X (Online)

<https://doi.org/10.18848/2325-1581/CGP> (Journal)

First published by Common Ground Research Networks in 2022

University of Illinois Research Park

60 Hazelwood Drive

Champaign, IL 61820 USA

Ph: +1-217-328-0405

<http://cgnetworks.org>

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is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal.

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# Transformation of Traditional Arts into Entertainment Arts: A Case Study of Acting Aspect and Performance Packaging

Indrayuda Indrayuda,<sup>1</sup> Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia  
Azrul Azizi Bin Amirul, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

*Abstract: The development of Randai as the Minangkabaunese traditional art in various regencies and cities in West Sumatra has decreased. One of the problems leading to such decrease is the presence of modern dances and theaters. Therefore, in order to keep its existence relevant, Randai needs to be transformed. This article aims at describing the transformation of Randai from a traditional art to a new form of performing arts. A descriptive qualitative research method was used to examine changes in Randai performances related to the aspects of acting perspective and performance packaging. The informants in this study were the heirs of traditional art of Randai, the actors of Randai, the managers of entertainment performing arts, art connoisseurs, and performing arts critics. The data were collected using interviews, direct observations on Randai activities, and literature review. The data were analyzed using an ethnographic method. The results show that there have been changes in the form and the packaging structure of Randai art. The newly designed Randai art is more artistic due to new acting and packaging techniques. These factors have transformed Randai into one of the more innovative performing arts.*

*Keywords: Randai Transformation, Performing Arts, Acting, Performance Packaging*

## Introduction

Randai is an old cultural heritage that remains cultivated by Minangkabaunese people who live in West Sumatra Province, as well as by those living outside West Sumatra and in the Malay Peninsula. Randai continues to exist in various *nagari* (traditional Minangkabaunese villages) throughout the regencies or cities in West Sumatra. Zulkifli (2013), one of the Randai experts in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra, states that Randai is one of the Minangkabaunese cultural heritages that has been inherited by Minangkabaunese people since the era of Datuak Katumanggungan and Perpatih Nan Sabatang in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Earlier, Randai used to be a *nagari*'s youth game developed based on several movements of *pencak silat* or martial arts (called *silek* in bahasa Minangkabau). The movements of *silek* are called *mancak*, which are further developed into a performing art of *pencak silat* movements, and are performed in a circular configuration.

After the entrance of *bangsawan* theatrical performance to Minangkabau, the art of Randai was no longer limited only to *pencak silat* movements, but it has been elaborated with acting, literature, and music, so that Randai performance has turned into a folk theater. Various kinds of folk tales and heroic stories were performed in Randai. Since then, the art of Randai continued to develop and reached its peak of development in the Indonesia's New Order Government (or Soeharto's Government 1966–1998). At that time, Randai served as the information medium for the government's Family Planning program (Harun 1980) because the Randai story could be modified depending on the type of its audience. For example, when the performance was attended mostly by indigenous people such as *niniak mamak* (a group of leaders of tribes in Minangkabau), then the messages conveyed in the Randai story were matters relating to Minangkabaunese traditional customs. When the performance was attended mostly

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author: Indrayuda Indrayuda, Jalan Prof. Dr. Hamka Air Tawar, Drama, Dance and Music Arts Study Program, Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, West Sumatra, 25131, Indonesia. email: yudaindra@fbs.unp.ac.id

by civil servants or government employees, then the messages conveyed in the Randai story were matters related to government's programs, such as Family Planning program (Putri and Salam 2015).

Currently, the development of Randai in various regencies and cities in West Sumatra has decreased. Although Randai's existence remains one of the cultural focuses, the number of its performances has started to decline. From 1980 to 1998, the Randai Festival was held annually by the provincial government of West Sumatra; however, since 1999 the Randai Festival has no longer been held on a regular basis (HS 2014). Moreover, based on the information from the informants, Randai performance was no longer relevant to people's tastes. On the one hand, the public wanted Randai performance to change from its previous form and structure, but on the other hand the actors and directors of Randai always presented Randai performances based on the established traditional structure.

Traditionally, the general procedures for the Randai performance are as follows. First, Randai is opened by the coming of Randai players onto a stage performing *silek galombang* or walking while clapping their hands and saying "hep ta hep ti" before the movements of *silek galombang*. Second, *dayang daini* song is played together with the movements of *pasambahan silek* (*silek* for welcoming the audience). Every traditional Randai must use *dayang daini* song at the beginning of the performance. After that, speeches and narrations about the story to be performed are delivered by either the *tuo Randai* (the leader or the respected person in the Randai performance) or the *tukang dendang* (story teller). Third, *legaran* is performed through the movements of *silek galombang* and *silek pancak*. The movements in *legaran* must be accompanied by *simarantang randah dendang* (another traditional Minangkabau song). Fourth, the players enact the story of Randai with the ancient version of Minangkabau dialogue, with its oral literature. Fifth, several scenes are shown following the scenario created by the director. Finally, the Randai performance is closed by the performance of *legaran* accompanied by *simarantang tinggi* song, and all the Randai players leave the stage. In the structure of traditional Randai performance, each scene transition is carried out through *legaran* movements accompanied by songs and musical instruments such as *saluang*, *talempong*, and drum. The songs also express the next story to be performed by the actors and actresses. This traditional Randai performance generally lasts about 30 to 45 minutes.

The main elements in traditional Randai performance, according to Putri, Desfiarni and Darmawati (2015), are *silek galombang* when getting into the arena, *dayang daini* song, *simarantang randah* and *simarantang tinggi* songs, *legaran* configuration, *tapuak galembong*, movements of *silek mancak* or *pancak*, actors and actresses. These elements must be carried out by every Randai group during its performance. According to Randai artists throughout the regencies and cities in West Sumatra, eliminating the main elements of Randai in its performance means eliminating the essential elements and peculiarities of Randai itself, resulting in a new form of art instead of Randai.

Today's world phenomena show that globalization has penetrated various sectors of community life, both in rural and urban areas, one of which is the art and tourism sector. Globalization has had an impact on the presence of the entertainment and tourism industry sector in Indonesia in general and West Sumatra in particular. The emergence of entertainment industry has encouraged the establishment of various event organizers and art studios that have grown intensively in West Sumatra (Indrayuda and Ardipal 2017). This means that the Randai performance structure described in the paragraph above is no longer favored by the audience of arts performances in West Sumatra.

Based on their preliminary observation, the writers found that Randai art has been oppressed by the emergence of various other more innovative and entertaining performing arts. The emergence of a number of creative dances and performing arts that are packaged with contemporary choreographic approaches and dramaturgy concepts has resulted in the

elimination of traditional Randai art from the socio-cultural life of the Minangkabau people in various villages.

The presentation of traditional Randai art is considered too traditional by event organizers and entertainment art consumers. Their criticism lies in the form of Randai's packaging, such as costumes, movements, acting and literature as well as stuffy blocking techniques. The techniques are stuffy because no improvements have been addressed to them. Information from consumers and event organizers has influenced people's mindset of art and aesthetics in various regions, leading to Randai's loss of market share. The selling power of Randai art has decreased at this time. This is in line with Arifninetrirosa, Dewi, and Sembiring (2019) who found that the art of Randai has not been able to adapt to the flow of performing arts development, so that many Randai performances have received less response from the public. Currently, the performance of Randai has become less and less attractive to the people in various villages in West Sumatra.

In general, the acting or roles performed by Randai actors and actresses often have not yet been reflected in their characterizations, body movements and expressions. As a result, when the actors and actresses play their role, it is obvious that they cannot artistically and aesthetically satisfy the audience's aesthetic feelings. They are too innocent and stiff in acting. Moreover, their vocal techniques have not been well trained. Meanwhile, today's society needs artistically natural acting; therefore, the traditional form of Randai should make various adjustments in its performance to satisfy the tastes of today's society.

The need to such adjustments is in line with Nadjamuddin, Syamsiah, and Tahir (2018) who argue that art performances in South Sulawesi have made an effort to adapt to the power of political, social, economic and aesthetic changes. The strong challenges of change have made the traditional theater of *Kondo Buleng* transformed following the tastes of today's society. Such effort was done in order to make the existence of the Kondo Buleng folk theater continue to be recognized and used by the community as a medium of entertainment. The same case also occurred in the traditional *Wayang Topeng* art in Malang Regency, East Java, where the demands of tourism and society have been contaminated with global entertainment arts, causing local artists to restore the form and style of Wayang Topeng performance. They focused on fixing the artistic aspects of the performance and the models of art performance for tourists, which presented many actual stories and conformed to the mindset of modern society.

People's desire for innovative performances, both in terms of form and content, has an impact on Randai artists' creativity to develop new patterns of Randai performances. The researchers observed that various public criticisms on traditional Randai performance have been responded by the Randai artists by changing the paradigm of performance art. Randai needs to be maintained because it contains the noble values of Minangkabau culture and moral messages that serve as local wisdom of the Minangkabau community.

There are several cases of traditional arts that have transformed following the needs of modern society, such as *Mak Yong* in Malay land and *Ludruk* in Java. Mpss (2010) believes that, as a cultural product, traditional art is not something static and untouchable by development. A traditional art like Mak Yong always undergoes a transformation depending on the dynamics of the local society, either in terms of its content or form, or both, and will be continually replaced by new traditions that are considered more suitable to the situations, conditions and tastes of the people at that time. Furthermore, Setiawan and Sutarto (2014) argue that a traditional art such as *Ludruk* in Java cannot be separated from the influence of its current situation and environmental conditions. This means that traditional art is not an antique that needs to be preserved, but it needs to be developed dynamically following the situations and conditions of the people who use it, provided that its essence or philosophical value does not change or shift.

Recently, various collaborations between traditional Randai artists and modern artists from performing arts groups in West Sumatra have emerged. These performing arts groups are also

called performing arts studios, generally located in urban areas, only a few are in rural areas. Nevertheless, Randai artists in the rural areas often collaborate with artists from performing arts groups in urban areas. In addition, they have collaborated with academicians in the field of performing arts. As a result, various innovations have been made in Randai performances, and Randai has transformed from traditional performing arts to entertainment performing arts in the context of entertainment industry. Such transformation is mainly for the sake of the sustainability of Randai art in Minangkabau society or for other communities. Moreover, such transformation is the result of the local artists' reinterpretation of the influence of the outside world to the world of art entertainment.

Referring to the issue of transformation of other traditional arts in Southeast Asia or in Indonesia, such as the case of *nooraa* art in Southern Thailand, Iwasawa (2008) says that, in a contemporary context, *nooraa* artists have preserved the traditional ritual, *nooraa roong khruu*. However, in an entertainment context, *nooraa* artists have made a number of changes. The artists or the professional performers have developed a modern style, i.e., *beap saakhon*. Such changes allow many people to participate in *nooraa*. Students can now learn about the local culture through their physical experiences by watching and learning the *nooraa* art. When *nooraa* turns into something accessible to anyone, it will certainly inspire every *nooraa* player to produce new interpretations of spiritual rites and new types of creation. This also applies to the Randai art performance in West Sumatra. Randai is now accessible to everyone, resulting in various interpretations of new style of Randai art. This is the product of transformation taking place in the traditional arts of West Sumatra.

The cases experienced by such traditional arts as Mak Yong, Ludruk, Wayang Orang, and Kondo Buleng Theater are almost similar with the ones experienced by Randai, i.e., the problems of transformations for the re-existence of the arts to prevent extinction. However, the unique case experienced by Randai is related to the problem of technical composition, which is considered obsolete. Its composition is no longer in accordance with the tastes of today's Minangkabau society in West Sumatra. Consequently, in order to adapt to the tastes of today's Minangkabau society, Randai artists should make a transformation in the Randai art.

Based on the problems experienced by the Randai art, this article aims at: (i) finding out to what extent the changes or transformation of Randai art can be enjoyed by the audience; (ii) finding out how the form of performance packaging and changes from traditional patterns to modernization in acting and performances are able to seize the entertainment performing arts market in West Sumatra. This study focuses on the problem of performance and creativity of Randai as a performance art in West Sumatra.

## Method

This descriptive qualitative study was conducted in seven areas in West Sumatra, including 50 Kota Regency, Solok Regency, Agam Regency, Payakumbuh City, Tanah Datar Regency, Padang Pariaman Regency and Padang City. Those regencies and cities were selected because they were the center of development and cultivation of Randai art in West Sumatra.

The research subjects were selected based on the research objectives and research problems. The research subjects were 124 people consisting of seven *tuu Randai* (master teachers of Randai), forty-nine Randai players, seven traditional singers, seven *saluang* (a type of bamboo flute) players, fourteen *talempong/cak lempong* (Minangkabau traditional percussion instrument) players, fourteen Randai trainers, seven *silek* (martial arts) teachers/trainers, 14 customary law holders, and five academician-artists. Furthermore, 21 Randai performances were selected as the research object (three Randai performances from each of the selected regions/cities). The observations on the Randai performances were guided by the observation guidelines which included acting and dialogue techniques, literature, *silek* movements,

*galembong* clapping (clapping on pants), songs, *talempong* music composition, movement rhythm patterns, musical rhythm patterns, actor displacement, expressions, and configuration.

In this study, the researchers were the key instrument serving as the designer and implementer in the research. In addition, the researchers were assisted by other equipment such as audio-visual recording devices, writing instruments, and computer devices. These tools were used to collect and process the data. Audio-visual recording was particularly intended to ensure the authors recollected the performance clearly.

The validity of the data was carried out by repeatedly conducting various data checks, as well as conducting discussions with colleagues. All the data were processed by means of a triangulation process which was done through observations, interviews, and reviews involving several researchers in culture field and mentors who were experts in the field of performing arts.

The data were collected using observations, interviews, literature studies, non-human sources employment, and audio-visual documentation of the Randai performances. The interviews were recorded using a video recording device. The data were analyzed using Spradley's ethnographic method through several steps, including (1) determining the research object; (2) conducting field observations; (3) conducting domain analysis; (4) conducting focused observations; (5) conducting taxonomic analysis of the sequencing data; (6) conducting theme analysis; and (7) writing reports.

## Results and Discussion

One of the positive values owned by Minangkabau people, especially those living in West Sumatra, is open-mindedness. They accept changes more quickly than other ethnic groups in Indonesia, resulting in easy adaptation to such changes. This attitude is motivated by a Minangkabau philosophy *kain dipakai usang, adaiik dipakai baru*, which means if the cloth is used, it will always be worn out, but if *adat* or custom is used, it will always be new. This implies that custom has no rigid ties, it is dynamic and it is able to adapt to the local natural environment. Due to such characteristics, *adat* will always be new and never be worn out; if *adat* is worn out, it is no longer an applicable *adat*.

Referring to the open-mindedness of Minangkabau people, currently in West Sumatra are various transformations in the field of culture, including transformation of arts such as Randai. West Sumatran people quickly accept a variety of new information from technical aspects (such as styles, patterns and colors) and knowledge aspects of performing arts, which they obtain from various information media that are easily accessible to the public. This, in turn, affects their mindset and taste of arts. The changes in their artistic taste have an impact on their view of Randai art performance in Tanah Datar Regency, Padang Pariaman Regency, 50 Kota Regency, Padang City, Payakumbuh City, and Agam Regency. Their mindset wants a change in the Randai performance, provided that it does not change the essence and does not erode the values of local custom and culture.

Based on the results of the observations in those areas, today's Minangkabau people do not like the performance with classic packaging design. The Randai packaging includes movements, acting techniques, music (accompaniment), costumes, and show duration. An old package is characterized by one *legaran* configuration and *salam pasambahan* (greeting dance). In addition, people do not really like the performance with long duration which is caused by many repetitions of the same movements in one *legaran*. This implicitly shows that the artists and directors have less creative ideas about the movements, music and songs used in the *legaran*. In addition to packaging, the people also do not really enjoy the acting or the role performed by the actors and actresses because they are less able to properly present the story figure through their expressions and gestures. This is caused by the absence of training in modern acting style for better acting techniques provided to Randai players in West Sumatra. These factors have contributed to the current transformation of Randai made by the artists and

directors in West Sumatra. The local directors and artists believe that transformations in Randai need to be done for the sustainability and existence of Randai in West Sumatra. This supports Thomas (2014) who states that adaptation to the local environment is required in order to preserve and maintain a local art. Based on the results of his study on *Skala Brak Mask Theater*, a performing art of the indigenous ethnic minority in West Lampung Indonesia, he found that the local artists have made various changes and shifts in the shape of the mask, which is part of the packaging of Skala Brak Mask Theater, in order to maintain the existence of this performing art in West Lampung.

In addition, Setiawan and Sutarto (2014) reported that traditional artists use transformation as a strategy to support traditional arts to survive in complex social, economic, political, and cultural conditions. Thus, a concrete effort is obviously needed, one of which is through cultural transformation. This is what local artists in West Sumatra are currently doing with the Randai art. They have made a transformation in the Randai art, so that Randai has transformed from a traditional art to an entertainment art.

Various transformations have been shown in Randai performances as part of the production of the entertainment arts industry in West Sumatra, including the transformation of the packaging whose sequence of performances now consists of *legaran* part (see Figure 1), movements in *legaran* (see Figure 2 and Figure 3), music and song in *legaran* part (see Figure 4), and configurations. Meanwhile, in the acting part, the transformation includes the acting techniques, gestures, vocal techniques, literature, and movement from one place to another.



Figure 1: *Galombang Silek* at the Beginning Part of Randai Performance  
Source: Indrayuda



Figure 2: Movements in *Dayang Daini* Song  
Source: Indrayuda





Figure 3: Movements of Tapping on *Galembong*  
 Source: Indrayuda



Figure 4: Movements in *Legaran* during *Dendang Simarantang Randah*  
 Source: Indrayuda

The transformations in Randai performance sequences shown in Figures 1 to 4 were taken during the 2018 Minangkabau Cultural Exhibition Show held in Padang, the capital of West Sumatra Province. The details about such transformations on Randai are elaborated below.

***Randai Transformation from Acting Perspective***

After observing the Randai performances in seven regencies and cities in West Sumatra, the researchers found the problems in the acting techniques performed by the players. The audience said that the acting techniques were still unable to satisfy their aesthetic instincts. They saw that the actors and actresses in the Randai performance did not seem to have attractive body postures. For example, their bodies tended to be limp, their faces were sluggish, the expressions depicted in their faces were tasteless (did not attract the audience) or failed to express the character of the figures they acted for. Besides, they also said that many players felt embarrassed or awkward in playing their roles. This fact has an impact on the reduced interest of the audience to watch the Randai performances in West Sumatra. Nowadays, due to the rapid development of sophisticated information technology, people can easily access various performances of modern dance, music and theater. Such phenomena become a comparison for them to evaluate the Randai performances they watch.

The recent cultural phenomena are inseparable from various perspectives of socio-cultural changes. The phenomena due to such socio-cultural changes strengthen the sustainability of a

cultural element, such as the emergence of various innovations in the form of art works and the emergence of both monumental and contemporary creative performance arts. The phenomena also implicitly remind Randai directors and trainers that they cannot escape from the flow of changes (Indrayuda 2015).

Moreover, the decline of traditional art in the market competition is caused by various aspects such as non-actual forms, poor designs, fixed work patterns, static performance techniques, fixed musical accompaniment, and disorganized performance packaging (Jamil, Anwar, and Kholiq 2011; Erwany 2016). That traditional performing arts tend to be long, complicated, rigid in rules, and less varied makes the audience feel bored and tired with the presentation. The weakness is also found in some of the players' acting skills indicating that the players are not well trained. In many traditional theater arts, the actors play their role carelessly. This is what makes folk performing arts such as *Ludruk*, *Mak Yong*, and Randai left by today's audiences.

Based on the results of the interview with one of the Randai experts, from the entertainment aspect, Randai has lost its attractiveness to the Minangkabau people. Randai performances are considered boring, so the audience feels that their feelings and thoughts are forced to understand the Randai performance. The movements are less attractive and repeated several times, and cannot exactly convey the messages contained during the Randai performance. Thus, the performance is lack of creativity. In fact, creativity is needed by artists, as Kent (2019) argues that an artist, such as a pianist, needs to interpret his/her own play in order to develop creativity. However, as artists, Randai players have not been able to develop their creativity in producing quality acting technique; therefore, they cannot properly represent the figures they act for during the performance.

Many traditional Randai trainers simply let the actors do improvisation on the stage without emphasizing the importance of learning certain acting techniques before coming onto the stage. The results of the interview with one of the Randai players indicate that the focus of the Randai trainers or directors is on the dialogue memorizing taken from oral literature. They pay less attention to the acting techniques that represent the meaning contained in the dialogue script. As a result, every actor performs a rigid acting and shows less movement during the dialogue. Thus, the audience has not been able to fully enjoy the actors' performance.

Responding to the case of poor acting quality of the Randai players, Randai directors and trainers are currently busy adopting the acting techniques from modern theater. The local artists and Randai directors jointly agree to change their performance styles from traditional art styles to modern theater styles. This means that the acting styles or techniques which are often performed by modern theater players are now learned and trained to Randai artists in the regencies and cities in West Sumatra.

Based on the results of the interview with one of the Randai experts, based on the theater knowledge approach, the dramaturgy of Randai must give more emphasis on good acting technique because the old Randai performances used to focus on the selected oral literature. It is true that the traditional Randai has better literary value than its acting technique. Its oral literature is more capable of bringing the audience's imagination to the past. Through its oral literature, the players are able to influence the audience's feelings, as if the audience were taken to the past lives of Minangkabau. However, such literature power should be followed by the improvement on acting techniques due to the development of people's artistic taste for entertainment.

Moreover, traditional Randai players used to rely on their instincts in acting because they had never acquired knowledge of the art of acting. However, today's Randai directors and trainers have started to train Randai players with breathing and vocal techniques to produce proper articulation. In addition, today's Randai players are also trained to produce good intonation, including tempo, dynamics, and rhythm. It is expected that they can successfully hypnotize the audience through their perfect intonation.

In addition, Randai players are still unable to precisely express the emotions contained in the story figure's characters, while they should be able to integrate their emotions to the characters of the figures they act for. Therefore, the Randai trainers provide dramatic behavior training by often playing with the players' emotions. This means that the old model and style of acting have been left by today's Randai trainers and directors. As a result, they have demonstrated a new form of acting in Randai performances.

For actors, role playing means turning themselves into the figures' characters and emotions manifested through their actions and words. Such characters are manifested in three parts: body, mind and emotion of characters. Creating a role means creating the whole human life spirit that must be seen physically, mentally and emotionally (Harymawan 1993). The concept of acting proposed by Harymawan had never been studied and applied in the traditional Randai performances. However, after many criticisms on the weakness of traditional Randai performances are addressed to the acting part, Harymawan's (1993) acting concept has been adopted by Randai artists in Tanah Datar Regency, Padang City, Payakumbuh City, and Agam Regency.

Having observed the current Randai performances several times, the writers found that there has been a change in the aspect of acting performed by Randai players. This means that the acting problem in Randai performances has been given serious attention to meet the style and taste of arts of today's Minangkabau people. A transformation to a more recent acting style, including mastery of the stage and movement from one space to another, has been made. Another visible transformation that has been made is a better physical and spiritual control, including body control, flexibility of gesture movements, body consciousness in movements (legs, hands, and body position while standing and sitting), and breathing control while talking.

Recently, there has been a fundamental transformation in the acting techniques performed by Randai actors. This transformation is motivated by the intervention of academicians and professional artists in creating a new face of Randai performance. Many traditional Randai groups and professional or semi-professional performing arts groups in West Sumatra collaborate with academician-artists to change the acting pattern in Randai performance.

The results of the interview with one of the Randai experts indicate the need of transforming Randai into an innovative performing art. To achieve such purpose, the players' acting technique must be changed. This is also particularly important to eliminate the impression that Randai is a plebeian art performance, an art performance only for villagers. Nowadays Randai has been marketed to tourism industry as the entertainment for local, national, regional, and international tourists. In addition, Randai currently becomes a study object among art academicians not only in West Sumatra, but also in Indonesia and in other countries. Therefore, the acting technique in Randai needs a fundamental change in order that its performance can be enjoyed by all the audience. The weakness in the acting technique has been recognized by most of the traditional Randai managers in West Sumatra. Nowadays, there has been collaboration between managers, artists, and trainers of traditional Randai and professional performing arts groups in West Sumatra, especially those in the cities of Padang, Bukittinggi, Padang Panjang, and Payakumbuh.

Currently, such collaboration has an impact on changes in the acting techniques performed by Randai players. Changes in people's tastes have an impact on the desire of Randai artists to transform from traditional substances to new, innovative substances. One of the realizations of such changes is the acting technique in the new model of Randai performance in West Sumatra. The Randai players act like modern theater players with a new style and character. Randai performance does no longer show stiff actors or actresses and their weak physical consciousness, but it shows a natural movement of actors or actresses with well-planned gestural movements. Therefore, the new model of Randai performance can be enjoyed by the audience.



Figure 5: A Dialogue Performed by the Actress Using an Acting Technique  
 Source: Indrayuda

The transformation made by Randai artists in collaboration with academician-artists has produced new strengths, i.e., the strengths in the acting techniques performed by Randai artists (see Figure 5). Such transformation makes the form of Randai performances become more varied. Changes in acting have been able to preserve Randai as a cultural heritage of the Minangkabau people, so that the Minangkabau people will continue to recognize and witness Randai as one of the entertainment objects for people in West Sumatra, local tourists, and international tourists.

Yohanes (2012) argues that the problem of transformation in traditional performing arts is motivated by their outdated form and content or packaging. Therefore, such traditional performing arts need to be transformed, so that they are relevant to the socio-cultural developments in the society. So, responding to Yohanes' (2012) argument, currently the acting techniques of Randai art have experienced changes. Randai players' body characters have been able to embody the characters of the figure they act for. In addition, the movements from one space to another space on the stage have been improved with newer movement techniques. The most notable change is incorporating elements of dance movements in the position movements. In short, the aspect of acting in Randai has experienced various changes.

Changes in acting techniques indicate that Randai players now play their role based on their acting skills (see Figure 6). This is in line with Sari (2019) who says that one of the important demands in creative art performances is having the acting skills because the real duty of actors or actresses manifests all the figure's characterizations in the story. Fulfillment of the skills is realized by placing the instruments of acting (i.e., emotion, body, vocals, and intelligence) as the important targets in creativity. Considering that Randai art is an art that can be referred to as a folk performance art, acting skills are very much needed. One of the success indicators of Randai performances is the quality of performance of the Randai actors or actresses. Recently, these skills are owned by most of the Randai players who act as actors in the performance.



Figure 6: The Scene Performed by Randai Players Using an Acting Technique  
Source: Indrayuda

Thus, Randai directors and trainers have trained Randai players with various acting techniques such as recognizing and preparing physical conditions (i.e., by practicing flexibility, strength, stamina, and speed), practicing body experiences (i.e., stage exploration and exploration of scripts and characters), and recognizing tempo or rhythm in movement. As shown in Figure 6, the Randai players have already performed various acting techniques. They show proportional body gestures and facial expressions. Furthermore, the directors and trainers also prepare the players with skills and knowledge to recognize emotional reactions, self-reactions, sounds and rhythms, styles and gestures, and balance in movements.

Nowadays, the changes in the acting techniques in most traditional Randai performances have an impact on the increased selling value of Randai in the entertainment industry market in West Sumatra. Randai art has been involved by various event organizers in various regencies and cities in West Sumatra for the purposes of entertainment industry. In addition, since the last three years, the people of West Sumatra have also used Randai as part of entertainment programs.

### ***Randai Transformation from Performance Packaging Perspective***

Changes in the form of performing art packaging are inseparable from the desires and the artistic tastes of the community. People want such a variety of new forms of art performance that they can enjoy, i.e., art performances with new and unique packaging (Indrayuda 2014). The art performances with static or fixed packaging model tend to be criticized and, eventually, left by most of people.

Considering the increased growth and development of arts industry in West Sumatra or Indonesia, the managers of entertainment industry have responded wisely and tactfully through a number of tangible efforts. One of the efforts is by bringing about changes in the packaging of the art performances. This is in line with Jazuli (2001) who argues that the presence of the arts and tourism industry will give birth to consumable performing arts and consumable entertainment arts. Therefore, it is inevitable that traditional art artists need to adjust their performances to meet the tastes of today's community. The show should be packaged in a well-designed art performance for consumption purposes with solid packaging, attractive presentation, and short duration. Traditional Randai performance used to last about thirty to forty-five minutes, while the modified one lasts about fifteen to twenty minutes. Such art packaging is a new phenomenon whose format will be adjusted to the conditions and tastes of arts connoisseurs or entertainment industry consumers.

Some of the characteristics of traditional performing arts that are packaged for the needs of the current art industry are: (1) the artwork is a reconstruction, modification or new creation

originating from the existing traditional arts; (2) in terms of its form and structure, the art performance should be short and concise; (3) the artwork should be non-monotonous, but is varied and dynamic; (4) the rates for watching the art performance should be in accordance with the purchasing power of the market; (5) the artwork is easy to understand and does not cause saturation of the mind in interpreting the message conveyed (Indrayuda 2016).

Previous Randai performances were essentially packaged in long time duration. As a result, most of the audience left the venue before the end of Randai performance. Nevertheless, such phenomenon did not take the attention of the management of Randai art in various regencies and cities in West Sumatra. Eventually, Randai was increasingly abandoned by the audience. Fortunately, in early 2015, many Randai artists started to be aware of such situation, and they started to create new Randai art packaging models. As a result, in early 2016, a new model of Randai art was performed during the *Randai Kreasi* festival held in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra.

Randai performances used to be simpler in the way they were packaged. In the aspect of movements, for example, a number of repetitions were obviously visible while demonstrating *Galembong* clapping. In each scene, the Randai players used to demonstrate the same pattern or technique of *Galembong* clapping. As a result, there were too many similar movements, causing most of the audience feel bored while watching the Randai performance. Ideally, there should be changes or variations in the technique of *Galembong* clapping when performed in different parts or scenes of Randai performance.

Many repetitions also used to be visible in *legaran*. The movements demonstrated in a part of *legaran* were repeated in other parts of *legaran*, showing less or even no variation of movements. Therefore, the audience would watch exactly the same movements in every part of *legaran*. When the Randai performance used ten scenes, for example, the audience would watch the same movements ten times because the movements were repeated in each of the ten scenes. As a result, the *legaran* part of Randai performance was monotonous and boring. In every scene, there should be a variation of movements because the message conveyed in every scene is different as well.

According to Putra (2012), the development of entertainment industry in Indonesia has stimulated the emergence of new ideas in the way how performing arts are packaged. In addition, this significantly encourages the creativity of artists to develop their ideas in creating new forms of performing arts packaging. Such development is essentially intended to attract more people to watch the performance.

Furthermore, Indrayuda and Ardipal (2017) say that artists are required to be responsive to the growth and development of entertainment performing arts in the era of arts and information technology industry by developing their skills to meet the growing artistic tastes of the community. This means that local artists should not be too idealistic about their local cultural heritage, as well as their creations. They are required to be more creative in renewing their art skills, particularly in the way how their art performances should be packaged, because packaging (that includes movements, acting techniques, music, costumes, and show duration) greatly impacts the integrity of the on-stage art performance. The art performance must be packaged neatly because today's people's artistic tastes are detailed and neat.

A traditional art, such as Randai in the Minangkabau community, needs creative ideas so that the soul of traditional art can be maintained. The soul of an art can weaken over time, or the art repeatedly performed, such as dance, theater or music, might cause its soul to decline. Therefore, various opportunities for developing traditional arts must always be considered in order to keep their soul alive. In the process of performing arts development, there is a dialogue between traditional thought and modern thought, and the absence of which will have an impact on poverty of ideas and decrease in the selling value and use value of traditional arts, such as Randai in Minangkabau society which is currently experiencing changes (Rustiyanti 2014).

Referring to the weaknesses found in the packaging of Randai performance, the Randai artists involved in the management of Randai art have made efforts to improve such weaknesses, which have been criticized by observers of performing arts and have no longer been in accordance with the tastes of the local community. One of the efforts is by establishing collaboration with various academician-artists and professional artists to change the pattern and performance packaging into the package of entertainment performing arts. Recently, the performance of Randai art has been transformed into dynamic, solid and attractive package (see Figure 7 and Figure 8). In addition, the package of musical accompaniment has included the elements of popular Minangkabau music and its other variants.



Figure 7: Changes in the Movements Aspect in Randai Performance  
 Source: Indrayuda



Figure 8: *Payung* Dance Movements in Randai Performance  
 Source: Indrayuda

Responding to such transformation, Mahardianto (2018) says that the transformation in Randai performance substantially lies in its form or packaging. Changes need to be made in order to maintain the continuity of the existence of Randai in the life of Minangkabau people and in order to preserve the Randai art. The main change is found in its form because it is the real object that can be seen by people, so that it is able to provide an aesthetic stimulus for the people’s artistic tastes and feelings. The changes in the form of Randai performance are found in the movement aspect such as galombang movements while coming onto the stage, galombang movements while coming off the stage, and silek or martial movements in legaran. The Randai performance with its legaran characteristics is still maintained, but the legaran form has been transformed from one form into two or more legaran forms in one performance package. Moreover, in addition to legaran configuration, such other configurations as vertical lines, straight lines and curved lines configurations have been made (see Figure 9). In addition,

there are other new variations of movements in legaran, such as increasing the frequency of galembong tapping, including the movements from Minangkabu dances, and using the combination of Minangkabau dance movements and dangdut (one of genres of Indonesian folk music) movements. Changes in legaran movements are intended to satisfy the artistic taste of Minangkabau people who enjoy Randai performance.



Figure 9: New Configuration Pattern in *Legaran*  
 Source: Indrayuda

Viewed from its structure, the Randai performance is no longer focused on the old established structure. For example, in some Randai performances, welcoming speech which used to be performed before dayang daini song has been dismissed. Meanwhile, dayang daini song is kept, but its musical accompaniment is combined with percussion and talempung. Furthermore, the first part of Randai performance keeps using simarantang randah, but the next part does not immediately present the story scene; it presents dance and silek movements instead. Then, the next part is the story scenes, but between the scenes, which used to play legaran only, is now a new variation of movements introduced such as dances, artistic movements and music compositions. The closing part keeps using simarantang tinggi. At the end of some Randai performances, silek galombang is still used, but with a newly designed structure by including various genres of silek. However, in some other Randai performances, the show is closed with gandang tasa music compositions or traditional music compositions.

The composition of the music in Randai performance has departed from the old standard, focusing more on melodies from saluang and bansi (a kind of wind instrument), to the new composition by introducing gandang tasa music composition, a combination of talempung pacik and gandang tasa music compositions, or gandang sarunai music composition. Each legaran which used to be accompanied by a traditional rhythmic song has now been varied with contemporary Minangkabau pop songs. The song choices are more varied. In addition to old songs, such as Talago Biru, Mudiak Arau, Singgalang Jaya, Pasisia (regencies located along the coast), folk songs have been used in the current Randai art. In traditional Randai art, it is very rare to find folk songs from coastal regencies.

The development of Randai performance packaging has been oriented toward the entertainment performing arts market, so the packaging is now made in a new form with a shorter duration of performance, i.e., between fifteen and twenty minutes (compared to forty-five to sixty minutes of traditional Randai performances). Nevertheless, for people who want to watch Randai performance without stories, i.e., enjoying the Randai's movements only, the performance duration even becomes shorter, i.e., between seven and nine minutes.

The importance of improving performing art packaging is also expressed by Setiawan and Sutarto (2014) who believe that the main weakness of traditional art compared to pop art or



modern art lies in its packaging. This is in line with Hidayat, Indrayuda, and Syahrel (2013) who argue that the marginalization of Randai art is due to the lack of neat packaging; therefore, many Randai arts performances have lost their audience. At this time, the packaging has been the main concern of every Randai trainer. As a result, a number of Randai groups have established collaborative programs with various parties including academician-artists in West Sumatra.

The performance packaging perspective is a major issue for entertainment performing arts lovers. Besides, entertainment industry managers also prioritize packaging as the indicator of successful performing arts. Consequently, if the packaging of Randai performance does not match the tastes and provisions of entertainment industry managers, then Randai performance will not be able to attract the audience's attention, and its competitiveness with other performing arts will continue to decline. Realizing the importance of packaging for the performance, Randai artists have collaborated with artists from more professional performing arts groups in West Sumatra. As a result, the new form of Randai performance has now begun to be used by managers of entertainment industry in West Sumatra.

## Conclusion

Randai performance art has transformed from traditional performing art to entertainment performing art form. This means that Randai art has experienced changes due to the desires of the performing arts market. This change has actually returned Randai's position as one of the cultural focuses in West Sumatra. Randai art has no longer lost its market, because it has made various transformations including its forms (acting techniques, configuration, movement, costumes, and music) and its performance structure. Besides, Randai art has transformed from a traditional packaging pattern to a new packaging pattern that is concise, short, attractive, neat, and dynamic.

Recently, many Randai artists have collaborated with academician-artists to improve their acting techniques and the performance packaging. The various demands of the entertainment performing arts market have influenced the mindset of Randai artists to improve the aspects of acting techniques and the pattern of packaging; as a result, Randai performances are no longer abandoned by art lovers or art connoisseurs in West Sumatra. In short, Randai performing art has been transformed into a new performing art form, which is more attractive, more concise in its form and content, more sophisticated in its acting techniques, simpler and more dynamic in its performance structure. The packaging is generally attractive to today's performing arts audience in West Sumatra. This newly transformed Randai performance has several implications to the people of West Sumatra. First, they can continue enjoying their traditional art Randai in a more attractive performance package. Second, newly transformed Randai performance can be used as one of the attractive media to attract more tourists to visit West Sumatra. Furthermore, the efforts of transforming Randai performance discussed in this article can be used as the model for other cultures to revitalize and maintain their traditional art performances.

## Acknowledgement

This article is the result of a research conducted in a group. Many parties are involved in this study. We would like to thank Randai elders, artists and cultural observers such as Zulhendri Ismed, Rizal Tanjung, Armeynd Sufhatsril, Saparman, Musra Dahrizal, Ismar Madis, Zulkifli, Yumartias, Hasanawi, and Mak Lenggang Halim for their contributions in completing this research. We would also like to thank our friends at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) for all the criticism and suggestions to make this article better.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

***Indrayuda Indrayuda:*** A Senior Lecturer in the Drama, Dance and Music Arts Study Program, Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia

***Azrul Azizi Bin Amirul:*** A Senior Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Department, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Gelugor, Penang, Malaysia

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