

# Destandardization of Art at Flash Mob Performance in Public Space:

*A Case Study of Beksan Wanara from the Yogyakarta Court, Indonesia*

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## Abstract

Flash mob performances in Indonesia emerge in response to urban affluence. Flash mobs, as an activity, explore unconventional performance spaces. The goal of this article is not only to address previous research gaps but also to explain how flash mob art performances have challenged aesthetic standards. Information about traditional dance flash mobs is widely discussed on various social media platforms. Data were collected through an intensive literature study, including desk review and document analysis. The findings suggest that flash mob articles are successful in engaging people of all ages as participants in public space dance performances. Visually, flash mobs provide a recreational understanding to the community in public spaces. In this context, the potential of flash mob performances extends into non-art activities like marketing and specific therapies. In this regard, participant audiences are aware that they do not need special skills to join flash mob performances.

**Keywords:** *Destandardization, Traditional Art, Flash Mob, Performance, Public Space, Indonesia*

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## Introduction

Indonesia is widely recognized as a country with exceptionally rich cultural diversity, including in the realm of dance, which has developed across regions with distinctive characteristics. Each form of traditional dance emerges from a close interrelation with the values, worldviews, and ideas of the communities that sustain it. These characteristics are reflected in modes of presentation, movement structures, aesthetic principles, and performance contexts that represent the cultural identity of each community. In contemporary developments, ethnic or traditional dances that are strongly rooted in these cultural value systems have increasingly become a source of inspiration for flash mob performances. This phenomenon indicates a process of aesthetic adaptation and transformation, in which elements of tradition are reworked into performance formats that are more popular, collective, and communicative within modern public spaces.

Traditional dance flash mob has become part of a new genre in public activities. Traditional dance flash mob has also become a tool for new artistic expression. Some flash mob activities are carried out in frequently visited public spaces such as tourist attractions, main roads, and even malls. The presence of public spaces as the target of flash mob performances actually holds a unique meaning of communal art in supporting the presence of flash mob. In fact, flash mob is no longer just a dance. Flash mob itself always begins with one person suddenly appearing in the midst of a crowd as a sign of a performance. As stated by León et. al. (2019), who argues about the impact of an activity, flash mob is always seen as the latest expression tool consisting of actions that appear spontaneous, developed by a group of people. Furthermore, flash mob has a widespread social impact thanks to mass media and social media. The end of a flash mob activity is marked by a crowd of dancers performing a dance together. The meeting of dancers with the audience reflects a release of free and spontaneous expression in the aesthetics of urban public spaces. From these facts, flash mob also carries the culture, values, and events of the present time.

Among flash mob performances rooted in traditional arts, the one that has attracted the greatest attention from researchers and art observers is *Beksan Wanara*, initiated by dancers of the Yogyakarta Court. The success of this performance in capturing public attention is closely related to the strategic selection of public spaces as performance venues. *Beksan Wanara* is a dance that represents monkeys and forms part of the *wayang wong* performance tradition of the Yogyakarta Court. *Wayang wong* itself is a form of dance drama associated with state rituals and occupies a crucial position within the royal performing arts tradition. Consequently, numerous normative conventions regulate its presentation, including costume design, performance venues, musical accompaniment, movement vocabulary, and other supporting aspects, including the presentation of *Beksan Wanara* as part of *wayang wong*. Nevertheless, artists and dancers of the Yogyakarta Court have reconfigured *Beksan Wanara*, transforming it into a flash mob dance performance format. This transformation demonstrates a shift in presentation style from one that was previously exclusive and bound by normative conventions to one that is more communal, spontaneous, and open within public spaces. Such changes indicate a shift in values that carries implications for the aesthetic destandardization of traditional dance performance.

This article aims to critically examine the phenomenon of flash mob performances that adapt traditional dance materials and gain widespread attention across various social media platforms, with particular emphasis on the case study of the *Beksan Wanara* performance packaged and popularized by dancers of the Yogyakarta Court in public spaces. The

focus of the study is directed toward how this transformation in presentation form takes place and how the shift in performance context influences the aesthetic dimensions, values, and norms previously embedded in traditional dance practices within the Yogyakarta Court. As a conceptual foundation, this research positions the work of Bagoes and Eko (2020) as an important reference that responds to the flash mob performance of *Beksan Wanara* by the Indonesian Air Force in Yogyakarta, particularly in highlighting the experience of dancing together within a crowd context. Building on this framework, the article develops further analysis by examining the aesthetic implications of the shift in dance presentation from a normative institutional context toward a more open and participatory performance format. Accordingly, this study assumes that flash mob practices utilizing traditional dance material have the potential to blur previously established aesthetic standards while simultaneously encouraging the destandardization of artistic values that have long served as the foundation of traditional dance presentation.

A number of studies indicate that the flash mob phenomenon has developed into an interdisciplinary research object that demonstrates its connections with various fields, ranging from physical education (Zyuz et al., 2020), ecological issues (Cissé-Depardon and Papetti, 2015), and innovations in bodily expression (Rebullido and Lameiro, 2016), to marketing strategies (Casals, 2011). This diversity of perspectives confirms that flash mob is no longer understood merely as a performative event, but rather as a contemporary cultural practice that embodies dimensions of values, social events, and present-day cultural dynamics. The use of public space as a performance stage generates significant aesthetic implications in shaping the aesthetics of everyday life beyond the established framework of performing arts (Salwa, 2019), while also emphasizing the balance between urban aesthetics and the social function of public space (García-Doménech, 2015). Within the performance context, the flash mob process from beginning to end often culminates in the formation of a dancing crowd that produces a shared experience of dancing together, as demonstrated by Christensen and Calvo-Merino (2013), and unfolds amid the everyday activities of society in public spaces (Torres and Gómez, 2017). Accordingly, flash mob can be understood as a representation of the collective dance experience of urban communities, as exemplified by the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performance that successfully attracted widespread public attention. Nevertheless, previous studies have not comprehensively examined the aesthetic implications of transforming traditional dance material into the flash mob format. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by critically examining the potential shift in aesthetic standards and artistic values within contemporary performance practices.

This article is based on the assumption that destandardization has become a material risk for traditional dance when used in flash mob performances. Furthermore, there is an assumption that art inherently upholds aesthetic standards in performances, but with the presence of flash mob, a shift has occurred. Additionally, flash mob performances make art appear less ethical in public spaces. The character of public spaces is inclusive, where everyone is part of the space. This aligns with Mady's (2012) statement that public space is not just about the location but more about the situation for engagement. If traditional dance flash mob materials are presented in public spaces, it would be within an urban setting. Through this, flash mob performances prioritize the situation of engagement over considering the original standards of dance material for the flash mob performance itself.

In the context of destandardization, this concept refers to the phenomenon of the development of established standardized activities in society that then lose their status as standardized activities (Jager et al., 2022). The developmental events involved encompass integral aspects of socio-historical changes that prompt communities to depart from prevailing norms (Grondelaers et al., 2016). This process of destandardization can be caused by both internal and external factors. The internal process is seen as individuals' ability to calculate risks and make their own choices rather than adopting lifestyles inherited from tradition or previous generations (Muszynski, 2020). Meanwhile, the external process views destandardization as changes resulting from factors beyond the individual's internal needs and capabilities, such as the effects of labor market deregulation and economic factors. Both of these aspects indicate that destandardization is clearly socially structured and partly driven by changes in structural conditions (Jager et al., 2022).

In the context of art, destandardization refers to dynamic changes that no longer align with the original norms or aesthetics of art (Bergh and Sloboda, 2010). There are three common characteristics that define the formation of destandardization. Firstly, destandardization pertains to changes in form or appearance (Al-Betawi et al., 2020). Secondly, artistic destandardization involves a significant shift in purpose (Carr, 2015). The changes that occur are closely related to the emotions within society (Locsin et al., 2021). Thirdly, this destandardization is closely connected to the field of education related to the advancement of knowledge about art, thus undergoing various changes involving new technologies (Galustov et al., 2021). These three characteristics demonstrate that artistic destandardization is a process that generates dynamic change, presenting new challenges for an art form (Carr, 2015). Therefore, artistic destandardization becomes a phenomenon that affects all aspects of life unevenly (Jager et al., 2022).

The general understanding of flash mob is considered as the intentional or unintentional gathering of people in public spaces to perform various coordinated movements (Colomina-Molina, 2021; Maximova and Lukyanova, 2020; Pasquier et al., 2020). Public space in this context is characterized by gatherings that create a crowd, not necessarily limited to physical space (Albacan, 2014). This activity is highly popular and widely participated in by people of various age groups, especially young adults (Cuellar-Moreno et al., 2018; Guimarães, 2025). In terms of its evolution, the emergence of flash mob initially aimed to portray these gatherings as social activities entertaining the public. However, as it progressed, flash mob has been utilized more extensively as a marketing tool, for political, social, economic campaigns, and more (Chapman, 2017). In general, flash mob captures the public's enthusiasm and becomes a massive and entertaining global trend (Sykes et al., 2011).

In the modern era, flash mob address many current and globally trending issues (Albacan, 2014; Maximova and Lukyanova, 2020). Flash mob are used as a form of expression in the Eastern world to campaign for women's empowerment in India and Southeast Asia (Colomina-Molina, 2021). These social activities are carefully planned in advance, where people agree to gather at a specific location, perform certain activities, and attract the attention of others (Raykoff, 2022). This becomes a part of the activism of a movement or campaign (Aripova and Johnson, 2018). Flash mob are always seen as a contemporary expression tool consisting of actions that appear spontaneous, developed by a group of people. Flash

mob have even been used in education and have been employed on several occasions as a source for physical expression development. Furthermore, flash mob have a widespread social impact thanks to mass media and social media (León et al., 2019).

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The functions of public spaces can be categorized into three forms. Firstly, from a sociological perspective, public spaces serve as settings for community activities or public life, such as parades, meetings, and informal gatherings (Mady, 2012). Public spaces are places for everyone to occupy without exclusion due to economic or social reasons (Cox and Guarnalda, 2016). In other words, public space is not about the physical location but more about the situation for engagement (Mady, 2012). Secondly, public spaces fulfill the needs of the community. Public spaces support their needs, whether it be markets, sacred celebration sites, or local ritual locations. As centers of social, economic, and political life in cities, they play various roles in human life at physical, psychological, social, political, economic, and symbolic levels (Bonilla, 2012). Thirdly, public spaces are highly important and have a regulatory role in providing access. These public spaces are constructed through the interaction of structured social realities (Pospech, 2013). These three functions underscore the importance of public spaces for society.

## Method

This study examines the phenomenon of dance gatherings in the form of flash mob performances taking place in public spaces, with a specific case study of a *Beksan Wanara* flash mob choreographed by artists and dancers from the Yogyakarta Court, Indonesia. The performance material is derived from *Beksan Wanara* within the *wayang wong* dance drama tradition, which is subsequently reconfigured and staged across diverse public spaces. The decision to limit the study to a single case is intended to produce a more focused and in-depth analysis, without diminishing the relevance of the findings to the broader discourse on the transformation of traditional dance within contemporary performance contexts.

The selection of the research object is based on three primary considerations assumed to be manifested in the chosen case study, namely the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob. First, the ethical dimension relates to the growing role of public space as a responsive, democratic, and meaningful arena for social, cultural, and recreational activities. Second, the aesthetic dimension is embedded in the use of traditional dance material within the flash mob format. Third, the sensory dimension emerges through the formation of dynamic and participatory dance gatherings. Based on this framework, the study specifically examines the risks of the destandardization of art in the use of traditional dance material in *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performances, which are assumed to occur across three dimensions: ethical risk,

when the public space employed does not represent the original stage context of the dance material; aesthetic risk, when the presentation displays only selected movement elements without the integrity of the traditional structure; and sensory risk, when the dance crowd becomes the peak of the performance experience.

This study employs a qualitative approach to examine the phenomenon of traditional dance flash mobs as a form of creative activity in urban public spaces. The research data are drawn from various digital media that extensively document and discuss Beksan Wanara flash mob performances, particularly social media platforms, online magazines, online newspapers, and YouTube channels. These sources are selected as primary data because they represent the digital traces, visual documentation, and public discourse accompanying the emergence of these performances. Data collection is conducted through an intensive literature study, carried out by means of a desk review and document study. The desk review is carried out by selecting and examining data that contain indications of ethical, aesthetic, and sensory risks in Beksan Wanara flash mob performances. Meanwhile, the documentation study focuses on identifying and categorizing visual and textual evidence that demonstrates forms of destandardization across these three dimensions. Accordingly, this method enables a systematic analysis of the transformation of traditional dance presentation within the context of flash mob performances in public spaces.

Not all YouTube channels were used as research data sources. An initial selection was conducted by choosing channels featuring Beksan Wanara flash mob content that gained wide public attention and achieved viral status, which were then analyzed in conjunction with the desk review findings from online magazines and newspapers. Prior to in-depth analysis, the data were first mapped to identify indications of destandardization across three main aspects: the ethical aspect related to the use of public space as a performance stage, the aesthetic aspect involving the reduction of traditional dance material, and the sensory aspect associated with the formation of crowds as the climax of the flash mob performance. The subsequent stage involved data display through the organization of visual data into tables and analytical narratives, which were then presented as part of the findings in this article.

## Results

flash mob performances in Indonesia have emerged as a response to the urban lifestyle. Flash mob, as an activity, always considers unconventional performance spaces. Urban environments are chosen as the venue for flash mob performances due to various reasons related to the nature of flash mob presentations. Flash mob performances consistently appeal to a wide range of audiences. Each flash mob display is marked by a crowd, and this atmosphere is often associated with mass gatherings. Flash mob involving a large number of participants become more captivating as the crowd size increases (Wahid, 2020). Initially, when flash mob first appeared in Indonesia, participants were predominantly young people (Wahid, 2021). However, over time, participants from various age groups have become increasingly involved. Flash mob are no longer just about dancing. Within flash mob, there is also culture, values, and events that reflect contemporary society. The current era of flash mob performances is often associated with specific cultural events or particular occasions.

In the community era, the age of social media, and even the era of reality shows, flash mob performances have consistently been part of specific events (Wahid, 2020). The origin

of flash mob involvement in particular events dates back to the 1990s in the Netherlands when a group called the *Zebra Pedestrian Theater* organized flash mob. Following this, a few years later, Bill Wasik, a senior editor at *Harper's Magazine*, gathered people to participate in flash mob. In May 2003, Wasik attempted to organize a flash mob in a store in Manhattan, but it was unsuccessful. In the second flash mob attempt in June 2003, Wasik changed the location to a department store called Macy's. Around one hundred people gathered, each pretending to be engaged in their own activities. They then simultaneously applauded for fifteen minutes, causing several visitors to crowd the hotel lobby and hallways and join in the dancing. One significant event in Indonesia featured a flash mob performance during the campaign of one of the gubernatorial candidates for Jakarta (Jokowi-Ahok) ("Sejarah Lahirnya Gerakan Massa Flash Mob," 2012).

The flash mob event in Indonesia that garnered the widest attention is the flash mob titled *Beksan Wanara*, initiated by the palace dancers of the Yogyakarta Court. The *Beksan Wanara* flash mob video, performed on Malioboro Street, Yogyakarta (18 June 2019), captured the attention of the general public. The video became a hot topic and briefly went viral on social media. All the dancers were young *abdi dalem Mataya* (*Mataya* palace servants), presenting a traditional monkey dance performance that engaged audience participants along Malioboro Street. The flash mob material, the monkey dance, managed to captivate the attention of audience participants from various age groups, including children, teenagers, and even parents around Malioboro Street. This event was initiated as a form of revitalizing traditional art (Setiawan, 2019; Rahman, 2019). After briefly going viral on social media by featuring the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob Dance or *Kethekan* Dance (*wanara* = *kethek* = monkey) in the Malioboro area, they performed at two tourist attractions in the city of Banjarmasin, namely the Bekantan Statue area and the Siring Menara Pandang, Banjarmasin (Diskominfotik\_bjm, 2019; Zainuddin, 2019). The trigger role on Malioboro was still performed by Mohan Kalandara, also known as Momo, in the flash mob performance (Ivan, 2019). This can be observed in Figure 1, where Momo is depicted as the trigger dancer.



Figure 1. Single dancer as a trigger at the beginning of the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob on Malioboro Street. (Source: Screenshot from [https://youtu.be/LAJ1sohKcfg?si=dBU5zc580J\\_cQHLu](https://youtu.be/LAJ1sohKcfg?si=dBU5zc580J_cQHLu), 2023).



Figure 2. Trigger follower dancers in *Beksan Wanara* flash mob on Malioboro Street.  
 (Source: Screenshot from [https://youtu.be/LAJ1sohKcfg?si=dBU5zc580J\\_cQHLu](https://youtu.be/LAJ1sohKcfg?si=dBU5zc580J_cQHLu), 2023).



Figure 3. The audience participated as dancers in the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob on Malioboro Street.  
 (Source: Screenshot from [https://youtu.be/LAJ1sohKcfg?si=dBU5zc580J\\_cQHLu](https://youtu.be/LAJ1sohKcfg?si=dBU5zc580J_cQHLu), 2023).

From the facts of its performance, one of the successes of a flash mob show can be seen from the involvement of people of all ages becoming dancers in a crowd in public space. This moment is when the trigger dancer and participant audience of the flash mob merge into a collective dance. In Figure 1, it is a primary characteristic of a flash mob that starts with a trigger dancer. The illustration is shown in Figure 2, where the trigger dancer begins to draw their community into a small crowd. The trigger dancer actually understands public space as a non-standard stage. Similarly, participant audiences in the vicinity of public space treat it as a space for artistic expression together in the flash mob. A trigger dancer will dance as if spontaneously, eventually capturing the attention of the surrounding community to engage in a gathering (Setiawan, 2019). This atmosphere ultimately lures the public audience into the mass dance, as shown in Figure 3, where the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performance has truly become a mass dance gathering.



Figure 4. *Beksan Wanara* or the monkey dance in *wayang wong* performances with a story derived from the Ramayana Epic at the Yogyakarta Court. (Source: Screenshot from <https://www.youtube.com/live/12XtQ0Scqmg?si=vl-Jahw-wUc3cy04> & <https://youtu.be/Nyh44nrzoMU?si=LWchq3iG2ydU3Ebk>, 2023).



Figure 5. The costume design of the monkeys with the characters Kapi Harima or Jaya Harima (left) and Jaya Susena (right) in the *wayang wong* performance at the Yogyakarta Court.

(Source: Downloaded from <https://twitter.com/lantip/status/1148251522179842051/photo/3> & <https://twitter.com/lantip/status/1148251522179842051/photo/2>, 2023).

The *Beksan Wanara* flash mob with a mission to refresh traditional art truly breaks away from conventional artistic standards. *Beksan Wanara* translates to monkey dance. Traditionally, monkey dance movements are only presented in the Ramayana epic performances. Visually, the monkey dance is performed using costumes with masks to cover the dancer's face. The entire body of the dancer wears clothes, pants, and socks of the same color, symbolically representing the monkey's body (See Figure 4 and Figure 5). Some types of dance movements also represent monkey movements. The body as the dancer's expressive tool has aesthetic standards in producing monkey dance movements. The stage as a performance space is predetermined according to dance space rules. What is presented in the flash mob performance doesn't pay as much attention to the standard performance. The

visual appearance of costumes differs from traditional monkey dance attire, as it is performed using casual clothing or contemporary millennial attire.

In the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performance, the dancers break free from the traditional artistic standards of *Beksan Wanara*, completely departing from conventions. This is also evident in the role of the trigger dancer. The presence of a real dancer as the trigger initially aimed to capture the attention and entertain the people around the public space. In Figure 6, you can see the Hotel Indonesia Roundabout in Jakarta, which was chosen as a strategic space for the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performance. After the audience was captivated by the trigger, participants from the community approached and began imitating the dancer's movements piece by piece. The same can be observed in Figure 7, where tourist attractions in Banjarmasin were selected as strategic locations for the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performance. Likewise, in Figure 8, Jogja City Mall, which is the largest shopping center in Yogyakarta, became the chosen target for the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performance.



Figure 6. The *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performed at the Hotel Indonesia Roundabout in Jakarta. (Source: Screenshot from [https://youtu.be/jsCrm2r\\_3qg?si=WSgYu7cGJ5VAD572](https://youtu.be/jsCrm2r_3qg?si=WSgYu7cGJ5VAD572), 2023).



Figure 7. The *Beksan Wanara* flash mob at Siring Menara Pandang Banjarmasin. (Source: Screenshot from <https://youtu.be/R2T2q2FiP2A?si=oh7PA-BH-r01AOoK>, 2023).



Figure 8. The *Beksan Wanara* flash mob at Jogja City Mall. (Source: Screenshot from <https://youtu.be/jkbyuj4koLY?si=WeDdeqDiv38elk-p>, 2023).

In the flash mob performance, several dancers, grouped together, pretended not to know each other. They entered the public space from various directions while engaging in their own activities. Suddenly, each group started dancing, following the movements of the trigger dancer and others who had danced earlier. Eventually, the participating audience in the public space formed a crowd of dancers (“Sejarah Lahirnya Gerakan Massa Flash Mob,” 2012). This can also be observed in several videos uploaded on the Kraton Jogja YouTube channel with content related to the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob, accessible through the following links:

- [https://youtu.be/LAJ1sohKcfg?si=dBU5zc580J\\_cQHLu](https://youtu.be/LAJ1sohKcfg?si=dBU5zc580J_cQHLu)
- <https://youtu.be/jkbyuj4koLY?si=WeDdeqDiv38elk-p>
- [https://youtu.be/jsCrm2r\\_3qg?si=WSgYu7cGJ5VAD572](https://youtu.be/jsCrm2r_3qg?si=WSgYu7cGJ5VAD572)

The presence of flash mob activities indirectly represents a new effort to redefine the communal nature of traditional dance movements in the format of a flash mob performance. The objectives of these activities can vary depending on the organizers’ needs (“Pengertian Fashmob dan Contoh Penyelenggaraanya,” 2022). Visually, a flash mob provides a sense of recreation for the people in the surrounding public space. There are several communication messages that can be conveyed through a flash mob. There is an element of surprise when the dancers gradually appear amidst the crowd. There is also a sense of dynamics and innovation conveyed when unusual movements emerge amidst the everyday activities of the crowd. A good flash mob should be able to create a shock effect and, if necessary, send shivers down the spines of the audience watching it (Wahid, 2020).



Figure 9. The communal nature of the flash mob with participants from various segments of society. (Source: Screenshot from <https://youtu.be/jkbyuj4koLY?si=WeDdeqDiv38elk-p>, 2023).



Figure 10. The audience participation of children in the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob, which is part of art communalism. (Source: Screenshot from <https://youtu.be/jkbyuj4koLY?si=WeDdeqDiv38elk-p>, 2023).

In Figure 9, it represents the common form of placing a flash mob performance as a situation of engagement among its participants. One characteristic of a flash mob performance's massiveness is the culmination of the performance in the form of a dance crowd. This is a common feature when the end of the crowd will disperse by itself once the peak of the dance crowd has been achieved. In this engagement situation, the dance crowd is considered successful when all layers of society, from children to the elderly, do not consider age and are in the same engagement situation (See Figure 10).

### Discussion

Flash mob, as an urban activity, always selects strategic urban locations. The choice of these strategic locations is a crucial factor in the success of a flash mob performance. Hence, the audience participants are aware that they do not require any special expertise when entering a flash mob crowd. The performance pattern of the trigger role as a sign that the flash mob is about to begin is a common pattern in presenting flash mob performances. Several public spaces that become trigger targets always exhibit this pattern and are spontaneous. The trigger dancer serves as a signal that the flash mob is commencing. Its presence seems to defy the conventions of traditional dance. This is demonstrated by the choice of flash mob's traditional art spaces, which are no longer confined to traditional dance stages. Flash mob performances have created new spaces within the perform-

ing arts. From the beginning of flash mob's existence, urban public spaces have been the primary choice. For example, Wasik's experiment in 2003 aimed to demonstrate that flash mob activities in urban public spaces provide an alternative stage. Wasik's activity serves as evidence that failures can occur during flash mob performance preparations. As stated by Langenheim et. al. (2020), based on its history, the idea of public spaces emerges when we are involved in unconsolidated and unformalized urban situations. Wasik attempted to organize a flash mob performance in a store in Manhattan, but his efforts failed. In the second flash mob experiment in June 2003, Wasik changed the location to a Department Store named Macy's. Approximately one hundred people gathered, each pretending to engage in their own activities. Then, they clapped their hands simultaneously for fifteen minutes, leading some visitors to crowd the hotel lobby and corridors and join in the dance ("Sejarah Lahirnya Gerakan Massa Flash Mob," 2012). Micara's (2021) statement suggests that public spaces can also provide a solution to urban voids. This statement aims to compare Wasik's failure in a flash mob experiment in a store with his second performance in a mall with larger voids, resembling urban spaces.

Public spaces in urban areas always have central points that attract visitors. There is an element of utilizing a public space as a stage for flash mob performances. Almost every flash mob performance can be characterized by a crowd, beyond aesthetic considerations, and there is an effort to create and interpret communalism in art. The interpretation of communalism in traditional dance materials has great potential as a flash mob activity in public spaces. Thus, traditional dance flash mob performances are staged as an effort to create and interpret communalism in art. The presence of the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performance in Yogyakarta is a phenomenon that is in line with the way of seizing opportunities to interpret communalism in art. This utilization aspect is a creative way of choosing the location for flash mob performances. Albacan (2014) stated that flash mob performances are seen as both performance and a re-emergence of creative communities. Additionally, the choice of public space is also based on the visual aesthetic representation of the public space. Mróz's (2021) statement emphasizes the importance of visual aesthetic representation in the selection of public spaces as venues for flash mob performances.

The common pattern of traditional dance flash mob performances represents a transformation of the aesthetic norms associated with traditional dance movement materials. When the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performance is considered to have received the widest response on social media, it becomes a form of destandardization in the transformation of aesthetic norms. Traditionally, the transformation of aesthetic norms in dance has been discussed by Hastuti and Supriyanti, as well as Jazuli. Hastuti and Supriyanti's (2015) statement places aesthetic value obtained through standard transformation. Another statement also considers the position of aesthetic norms in traditional dance (Jazuli, 2015). Both of these statements demonstrate the inherent transformation of aesthetic standards with the artistic values displayed on the performance stage. The strength inherent in the transformation of aesthetic norms is achieved through the practice studio or training space. Flash mobs do not require this process and tend to disregard the patterns of studio or training practice. Flash mob activities are a visual presentation when dance is performed on the public stage. If traditional art stage spaces have binding aesthetic standards, flash mobs are not dependent on aesthetic standards.

Flash mob performances of traditional dance become attractive because the material originally has established performance stages. In flash mob performances, the choice of stages in public spaces seems to mirror the boredom of established norms. The contemporary era of a flash mob performance will be linked to specific cultural events or particular occasions. The most explicit visual representation of traditional dance art is the use of complete costumes. In the visual representation of the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob, the artistic value of the costumes has undergone destandardization. The visual presentation of the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob differs from traditional monkey dance, which uses special costumes. This flash mob dance is performed using casual attire or contemporary millennial clothing. In the context of art, destandardization refers to dynamic changes that no longer conform to the original norms or aesthetics of art (Bergh and Sloboda, 2010). This statement seems to reinforce the presence of specific characteristics in understanding destandardization. There are three common characteristics that shape its formation. First, destandardization refers to changes in form or appearance (Al-Betawi et al., 2020). Second, artistic destandardization involves a significant shift in purpose (Carr, 2015). The changes that occur are closely related to the emotions within society (Locsin et al., 2021). Third, this destandardization is closely related to education in the field of art, involving advancements in knowledge about art and the incorporation of new technologies (Galustov et al., 2021).

The discussion about the presence of traditional dance flash mob performances needs to be directed towards a creative phenomenon that utilizes public spaces as a stage. From an artistic perspective, this is an effort to argue for destandardization as a new phenomenon. In Jager et. al. (2022) statement, it is mentioned that the destandardization of art has become a phenomenon that unevenly affects all aspects of life. This statement has been supported by the responses of the participants in flash mob performances, which have been widely reported through various social media. Furthermore, Jager et. al. views the phenomenon of destandardization as a concept that refers to the development of standardized activities that were well-established in society but have lost their status as standard activities. The facts in social media news about the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob performance are the best examples of the shift from standardized activities on the stage to public spaces. For instance, the traditional monkey costumes with all their accessories have been replaced with sports shoes, no masks, and jeans by the participants of the *Beksan Wanara* flash mob. This appearance is very simple and departs from the original aesthetic concept. The illustrations in Figure 6, Figure 7, and Figure 8 clearly demonstrate this phenomenon. The public space in the illustration in Figure 6 is located at the Hotel Indonesia Roundabout in Jakarta, which is iconic in the city center of Jakarta. The choice of this space seems to represent the center of social, economic, and political activities. The participants' choice of an iconic public space strengthens the argument for destandardization as a new phenomenon. As mentioned by Bonilla (2012), the Hotel Indonesia Roundabout, as a center of social, economic, and political activities in urban areas, plays a role in human life on physical, psychological, social, political, economic, and symbolic levels. Therefore, it is indeed true that flash mob performances require a new direction to provide creative space without disregarding well-established standardized activities.

This research is positioned as an initial step toward a broader global discourse on the destandardization of aesthetic values in traditional dance that is repackaged through flash mob practices in public spaces. The findings remain foundational and therefore call for expanded future research to map more comprehensively the position and transformation of

flash mobs rooted in traditional dance. Future research agendas should be directed toward cross-regional and cross-cultural exploration in order to compare variations of flash mob practices across different global and regional contexts. Such studies may examine diverse uses, the digital platforms that facilitate the mobilization of participants, and the dynamics of distribution and consumption of performances in both physical public spaces and virtual environments. In addition, subsequent studies need to investigate the diversity of participants involved, including demographic differences, age groups, gender, social backgrounds, and thematic orientations such as political expression, special-interest advocacy, and responses to issues of economic inequality and poverty. Through this broader perspective, flash mobs can be understood as complex and multidimensional socio-cultural phenomena.

In this context, further research is also required to examine legal implications, cultural policies, and governance models relevant to flash mob practices derived from traditional dance. In line with Boonserm and Chandransu's (2025) view regarding the potential of public art to address social challenges, foster social healing, and contribute to cultural preservation and economic development, flash mob performances in public spaces with broad community participation present significant opportunities to strengthen both the artistic ecosystem and the creative economy. However, destandardization processes that occur without a clear policy framework risk eroding the stylistic characteristics, values, and knowledge systems embedded in traditional dance. Therefore, future research is expected to formulate conceptual models and policy frameworks capable of balancing the need for open creative space with the preservation of established artistic values and standards. In this sense, the present article serves as a foundational point for the development of a broader and more interdisciplinary research agenda on traditional dance-based flash mob practices in a global context.

### Conclusion

Flash mob performances have evidently become a new trend in bridging the gap between artistic and non-artistic values. This is demonstrated by the difference in the materials used in flash mob performances compared to traditional stage settings in public spaces. Flash mobs are highly inclusive, as they blur the line between the performance area and the audience. They come together in a dance crowd without barriers. This article has illustrated that the phenomenon of traditional dance flash mob performances represents a liberation of artistic values with the choice of public spaces as their stage.

This can also be interpreted as if it were a reflection of boredom with conventionality. Flash mob performances simultaneously capture the enthusiasm of the public and become a massive and entertaining global trend. Flash mob performances take public spaces and make them accessible to everyone, regardless of economic or social reasons. This article, of course, does not provide a complete representation of the material in traditional flash mob performance art. Naturally, this article has limitations in terms of field data. This is also related to the fact that the approach of this article has not involved direct observation of the phenomena that have developed in recent years.

Therefore, a comprehensive study of flash mob is needed, examining data obtained from field studies. From the facts of traditional dance flash mob performances, a new interpretation of the urban art genre that uses traditional dance material can be seen. This is a significant contribution to the study of performing arts, especially in the field of dance and the emerging new public space stage.

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