

BATU

CHOREOGRAPHERS' MESSAGES

A stone is something I have known through the body before I knew how to speak about it. I know its weight, its hardness, its texture, and the sound it makes when it meets another stone. In *BATU*, I return to this familiar material and ask what happens when it enters the body differently: when it is held, carried, rubbed, struck, turned, and moved.

The *batu lesung*, *cobek*, and *ulekan* remind me of the women around me and of the everyday knowledge that lives through their bodies. Much of this knowledge was never taught through words. It was learned by watching, repeating, listening, smelling, touching, and doing. It lives in the hands and muscles, in the rhythm of preparing food, and in gestures that can seem ordinary but carry generations of memory.



As a dancer and choreographer from Lampung, I am interested in what happens when this inherited knowledge enters my body. I do not want to simply repeat what came before me. I want to stay with it, question it, sometimes resist it, and see how it can change when carried by another body.

For me, the stone is not only a tool. It can become a partner, a weight, a boundary, a witness, or an extension of the body. Like the ingredients placed inside it, what we inherit can also be crushed, mixed, transformed, and given another form.

BATU is not an attempt to preserve a fixed tradition, nor to romanticise women's domestic labour. It is a way for me to sit with what I have inherited and listen to what the body remembers, what it carries, and what it might choose to transform.

Ayu Permata Sari



BATU began with an obsession.

In 2020, seven months pregnant with my firstborn, I was afraid of giving birth. At that time, while developing *Daging*, I found myself captivated by the act and sound of pounding uncooked meat on stone. The rhythm, weight and resonance of the *batu* stayed with me, becoming the seed for this work.

Years later, *BATU* returns to that moment.

Through this process with Ayu Permata Sari, I became curious about what the *batu* could hold—not just stories and memories, but also conversations, questions and possibilities. I wonder how performance can create a space for us to listen to one another, share our lived experiences and gently question the stereotypes and expectations we inherit as women. As Malay women from Singapore and Indonesia, we discover both familiarities and differences, and in these encounters, new questions emerge about womanhood, culture, intimacy and what it means to carry what has been passed down to us.



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With love and gratitude,
Hasyimah Harith



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