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Do What You Love, Love What You Do

BY PRISCILLA TAWIE

HAVE you ever wonder if what you are doing is worth your time?

Some may argue that it is for a better future, they tend to dismiss the fact that you only live once, and your happiness is dependent on the choices you make. For Abdul Walid Ali that is what he chose to do - something that someday he would not regret, something that is worth his life time, a decision worthwhile for living.

Walid who took pure science subjects in secondary school, albeit doing well, he eventually took a detour away from the discipline and into the world of arts, specifically into theatre and performance.

"I thought Science was my forte, but it is not - I felt it when I finished my Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) that it is not the thing that I wanted to do."

He continued, "I decided against other courses but art, because I want to do something I feel that is worth my time," he said as he emphasises on living life through the path he is satisfied

with. The curly-haired man's belief in getting a job that you want to do, instead of one that you need to do, "At times, you have a job that you dislike, you might not enjoy it, and you might not go far with it too."

The 29-year-old who started off his career after his Diploma with lighting design for stage and concerts, "I felt bored with that work then I did stage design, and some acting, and have done some directing too."

He soon revealed that his inner passion was to share creative ideas, "The thing that I find very interesting about myself, is that I have a lot of ideas to share with people, and then they love it very much, hence why when I work with theatre companies, most of the work is usually on ideas."

The man with a mole featured on his right cheek is known as the performance maker in theatre productions, he said despite the role not being familiar among the theatre scene in Malaysia, that role is a job he enjoys the most.

"A performance maker is the one who will find ideas for the performance, usually we will share ideas, check the artistic value of the performance, and if I find an idea to be boring, I will say it is boring and tries to fix it."

Walid however clarifies that a performance maker is not the one who decides whether an idea is a go, rather he is acting as the advisor of a theatre production.

Other than sharing his ideas as a performance maker, the creative-driven Walid also complement theatre productions artistically as an artistic director.

According to him, the role of an artistic director is to control the artistic side and the appearance of the performance, "And it is quite different from a theatre director where they control the concept, an artistic director controls the visual on stage which for me, is quite an interesting thing to do."

Walid Ali who is now a lecturer under the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts in University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) shared his daily routine as a lecturer, and at times during production commencement.

"When there is no production, my usual daily routine would be

to wake up at 5am, depending on the weather I would jog. Then go to work around 8am, or 10am depending on what I have on that morning."

He continued with a serious look on his face, "The most interesting part about my daily life is when I get to go home in the evening," a statement he mentioned which broke the seriousness donned.

The party of his life is during the commencement of a production, where he admitted his packed schedule turned his life to be quite hectic.

Sharing that his last production was held in December 2017, he revealed his daily routine then, "During those times, my day would be hectic because I have to balance my work and production time. My daily routine would be the same, but after that I would work on the production with the cast during the weekdays from 8pm to 10pm."

He mentioned also, "I would have rehearsals on Sundays from 10am to 10pm, with Saturday as our rest day. And it usually goes on for about three months."

"The biggest challenge," he let an insight was that most of his productions are done not based on the coursework, hence the time between 9am and 5pm cannot be disturb.

His most meaningful production

Titled as 'How to read my map', Walid's solo performance conceptualise the idea of telling his stories, what he has done in life, and about the land of Borneo.

"My performance was not showcased in Malaysia, but it has been performed by myself in Cardiff, Edinburgh and Spain, and was first showcased during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2017."

On the local theatre scene

"When I pursue my Master of Arts in Contemporary Performance Practices in London, I learned something interesting



WALID (third from left) advising on a production.

in one class that is specifically for students to explore ideas."

He continued, "I learned with many practitioners out there so that is why when I came back to Malaysia, sharing this kind of idea is important because what I can see our local theatre or performance is when they perform ideas, or onstage the idea is quite cliché."

The performance maker gave an example whereby the local theatre and film scene typically generate cliché contents, input into their production which usually show scenes of families fighting over properties, or a love story which occur in secondary school, "that kind of cliché ideas that we have to break down because the idea of this creative scene is not about performing trendy topics," he shared his sentiments.

When asked during the private interview on his opinion pertaining the theatre scene in Kuching, Walid shared, "The problem with the theatre scene in Kuching is they do not have good practitioners, but a lot of audiences."

"We have problems when it comes to performance and it is not as developed as what we can see in Kuala Lumpur," he said, how-

ever he commended the growing participation in art appreciation among the communities in Kuching, "The interesting thing about the art scene in Kuching is they do have a very supportive audience."

Thriving through his creativity, he shared an advice to those who are constantly experiencing mental block, especially in the creativity field, "Mental block happens when we aim too high, and have a high expectation, so just use what you have and enhance the speciality."

He added also, "We are only humans, we cannot do everything."

Walid Ali is part of the Kamek Kitak Human Library as a Human Book. Kamek Kitak Human Library is a platform to build understanding and break stereotypes in our community. Kamek Kitak is a platform set up to counteract and offer an alternative narrative to the negative narrative we see in our community about the differences that divide us - ie differences of ethnicity, religion, lifestyle choices, political beliefs etc. For more information on Kamek Kitak, visit their Facebook page at Kamek Kitak.



WALID (left) as an artistic director during the 'Culik' theatre production.



LIGHTING designs were among the early works done by Walid.



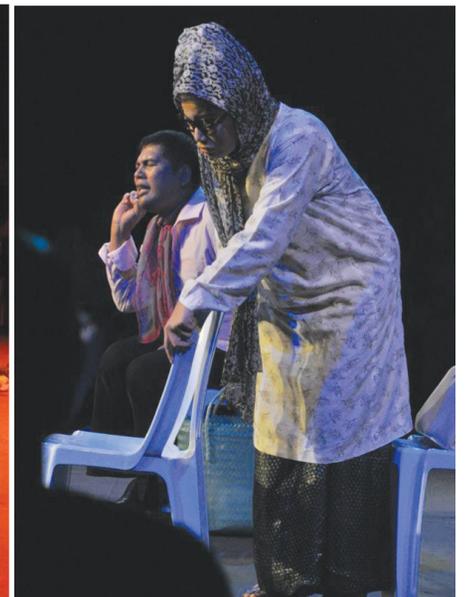
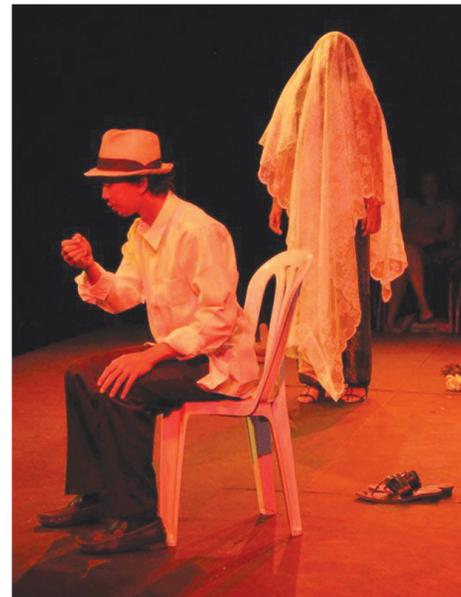
WALID during the theatre performance of 'The Lonely Little Prince', an adaptation from The Little Prince Novella.



WALID during his solo performance 'How to read my map'.



WALID was the assistant director of 'Berani Mati' theatre performance.



THEATRE performance 'Selipar Jepun Kasut Tumpit Tinggi 2' where the creative Walid did lighting designs for the show.