

香港舞蹈概述

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香港舞蹈概述2019

Hong Kong Dance Overview 2019

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**'Rediscovering' Hong
Kong Choreographers
– *Studies on Works by
Hong Kong Contemporary
Choreographers 1980–2010:
Contemporary History
of Dance in Hong Kong,
Aesthetics and Exploration
of Identity***

Leung Wai-size Jass

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**Foreword: Overseas and Hong Kong's Situations of Research in
Performing Arts**

When it comes to research in theatre works, there are sizable research/resource centres of performing arts in Europe and Asia, including the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS) and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). The Paris-based CNRS has been setting up research centres with collaborators from various universities and publishing theatre practitioners' research works on performing arts, producing a special collection of important reference books for the up-and-coming generation and researchers from all over the world. There are different research institutes affiliated with the CASS, based in Beijing, each conducting research on topics of their concern. The Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies under the CASS, for example, adopts methodologies in folklore studies/folkloristics and anthropology, leaving a valuable legacy for Asian performing arts. In addition to the national-

sized institutions, the Vlaams Theater Instituut (VTi) ¹ in Belgium is one of the institutes that have enjoyed a high profile recently. Their research outcomes and publications provide a huge amount of information and data on their core artists and performing arts groups, and as a result, the database of the theatre plays and experimental dance works that they promote have enlightened the audience and readers about the vibrant art scene in Flanders and the world-famous 'Flanders art phenomenon'.

European performing arts have been internationally known for a long time. A considerable number of resource centres associated with professional research institutes of performing arts keep records of programmes produced by different types of theatre companies, building strong research frameworks for the overall internationalisation of certain performing venues, artist labs and arts festivals. It is important to note that the internationalisation of contemporary performing arts is not only about producing performances but also about going through a process of introducing and exchanging artistic outcomes. Scale and production of performances aside, as can be seen from the research, collection, education, and extensive programmes developed during the process are aspects related to positioning artists and collating art history. Plenty of talented artists have embraced the nomadic performing practice, as their theatre works travel through different cities and are put on in venues of varying scales. In other words, research studies on performing arts play a decisively active role in the development of the artists and the branding of performing arts.

¹ Editor's note: The Vlaams Theater Instituut merged with two other institutes specialising in the visual arts and music into Kunstenpunt in 2015. 'Missie, visie & historiek,' Kunstenpunt, accessed 29 April 2021, <https://www.kunsten.be/over-kunstenpunt/missie-visie-waarden>.

By comparison, the organisation and research work of Hong Kong’s performing arts seem to be a new matter that came up only in recent times. The scene has come to realise that a database of and research into Hong Kong’s performing arts are indispensable in the face of the diversification and internationalisation of performing arts in the city. In light of the flourishing development since the 1970s and 1980s, performing arts groups, artists and performers focusing on the exploration of various art forms have grown, changed and thrived in their own realms, but a comprehensive record of the arts groups, artists and artworks and a full outline of their aesthetic values on a research level have been lacking. Thanks to the considerable effort of a number of people, at an institutional level, there are research projects such as the establishment of the Chinese Music Archive at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for related research, the compilation of the *Hong Kong Visual Arts Yearbook*, and the series of *Hong Kong Drama Yearbook* and *Hong Kong Xiqu Yearbook*² published by the International Association of Theatre Critics (Hong Kong) (IATC [HK]). A fair number of specialised books have also been published (such as research publications on performing arts, playbooks, and the five series of *Jutan dianjiang lu* [An account of theatre practitioners] by the Hong Kong Federation of Drama Societies); however, they tend to be comprised of an introductory short history of the art forms in a textual format. Even if there are special studies on individual Hong Kong artists, they either focus on the artists’ creative preferences in a certain period (e.g., *The Art of Synthesis: The Theatre World of Tang Shu-wing* in 2004) or appear

² Editor’s note: the *Hong Kong Drama Yearbook* and the *Hong Kong Xiqu Yearbook* combined into the *Hong Kong Theatre Yearbook* between 2015 and 2016 to integrate the disciplines of dance, *xiqu* and drama. In 2017, the publication was split into the *Hong Kong Drama Overview* and the *Hong Kong Xiqu Overview*. ‘Publications | IATC Publications | Yearbook Series’, International Association of Theatre Critics (Hong Kong), accessed 29 April 2021, http://www.iatc.com.hk/group/publication_iatc?cat_id=81.

as compendia of images and text (e.g., *Book of Ewing* in 2016). While organising historical information by means such as making timelines that chronicle performances and events is doubtless important for studies on performing arts, it was difficult for researchers in the past to get a glimpse of the whole picture of the development of performing arts in Hong Kong based on the existing and rambling compilations of information and special articles.

Oral History as Research Methodology

‘Oral history’ is an effective mode for organising cultural knowledge, and thus many arts and cultural organisations from various backgrounds allocate resources for the documentation and publication of ‘oral histories’. The ‘Archive and Oral History Project on Hong Kong Drama’ and ‘A Snap beyond Borders: An Online Archive and Education Project of Hong Kong Theatre and Performance Photography’ initiated by the IATC (HK) in recent years are cases in point for knowledge organisation. In 2020, the City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC) was awarded for ‘Outstanding Services to Dance’ at the Hong Kong Dance Awards for its ‘Research Project – Oral History of Hong Kong Dance Development’ launched in 2018. This shows that the organisation of information about and research into Hong Kong’s performing arts activities has begun a new chapter with support and recognition of the scene and moved forward on the pathway of sustainable development. The content of the ‘Research Project – Oral History of Hong Kong Dance Development’ includes the Chinese-English bilingual publication of *The Unspoken Dance: An Oral History of Hong Kong Dance (1950s–70s)* (*The Unspoken Dance*) and

a website. Taking the ‘pre-professionalisation era’ of Hong Kong dance as the main time frame of the research, two researchers conducted interviews with ten pioneers who were active in Hong Kong between the 1950s and the 1970s³ to construct a body of historical materials regarding the early development of Hong Kong dance in the form of oral history, by drawing on different perspectives and views.

Xianggang dangdai bianwujia zuopin yanjiu 1980–2010: Xianggang dangdai wudao lishi, meixue ji shenfen tanqiu (Studies on Works by Hong Kong Contemporary Choreographers 1980–2010: Contemporary History of Dance in Hong Kong, Aesthetics and Exploration of Identity) (hereafter referred to as ‘*Studies*’), published in September 2019, carries forward the predecessors’ commitment to the research. Edited and coordinated by Prof. Man Kit-wah Eva from the Hong Kong Baptist University, the book matches six pairs of local choreographers and art critics on a ‘one-to-one’ basis, including ‘Chin Sau-lin Miranda and Enid Chung’, ‘Helen Lai and Chen Yaping’, ‘Mui Cheuk-yin and Lok Fung’, ‘Yuri Ng and Kuh Fei’, ‘Pun Siu-fai and Lau Tin-ming’, and ‘Yeung Chung-kong Daniel and Daisy Chu’. One chapter is dedicated to each pair, sorting out the relationship between the choreographer and the traditions in dance, describing how they affect each other, and even concentrating on some creative phenomena in artistic investigations of specific works. This ‘one-to-one’ approach allows the choreographers studied to review and explain the concepts of their works from a first-person perspective, and to share their views on performing arts and their cultural vision for

³ The interviewees of *The Unspoken Dance* include Ng Sai-fun, Julie Ng, Kwok Sai-ngai Stephen, Lorita Leung, Aw Mo-han Florence, Cheng Wai-yung, Yeung Wai-kui, Lau Siu-ming, Lau So-kam, and Joan Campbell.

Hong Kong, in the interview sections. More significantly, the subjects can open up to the researchers about art as a result of the valuable bond built with someone who understands them and discuss the intricate relationship between performing arts and the city's cultural fabric before and after the handover of Hong Kong in 1997. From the changing landscape of Hong Kong's performing arts in the 'post-transition period' and 'around the Millennium' as constructed in *Studies*, one can trace the development of performing arts in Hong Kong over the past decades and get a clear picture of the psychological journey of a whole generation of Hong Kong 'dance practitioners'. In other words, this research project provides a written record of what the choreographers have done and achieved in a way of 'seeing both the forest and the trees', by presenting in the book the choreographers' artistic backgrounds and psychological experiences, and the representation of the uniqueness, ambience and sense of space of their non-repeatable dance performances on stage.

Author of *In Conversation with Hong Kong Art 1980–2014* (co-authored with Lai Ming-hoi Victor, 2015) and *Hong Kong Visual Artists 1970–1980: Experiments and Shifts after the New Ink Movement* (2018), Prof. Man is a dedicated scholar who promotes documentation and archiving of the art ecology in Hong Kong. The research project 'Studies' focuses on the development of Hong Kong dance between 1980 and 2010 from the multi-disciplinary aspects, on which she puts special emphasis, and those aspects include dance aesthetics, theoretical and contextual research on the body, dance history, and cultural studies. Professional performing arts groups emerged in Hong Kong in the 1970s, and more and more

small-sized professional arts groups were set up in the 1980s and 1990s. The three decades being studied represent the cultural field in which the activities took place, spanning the thirty-year-long period before and after the 1997 sovereign handover. The case studies of the six Hong Kong choreographers form 'dots, lines and planes' that give shape to how Hong Kong's performing arts in their heyday transited from a time where Hong Kong dance progressed 'from ignorance to professionalism' (between the 1950s and 1970s).

Six 'One-to-One' Pairings for Research

In the article '*Huichu wudao Qian Xiulian*' (Miranda Chin who paints the way for dance), Enid Chung describes that a dance group whose creative conception can be identified with that of the Cloud Gate Dance Theater of Taiwan was founded in Hong Kong as early as the 1980s under the guidance of Miranda Chin, and it was called the Miranda Chin Dance Company. Chin is not only keen on collaborating with creators in other art forms on crossover projects, but also on fusing visual thinking of Chinese painting and calligraphy and eastern movement training such as Taichi and martial arts into dance creation. Hence, the Miranda Chin Dance Company managed to establish its niche in the 1980s and 1990s, at a time when artistic concepts were relatively less stylised and personalised (Chung 2019, 30-70). Lau Tin-ming re-familiarises readers with a pioneering figure in 'environmental dance' in Hong Kong in the article '*Pan Shaohui de huanjing wudao yu xiandaixing*' (Pun Siu-fai's environmental dance and its modernity). Known for making dance performances for specific historical environments (e.g., Hong

Kong Railway Museum and Sam Tung Uk Museum), choreographer Pun Siu-fai has a holistic view of performing arts that regards stage design, installations, and performances as part of a creative organism. He is also one of the Hong Kong dance pioneers to shift the base of his dance career to mainland China. The Guangdong Modern Dance Company, of which he was the artistic director, continues to support the development of environmental dance and promotes performing arts exchange between the mainland and Hong Kong (Lau 2019, 188-233). Kuh Fei recounts the experience of growing up of a ‘man who dances ballet’ in the article ‘*Cong gudian balei dao dangdai xunlian: Wu Yulie zuopin chengxian de Xianggangxing*’ (From classical ballet to modern training: The representation of ‘Hong-kongness’ in Yuri Ng’s work). Ng rips away the aesthetic standards of classical ballet such as precision, symmetry and *développé* in his later work of contemporary dance, carving out a distinctive niche for himself (Kuh 2019, 156-185). As for the sections about ‘Helen Lai’, ‘Mui Cheuk-yin’ and ‘Daniel Yeung’, they each detail the issues on their respective topics and are an exemplary demonstration of research on Hong Kong’s performing arts.

The Taiwanese dance scholar Chen Yaping is the researcher for the chapter of ‘*Xianggang zuowei fangfa: Li Haining wuzuo zhong de xushi, shenti yu zhuti tanqiu*’ (Hong Kong as a method: The narrative, body, and exploration of subjects in Helen Lai’s works of dance). An expert on research into Taiwan’s contemporary dance history, theories of modernity, body culture studies, and analysis and criticism of dance, Chen has lately focused her attention on studying the works of Hong

Kong choreographer Helen Lai. She is the most suitable person in the Greater China region to write about Lai. From the angle of cultural studies, she explores Hong Kong dance in ‘the style of Helen Lai’ created as products of the post-colonial city and examines the cultural symbols and meanings of *Revolutionary Pekinese Opera (Millennium Mix)* (1997), *Tales of Two Cities – Hong Kong · Shanghai · Eileen Chang* (2010) and *HerStory* (2007). *The Revolutionary Pekinese Opera (Millennium Mix)* presents the hybridity of Hong Kong’s cultural identity through the body image in a Pekinese opera filled with dissonant chords and disjointed melodies. With the story of the celebrated novelist Eileen Chang as a leveraged means, *Tales of Two Cities* links up Shanghai women as told in the Hong Kong and Shanghai legends⁴ — and even of Eileen Chang herself — who ‘slump into’ and are ‘stuck’ in a sofa in Hong Kong. The *écriture féminine* of *HerStory* is a blend of language characteristics of the poetry of ‘mysterious-females’ typical for the work of Hong Kong female writers Xi Xi and Wong Bik-wan. The researcher has a great sensitivity to the usage of Cantonese on the stage because of her Taiwanese background and makes a special interpretation of it. Stemming from an analysis of the cultural theories by Ackbar Abbas, Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes, the article is in line with the ‘Hong-kongness’ that Lai has always stressed, be it discussing the marginalised cultural identity of Hong Kong or female alienation (Chen 2019, 74-105).

A veteran arts editor and dance critic based in Hong Kong, Daisy Chu is the researcher for the chapter ‘*Suishen qiwu: Yang Chunjiang de shenti*

⁴*Tales of Two Cities – Hong Kong · Shanghai · Eileen Chang* uses Eileen Chang’s classic works such as *Love in a Fallen City* and *Agarwood Incense: The First Censer* as the working text.

wuxue’ (The corporeality of dance: Daniel Yeung’s dance as the body). Having observed his dance pieces for years, Chu becomes an ‘eyewitness of Daniel Yeung’s development of his artistic practice’, as she details in her research how he switched to the world of dance despite having graduated from the Department of Fine Arts. Yeung has a high regard for dramatic elements in dance performances. Unrestrained from the traditional forms of dance and aesthetic techniques, he draws inspiration from Mui Cheuk-yin’s ‘contact improvisation’ and attaches importance to the subject position of the body. From *Topsy-Turvy* (1995), *Twin* (1995), *Dance Exhibitionist – A Paradise for Natural Body* (1999) and *Play Boys* (2002) to *Metalove* (2004), he appears in full nudity in almost every performance. Apart from being a tool for performance, the body is also a stage and a canvas for Yeung, the diversity of which he fully exploits. Daisy Chu reaches the conclusions that in his dance pieces, Yeung aims to ‘play games with his own body’ and that he enjoys presenting gender issues in his works, into which he incorporates a creative use of space and multimedia elements, to inspire the audience to reflect on gender and identity. Yeung and his dance pieces are celebrated as the ‘DV8 of Hong Kong’ (Chu 2019, 226-255).⁵

Hong Kong’s noted cultural critic and art critic Lok Fung begins her research section ‘*Luohua ren du li: Mei Zhuoyan de wudao meixue*’ (Standing alone with fallen petals: The dance aesthetics of Mui Cheuk-yin) with Mui Cheuk-yin’s experience of learning to dance. Receiving training in Chinese dance, Mui became inspired by the notion and

⁵ DV8 is short for the UK’s renowned dance company DV8 Physical Theatre, whose work is characterised by a clear focus on socio-political issues and includes voicing concerns for the gay community and ethnic minority.

techniques of contact improvisation, a form of postmodern dance, during her two visits to the U.S. after 2000, which had a direct impact on her subsequent artistic practice and development, traversing between the styles of Chinese and western dance. Lok Fung works particularly hard to put forward theories and keywords which she regards relevant to Mui's work because she was a bit late to the game and did not follow Mui's dance practice on site until recent years, and because theoretical explanation is a strong suit for her. For example, Mui borrows concepts from the east, such as Zen Buddhism, Confucian ideas, and philosophical thoughts on the body in *Taichi* and *Aikido*, for the basis of contemporary dance, and integrates movements that are traditionally not regarded as dance moves into it. Lok Fung provides details on those elements of contact improvisation: 1.) weight shifting; 2.) building connection with objects; 3.) establishing ways of communication through the body. Another example is that Mui believes in the 'similarity of poetry to dance', and Lok Fung tries to corroborate the evidence from 'concepts to practices' with the use of images, symbols, and metaphors in Mui's works. Her cross-cultural and cross-border friendship with Pina Bausch and the fact that she was invited by the Folkwang Tanzstudio to choreograph works are things that people have been much talked about. After mentioning those life events, Lok Fung adds that the concept of 'dance theatre' was first used by the Austro-Hungarian dance artist Rudolf von Laban and was later established by Pina Bausch. She then analyses and evaluates six of Mui's dance and choreographic works, namely *Awakenings in a Dream* (1986), *Eulogy* (1995), *Desperately Seeking Miss Blossom* (2008), *Love Accidentally* (2010), *Dairy VI: Applause*

(2015) and *The Life and Death of Xiao Hong* (2013) (Lok Fung 2019, 108-153).

The character ‘*du*’ (alone) in the title ‘*Luohua ren du li: Mei Zhuoyan de wudao meixue*’, as suggested by Lok Fung, derives from Mui’s artistic practice which is mostly based on solo dance. On the other hand, I have summarised Mui’s works and described her with the metaphor of ‘a blue peafowl holding up a fan dancing to a mirror’ in another medium. The ‘blue peafowl dancing to the mirror’ is a classical allusion first seen in ‘*Luanniao shi xu*’ (The preface to the poem of peafowls) written by the Liu Song Dynasty (420–479 CE) poet Fan Tai (also quoted in Hou Hsiao-hsien’s film *The Assassin*). The story reads: ‘The king of Jibin was given a blue peafowl which declined to sing for three years. His wife said, “Peafowls sing when they see their kind. Why don’t you hang a mirror for it to look into?” The blue peafowl saw its own image (in the mirror) and danced all night until it died.’ The allusion of ‘a blue peafowl holding up a fan dancing to a mirror’, leaving aside the tragedy of not being able to be its own master in the original text, highlights that Mui has chosen to be an independent dancer and has excelled in solo dances imbued with the spirit of Chinese performances. Lok Fung’s research study pinpoints Mui’s artistic dimensions and voices criticism regarding the maverick qualities of the female choreographer, which include the double identity as a choreographer and a performer, the mix of nuances and broadness, and the coexistence of doing nothing and doing everything possible to put ideas into actions, offering the readers a deeper knowledge and understanding of the artist and her dance works.

Critical Writing from Practical and Artistic Points of View

Another Hong Kong dance critic, Lee Hoi-yin, wrote the book review '*Xianggang dangdai wudao lishi, meixue ji shenfen tanqiu de qihou*' (*Contemporary history of dance in Hong Kong, aesthetics and exploration of identity as a source of inspiration for the future*) and raised a profound question regarding *Studies* – 'if there is a follow-up research': 'if we could study the researchers and break down their concepts of time and space to understand what historical points of view they would take to explain the development of art forms...' (Lee 2020, 26). It does challenge one to think about the question. In Hong Kong, very few people engage in arts criticism, and dance critics could even be considered endangered species when compared with theatre (drama/theatre) critics. Nevertheless, the 'one-to-one' research study on dance involves dance criticism that particularly requires professional expertise, long-term observation, and research ability, and thus the dancers/choreographers and the researchers have a relationship that resembles the one of a boat in the water, in the sense that a rising tide can lift the boat. As the tide comes in and goes out, some people inevitably expose themselves when rushing to finish their work. An individual research study might even struggle to cover the four steps of dance criticism (Lok Fung 2014). As a result, it keeps repeating the childhood events and experience of growing up of the 'man who dances ballet', wasting the opportunity to put the research subject and the platform to good use.

In the world of literary criticism, critics have always been ridiculed as 'horseflies', which feed on the blood of livestock. If so, what exactly is (performing) arts criticism, and especially dance criticism, about? Author of the collection of arts criticism *Dancing in the Maze* and winner of The

Artist of the Year (Arts Criticism) at the Hong Kong Arts Development Awards 2015, Lok Fung has written an article on 'what dance criticism is' which says, 'Dance criticism (or all types of cultural criticism) is split into two levels of "practical writing" and "artistic writing". The former is an insightful narrative about a particular work constructed from one's cultural accumulation of knowledge, erudition, and experience, while the latter is a writer's expression of personality, involvement of life experience and reflection of ego... The former is produced for history studies and the latter imprints art with a sense of humanity and sentiments...' (Lok Fung 2014).

To elaborate on this, I believe that a piece of truly excellent and worthy (performing) arts criticism always combines the strengths of practical writing and artistic writing. It should produce summaries, narratives, documentation, and professional criticism that point to the practicality of the former, and at the same time present itself as stylised writing, in which the latter can highlight a critic's 'intelligent quality'. More importantly, the existence of (performing) arts criticism and its established system would mean that the works in that field or form of art, in terms of quality and development, have reached a level on which they can stand up to being stared at, criticised, and studied. That is to say, when (performing) arts criticism becomes a system in its own right, it is a symbol of professionalism of (performing) arts. The quality of the (performing) arts pieces, critiques (articles and the system to which they belong) and people (artists and critics) is fully revealed/exposed in the 'critical activities'. Some critiques are excellent both in terms of the content and the language, showing the writers' scholarship, talents, and

unique insights, while some rehash what someone else has said or just go through the motions to confuse everyone. Admittedly, different people have different opinions on whether a critic’s writing has the verve and appeal required, and the high-quality ones can only be found by chance. It is the aesthetic and value judgements that are the greatest ‘hidden gems’ in criticism itself, as well as our most precious and extraordinary asset. Therefore, *Studies*, edited by Prof. Eva Man, aims at providing six exchange platforms for choreographers and arts critics to trade ideas and learn from each other, while also serving as a vast plain of critical writing where arts critics can go all out to utilise their knowledge and expertise.

That also reminds me of what Joan Campbell,⁶ an interviewee for *The Unspoken Dance*, has said. Speaking of ballet, people generally think that it is always about learning and showing the methods and techniques, but in the eyes of the dance educator, ballet training is about building a set of aesthetic values. She says, ‘When you are sent to a ballet class, you are not sent to become a ballerina. You are sent to become sociable, to sit and walk nicely, to move gracefully, and to listen to the music. It does not matter if you will never go onto the stage when the classes are over — one walks down the street, and one should walk nicely down the street’ (Lee 2018, 343). As society has become wealthier, the nurture of aesthetic awareness and the appreciation and pursuit of beauty as represented by ballet should naturally become indispensable to a good citizen. Similarly, the ultimate goal of (performing) arts criticism is to create a better group of audience members and readers, and through life-on-life interactions

⁶Joan Campbell taught in the education department of the Hong Kong Ballet in the late 1970s, setting the trend of training artistic talents, in which dance companies would nurture their own dancers.

with others in the forms of writing and reading, more people will become better audience members and readers.

Summing Up: Research on Performing Arts and Urban Commons

If we compare *Studies* with *The Unspoken Dance* published in the same year, as they are both time-consuming research projects that required strenuous efforts to complete, what 'cultural landscapes' do they produce for us? Not only are those materials and research studies without a doubt important archives for documents and data on performing arts, but they are especially valuable links of 'urban commons' that connect the depiction, organisation and humanistic concerns of specific social groups. According to the definition of the 'common' given by the renowned American critical geographer David Harvey, 'The common is not to be construed, therefore, as a particular kind of thing, asset or even social process, but as an unstable and malleable social relation between a particular self-defined social group and those aspects of its actually existing or yet-to-be-created social and/or physical environment deemed crucial to its life and livelihood' (Harvey 2012, 73).' An urban common is built up over time through social interactions and developments by a community, and the culture of performing arts is a key. The complexity and diversity of urban life cannot be attained simply by drawing up plans. A city has its own rhythm and speed of growth, like a living organism. What those research projects on performing arts need to do is to monitor and keep track of the rhythm and speed of growth of a culture when taking part in its development.

If we look at a wider picture, that also has something to do with the 'cultural and creative turn' that took place in Europe and the US within twenty or thirty years, and in the Asian region in the most recent decade (e.g., New York, London, Tokyo, Taipei, Hong Kong, Seoul, and Singapore). This round of shock waves has prompted the governments to act, inducing them to divert huge amounts of resources to the emerging cultural and creative industries (e.g., design, animation, film, visual arts, performing arts, etc.). To increase the appeal of their major cities in this era of globalisation, they also utilise enormous cultural resources to build city branding, while 'rediscovering artists' by launching research on them is one of the most common cultural strategies.

'Dance' and 'art development' were barely thought of in Hong Kong in the 1950s and 1960s due to economic and cultural constraints. It was only after 1967, when the British colonial government began actively formulating youth policy, that 'dance' was gradually looked at from 'artistic' and 'cultural' perspectives, and by doing so, the cultural roles of 'dancers' and 'performing arts' were defined. Catching up with the progress of society, increased demand for 'professional qualifications in dance' became apparent in the development of Hong Kong dance in the 1980s and 1990s, and 'dance creation' came into being as a product of the times. The reality behind such a development, besides the desire to align Hong Kong dance with standards for western art, is that Hong Kong, as an international city with a dominant Chinese population, has inevitably and coincidentally been a cradle for 'dance creators' with a dance background from both eastern and western cultures. Judging from

the time context, *Studies* focuses on the time period of major turning points and new highs in 'Hong Kong's performing arts'. It introduces the philosophy of art and aesthetics of Miranda Chin, Helen Lai, Mui Cheuk-yin, Yuri Ng, Pun Siu-fai and Daniel Yeung, a generation of pioneers and forerunners of 'Hong Kong's dance creation', during the phase of 'rediscovering' local choreographers. *Studies* gives an outline of 'Hong Kong's performing arts', which are represented by the art form of dance, and captures their features and essence, making an important mark on Hong Kong's cultural trends in contemporary times – that they represent 'Hong Kong' as well as the 'city branding' of Hong Kong. Those artists create works in Hong Kong, and at the same time are creating the visible face of the city.

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