

Hong Kong Exile Brings Multimedia Dance to Seattle

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Hong Kong Exile. • Courtesy Photo

Four nations converge in the work of **Hong Kong Exile**, a Canadian dance company making its American debut at this year's **Seattle International Dance Festival**.

With **NINEEIGHT**, Hong Kong Exile will present a multimedia dance reflection upon transitions of all kinds, including geographical, political, and social.

This performance trio made up of Natalie Tin Yin Gan, Milton Lim, and Remy Siu will engage in an organic creative development process, exploring and discovering political issues as they work.

"The Hong Kong Exile process tends to be vastly different from project to project," said Gan, whose specialty within the group is dance.

Independent preparation is key, Gan said of the rehearsal process.

“I am quite sensitive and affected by local and international politics as an individual, so it feels only natural that this extends to my creative research,” Gan said. “I read a lot in order to prepare for rehearsals, exploring the content for images or relationships that resonate with me.”

Once the independent preparation is complete, company members then come together to share what they’ve learned.

“[Hong Kong Exile] works in the spirit of collaboration and devised theatre—with improvisation, jamming, and personal offers generating most material,” Gan said. “There is also a lot of rigorous debate and discussion outside the studio.”

The floor is typically open to any topic that inspires the three co-artistic directors: “Whatever we find interesting or curious,” Gan said. “Sometimes it is what we find uncomfortable.”

But most of what they develop into performance relates to geopolitical concerns. “I think it is a combination of how we reflect on our identities as Chinese diaspora living in Canada, in conjunction with current global political phenomena that manifest locally,” Gan said.

As a multimedia performance group, they present their work in many realms beyond the traditional stage. “Our work is shown in varying contexts—in New Music Festivals, as art gallery installations, on web platforms, etc.,” Gan said. “So there is a lot of nuance to how our processes unfold, further diversified by who we bring in as collaborators.”

Hong Kong Exile will only be in town briefly to perform, but Gan will also teach a Master Class as part of the Festival’s educational outreach programs and looks forward to learning more about Seattle’s arts community.

“We are incredibly interested in how Seattle audiences will engage with the political and cultural themes in NINEEIGHT,” Gan said.

Hong Kong Exile performs NINEEIGHT at the Seattle International Dance Festival on June 19 at 8:00 p.m. at Raisbeck Performance Hall, 2015 Boren Avenue, Seattle. For more information, visit www.seattleidf.org/event/international-series-weekend-2-program-a-2015.