

This year was the first time that the contest was held at Yokoham Nigiwaiza Small Hall, so the situation was very different from last year. Through last year, the event had been held in the multipurpose space on the second floor of the Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse No.1, and the galleries and meeting rooms and others. The artists were performing in 'everyday space' being treated as a 'stage'. This year, at Yokohama Nigiwaiza Small Hall, they performed in a black box, an 'out of the ordinary space' just like a theatre with a proscenium.

'This out of the ordinary space' is totally antiseptic, with no atmosphere at all. The choreographers were forced in every respect to start from zero. This was both an extremely interesting space and a space that demanded expenditure of great effort. I imagine the dancers appearing on this stage for their final performances thinking 'But there is nothing at all here! What can I do?' That's it, precisely. 'This out of the ordinary space' is a zero. Most of the videos we were sent for the preliminary judging were shot in 'ordinary spaces'. Having the works performed in this 'out of the ordinary space' raised new issues. For this round we chose people with an appetite for creativity, who felt 'I've got to create!' Their works may not have been fully mature, but the way in which their intentions were revealed to us was due to this space.

I want us to savor how the body moves differently in everyday and out of the ordinary spaces, the speed with which an atmosphere is created, the differences in how time flows. In a zero place, every trace of excess must be trimmed away, reduced to the dancer's intentions and nothing more. That is what I want the dancers to think about. Be free! Be more straightforward in creating work that satisfies yourself. That is the caring cry of my own heart.

Ito Chie

This year the members of the jury were compelled to rethink what Competition II's raison d'être, and that of its parent body, should be.

Competition II does not demand highly polished works that displays refined sensibilities or exceptional technique. Instead of a high level of finish or maturity, what we look for is work that deeply engages the artist's own issues and, while sincerely addressing the physicality of the body, is also timely, characteristic of the period in which it appears.

We look for unique work, work that, while it may be immature, resembles nothing we have seen before, work that still has room to grow, work that points to the evolution of totally unimagined new possibilities. In these works we see the crystallization of individual standards. These are the works we are all looking for.

We select and foster the seeds from which new talent will grow, reshaping dance in Japan and around the world within the next five to ten years. Unique, original work has strength, but is at the same time fragile. It is filled with me-ism and solipsism and is closely aligned with rebellion against dance conceived as a genre. We can never cease in our search for

the memories embedded in our own bodies, while at the same time searching for forms that return us to the primal instinct that makes dance the oldest of all human forms of expression.

Questions that arise from consciousness of the body are questions for all of humanity. We need to reaffirm our commitment to preserving Competition II as one of those rare places in which these questions are asked.

This time the venue changed; it became a pitch black space. Our question was what would we see and how would it be presented in that space. It was also a very Yokohama place but a topos entirely different from the Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse No.1. With the use of this space the Yokohama Dance Collection came to straddle two places, each with its own memories. The memories of this place changed the chemistry of our own visceral memories.

Vivienne Sato

I was happy to see the Yokohama Dance Collection move from the second floor of Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse No. 1 to the Yokohama Nigiwaiza Small Hall. With no pillars breaking up the space and a higher ceiling, the new venue is a better environment for dance. Because, however, the dancers were enclosed in a totally black box, I could see that the finalists were rather perplexed about how to adapt to this space. How should they use their bodies to control the space? And where should the dancers position themselves and their props? Instead of focusing only on how to compose their bodily movements, they were forced to be more strongly aware of relation between body and space.

Thinking about the unique series of ideas in "Tuna" by Yousei Daizukan's Nagano Yuriko, I foresee audiences being transported to places they have never imagined. I look forward to her next work. Many of the other artists' work, while needing improvement, holds great promise. I think of Taka Mizuki's "Other people's affairs", Kobayashi Rina's "Suppon", Kuri Akane's "Quiet Room", Kobayashi Nana's "Imposter / FAKE", Imaeda Seina's "Have you ever thought that you want to lick your own eyes?" and so on.

Hamano Fumio