

## YDC 2020 Competition I : Comments of Judges

Competition I featured 10 outstanding works by finalists from South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Japan, which confronted the body through diverse approaches and proficiently articulated their respective core concepts. The most highly evaluated of these were the works that skillfully arranged the body and the space, and flow of time, in which it exists.

Performed against a plastic-bottle-covered wall, the delicately choreographed “Suiyoubaiion” by Yokoyama Ayano visualized and transformed human emotion—colorless, shapeless, and ever-evolving, like water—from a certain moment into a captivating dance. In Shikichi Osamu’s “happy ice-cream,” the superimposition of a chaotic installation, three bodies collapsing on to the floor, and amplified breathing from microphones create an interplay of otherwise divorced space-times, culminating in an ephemeral dance work that hones in on the underlying, invisible relationships behind phenomena.

The choreography of Raul L. Raquitico Jr. and Song Yunjoo, both an abstract and sublimated version of a local context, were impressive, as was the poetic work of Lin Chun-Yu. For VONNOS and Shimojima Reisa, I look forward to seeing the further development of their themes.

Dance is in fact built on a range of elements that surround it. YDC is a gathering place for choreographic works that go beyond mere technique and enable the discovery of the world anew.

Okami Sae

The video selection drew 187 entries from 38 countries, including many unique works from regions such as Africa and Asia, that went beyond the conventional framework of dance competitions; I had a strong sense of the broader perspective on dance that came from this diversity of social background.

The results were determined by the sum total of the jurors’ ratings of each work, with criteria including the following: innovation in choreographic vocabulary, whether the composition and theme were well considered, the physical caliber of expressive intensity, how well everything worked together as a whole, and how much it challenged or went beyond existing methods of creation. This approach meant that each award was presented from different standpoints, making the competition unique.

On the whole, the competition saw many well-rounded works, with serene choreography and elaborate spatial design. I was extremely encouraged to witness such creative maturity. On the other hand, it was a bit unfortunate that there were no dance works that excelled conceptually or with an intense physical presence.

With many avenues of expression already explored, contemporary dance has become, in some ways, a struggle to get away from what is familiar. But creating dance is an act of exploring the relationship between the body and the world, as well as pursuing the tireless charm of humanity. The terrain of the unknown will endure ad infinitum, as long as our ever-evolving bodies and societies exist. I look forward to being amazed by the new sensibilities these young choreographers bring forth, and truly wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

Kitamura Akiko

I found this edition of Competition I hard to grasp, almost like we were back to square one. Maybe it was a coincidence but the video selection process was more exciting: the entries moved in unexpected directions. But in the final competition, all of this had faded. I may have raised my expectations too high with the anticipation for new emerging practices in dance. The competition was more international compared to past editions, but the works overall lacked intensity. I would have liked to see artists really show upfront their core concept and how they influence those watching. Because this is a competition, the works are presented in an extremely reserved setting; however, I would have preferred to see something memorable that overpowers that kind of atmosphere. In order to promote contemporary dance through this competition, everyone, including the jury members, needs to take on a more active and positive stance. In order to prevent the value of art diminishing, I want to keep on putting out work into the world, while keeping the conversation going by communicating with and commending other artists. I hope to continue my commitment to the competition, retaining a sense of its value as well as closely follow the future progress of this year's winners.

Kondo Ryohei

This year's competition was an opportunity to reconsider contemporary dance. I was not disappointed by the level of skill, direction, composition, and so on, of the works. But what do we want to do through dance and why do we dance? There are bodies as well as dance works that can only be made possible through contemporary dance, which, in my opinion, is the very reason we work with this medium, but I felt this competition fell short of reaching that level. As a non-specialist in dance, what I ask from the contestants is always the same: I want to see why they dance. The work of Yokoyama, who won the Jury Prize, was superior in its integration of different elements, including composition and choreography. She still seemed to be grappling with challenges, and has room for growth, which makes me look forward to her future activities even more. I also highly rate Shikichi's work—a product of a need to create, that happened to result in something resembling dance—for its potential and determination, as well as Lin Chun-Yu's work for its elevated composition and choreography. Overall, because this is a competition, I would have liked to see contestants really compete for the prize. Going forward, I hope to see a range of ambitious works, from those the artists are confident in to those submitted to gauge reception. The Taiwanese works in particular excelled in this year's video selection. I look forward to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan developing together through friendly competition in East Asia.

Tada Junnosuke

With ten works chosen out of 187 submissions from 38 countries, this year's competition was very interesting as it showed further expansion in the diversity of technique and theme. The most controversial work was Shikichi Osamu's "happy ice-cream." Dimitris Papaioannou and Romeo Castellucci first come to mind when thinking about works that traverse visual art and dance. Shikichi's work, featuring a beautiful space enveloped in white and the progression of time led by the breath, was also flawless. In his next work, I hope to see bodies that can more than compete with the strength of this space. In "Suiyoubaiou," a solo piece by Yokoyama Ayano (who heads the all-women dance company <lal banshees>), light reflecting off of plastic bottles creates a dreamy space; in this setting the work ingeniously presents a body gradually laying bare its vulnerability and ephemerality. The unique lyricism Yokoyama conveyed was also where this work shined. I am already looking forward to future performances by this year's winners at Yokohama Dance Collection. In "Vacant seat" by VONNOS, dancers donning orange dresses as well as hats that conceal their faces perform on a stage partitioned by darkness. The obsessive delivery of their steps gave rise to an ominous atmosphere that was striking. "A Pillow Song" by Lin Chun-Yu, of Taiwan, was performed against Tchaikovsky's "Valse Sentimentale" rendered in the mysterious sound of the theremin. The dreamlike duet performed by two women left an impression. The other works were similarly powerful; once again, however, there was an absence of works in which the dancers' bodies themselves took over on stage.

Hamano Fumio

2020 was a fruitful year for Yokohama Dance Collection. An incredible group of artists presented their choreographic works. First, I would like to express my gratitude for their deep involvement and belief in dance, and for being the ones fearlessly taking risks. They were selected among many applicants. I would also like to thank the members of this preselection jury; devoting many hours to watching submitted videos is another way to be deeply involved in dance.

In my view, the overall level was very high but sometimes lacking in originality. This resulted in some works essentially resembling one another. At times, the format of a competition demands astonishment, and the question of why we are doing this dance at this moment in front of this audience arises. For example, many works in this year's Dance Collection used objects. However, the work that stood out to me and received this year's French Embassy Prize presented not objects, but sculptures. Shikichi Osamu managed to create a unique atmosphere in which the body was one of the elements rather than the sole subject.

Lastly, I express my gratitude to the entire Yokohama Dance Collection team and the French Embassy in Japan for continuing to support art, cultural exchange, and cooperation between our two countries.

Aymar Crosnier