

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL 2026

Re-Shaping Identity

EDUCATION RESOURCE

Youth and Education Program Partners



Overview

Suitable year levels

7 – 12

Warnings

Low-lighting, strobe and haze effects.

Themes of displacement and cultural dislocation.

Genre

Dance, Physical Theatre, Contemporary Dance, Multidisciplinary Performance

Synopsis

Re-shaping Identity employs choreographic methods to actively intervene in the “identity” presented by folk dance, so that people are no longer troubled by “definitions.” Here, “folk dance” is no longer a dance genre, but a material, a form that transforms movement and identity consciousness. It breaks free from stereotypical notions and challenges the power structures imposed on our bodies. The performance invites five Chinese dancers from different ethnic groups, including Tibetan, Yao, Uyghur, and Han, to explore the issue of “self-identity.” It utilises the traditional group dance form, emphasising the function of collective dance and demonstrating how group dance brings different individuals together, thereby loosening the rigid perceptions of the “collective” and the “individual.” It re-imagines traditional dance forms and seeks new meaning from these roots. GuoGuoHuiHui’s work merges choreography with cultural critique, creating a unique dance language that invites you to see yourselves and the world in a new light, and recognise that dancing is a present-moment action intimately connected

Themes/Ideas

Reshaping Identity investigates how identity is formed, disrupted, and rebuilt in a contemporary world marked by movement, cultural complexity, and rapid social change. Through highly physical and emotionally charged choreography, the production positions the body as both a site of conflict and a vessel for healing, allowing the dancers’ stories to emerge through gesture, rhythm, and collective tension.

Rebuilding Identity After Cultural, Social, or Personal Upheaval

A central focus of the work is the rebuilding of the self after disruption caused by migration, cultural dislocation, trauma, grief, or profound personal transitions. The choreography reveals identity reconstruction as fragmented, messy, non-linear and unstable. Dancers repeatedly fall out of alignment, are pulled away from the group, or must rebuild physical motifs they previously abandoned. These recurring patterns mirror how identity is often rebuilt through cycles of resistance, acceptance, and rediscovery. The work highlights that reconstruction is both an emotional and embodied process: the body must relearn its place in the world.

Belonging and Otherness

The tension between wanting to belong and feeling excluded drives much of the ensemble interaction. Belonging appears in moments of synchronised movement, shared breath, or flocking patterns, while otherness is expressed when dancers are pushed to the margins, isolated under specific lighting states, or forced into discordant rhythms. The production shows how belonging can be fragile, shaped by culture, language, appearance, or history, and how easily it can shift. At times, dancers strain to assimilate into group sequences but never fully “fit,” capturing the complexity many feel when navigating unfamiliar or unwelcoming spaces.

The Body Remembers: Movement and Memory

The work proposes that the body remembers what the mind forgets. Movement phrases draw on gestures associated with cultural practices, inherited trauma, or unconscious habits. These motifs resurface unexpectedly, as if triggered by internal memory rather than external choreography. Small, intimate gestures suggest memories surfacing without permission. The idea that identity is carried through muscle memory positions the body as an archive containing personal, cultural, and ancestral history.

Community vs Individuality

Throughout the work, the ensemble shifts between tightly unified formations and moments where individuals assert their own movement languages. This interplay asks how much of us is shaped by community and how much we actively carve out ourselves. Group sequences illustrate communal shaping forces—cultural expectations, shared rituals, collective identity—while solos emphasise autonomy, self-definition, and inner conflict. The production also acknowledges the layered nature of identity by suggesting that community and individuality are influenced by intersecting factors: gender, culture, class, heritage, digital identity, and lived experience. In revealing identity as fluid and able to be continually reshaped, *Re-shaping Identity* presents the self as something negotiated and evolving rather than fixed.

General Capabilities

The Arts Learning Area has a natural link to the elements of the General Capabilities. Specific learning activities have been linked with the following icons:



Year 7 and 8 Dance

- Analyse how the elements of dance, choreographic devices and/or production elements are manipulated in dance they create and/or experience.
- Evaluate the ways that dance works and/or performances in a range of styles and/or from across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning.
- Describe respectful approaches to creating, performing and/or responding to dance.
- Manipulate the elements of dance and choreographic devices to choreograph dance that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning.
- Employ technical and expressive skills and, as appropriate, genre or stylespecific techniques when performing dances for audiences.

Year 9 and 10 Dance

- Analyse how and/or why the elements of dance, choreographic devices, genre or stylespecific techniques, production elements, and/or technical and expressive skills are manipulated in dance they create and/or experience.
- Evaluate how dance works and/or performances in a range of styles and/or from across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning.
- Evaluate how dance is used to celebrate and challenge perspectives of Australian identity.
- Select and manipulate the elements of dance, choreographic devices and/or structure to choreograph dances.
- Employ technical and expressive skills and genre or stylespecific techniques to enhance communication of ideas, perspectives and/or meaning when performing dance for audiences.

SACE Stage 1 Dance

Understanding Dance

- UD1 Knowledge and understanding of dance practices, such as the use of the body, dance skills, dance elements, structural devices, production elements, and/or safe dance practices.

Creating Dance

- CD1 Application of skills using safe dance practices and techniques in presenting and/or creating dance works.
- CD2 Communication of choreographic intent to an audience through composition or performance.

Responding to Dance

- RD2 Investigation into different cultures, historical periods, or dance traditions.

SACE Stage 2 Dance

Understanding Dance

- UD1 Knowledge and understanding of dance practices, such as the use of the body, dance skills, dance elements, structural devices, production elements, and/or safe dance practices.

Creating Dance

- CD1 Application of skills using safe dance practices and techniques in presenting and/or creating dance works.
- CD2 Communication of choreographic intent to an audience through composition or performance.

Responding to Dance

- RD1 Critique and evaluation of a dance presentation, performance, or choreographic piece.

- RD2 Analysis and synthesis of research findings to choreograph a dance work.

Year 9 and 10 Chinese

- Communicate using nonverbal, spoken and written language to collaborate, plan and reflect on activities and events.
- Interpret and analyse information and ideas in texts and demonstrate understanding of different perspectives.
- Synthesise information and respond in Chinese or English, adjusting language to
- convey meaning and to suit context, purpose and audience.
- They reflect on their own language use and cultural identity.

SACE Stage 1 Chinese (Continuers)

Ideas

I1 Relevance

- relevance to context, purpose, audience, and topic
- conveying appropriate detail, ideas, information, or opinions
- creating interest and engaging the audience.

I2 Depth of treatment of ideas, information, or opinions

- depth and breadth of content
- elaboration of ideas and support of opinions
- planning and preparation.

Expression

E1 Capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately

- range of expression (i.e. linguistic structures and features)
- accuracy of expression (i.e. linguistic structures and features, grammar)
- use of cohesive devices
- appropriateness of expression, including cultural appropriateness
- clarity of expression, including fluency, pronunciation, and intonation.

E2 Coherence in structure and sequence

- organisation of information and ideas
- use of the conventions of text types.

Interpretation and Reflection

The specific features are as follows:

IR1 Interpretation of meaning in texts, by identifying and explaining

- the content (general and specific information)
- the context, purpose, and audience of the text
- concepts, perspectives, and ideas represented in the text.

IR2 Analysis of the language in texts

- linguistic and cultural features (e.g. word choice, expressions, idiom)
- stylistic features (e.g. tone, register, phrasing and repetition, textual features and organisation).

IR3 Reflection

- reflection on how cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas are represented or expressed in texts
- reflection on own values, beliefs, practices, and ideas in relation to those represented or expressed in the texts studied
- reflection on own learning.

SACE Stage 2 Chinese (Continuers)

Ideas

I1 Relevance

- relevance to context, purpose, audience, and topic
- conveying appropriate detail, ideas, information, or opinions
- creating interest and engaging the audience.

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- appropriateness of expression, including cultural appropriateness
- clarity of expression, including fluency, pronunciation, and intonation.

E2 Coherence in structure and sequence

- organisation of information and ideas
- use of the conventions of text types.

E3 Capacity to interact and maintain a conversation and discussion

- interaction on topics (i.e. relating to the interlocutor, interest in the topic)
- use of communication strategies (i.e. comprehension, responding to cues)
- fluency of responses.

Interpretation and Reflection

IR1 Interpretation of meaning in texts, by identifying and explaining

- the content (general and specific information)
- the context, purpose, and audience of the text
- concepts, perspectives, and ideas represented in the text.

IR2 Analysis of the language in texts

- linguistic and cultural features (e.g. word choice, expressions, idiom)
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IR3 Reflection

- reflection on how cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas are represented or expressed in texts
- reflection on own values, beliefs, practices, and ideas in relation to those represented or expressed in the texts studied
- reflection on own learning.

SACE Stage 1 Society and Culture

Knowledge and Understanding

KU1 Knowledge and understanding of contemporary social and/or cultural issues in Australian and global contexts.

KU2 Understanding of connections between societies and cultures.

Investigation and Analysis

IA1 Analysis of and reflection on contemporary social or cultural issues.

IA2 Analysis of how and why social change occurs.

IA3 Investigation and analysis of a range of sources and perspectives.

Collaboration

CI1 Collaborative investigation of a range of perspectives on a contemporary social or cultural issue.

CI2 Reflection on learning and sharing of learning with others.

Communication

Cm1 Communication of informed ideas about social and/or cultural issues and societies.

Cm2 Communication of opinions supported by evidence, with appropriate acknowledgment of sources.

SACE Stage 2 Society and Culture

Knowledge and Understanding

KU1 Knowledge and understanding of different aspects of and issues related to contemporary societies and cultures, in local and global contexts.

KU2 Knowledge and understanding of the nature and causes of social change.

KU3 Understanding of ways in which societies and cultures are connected and interdependent.

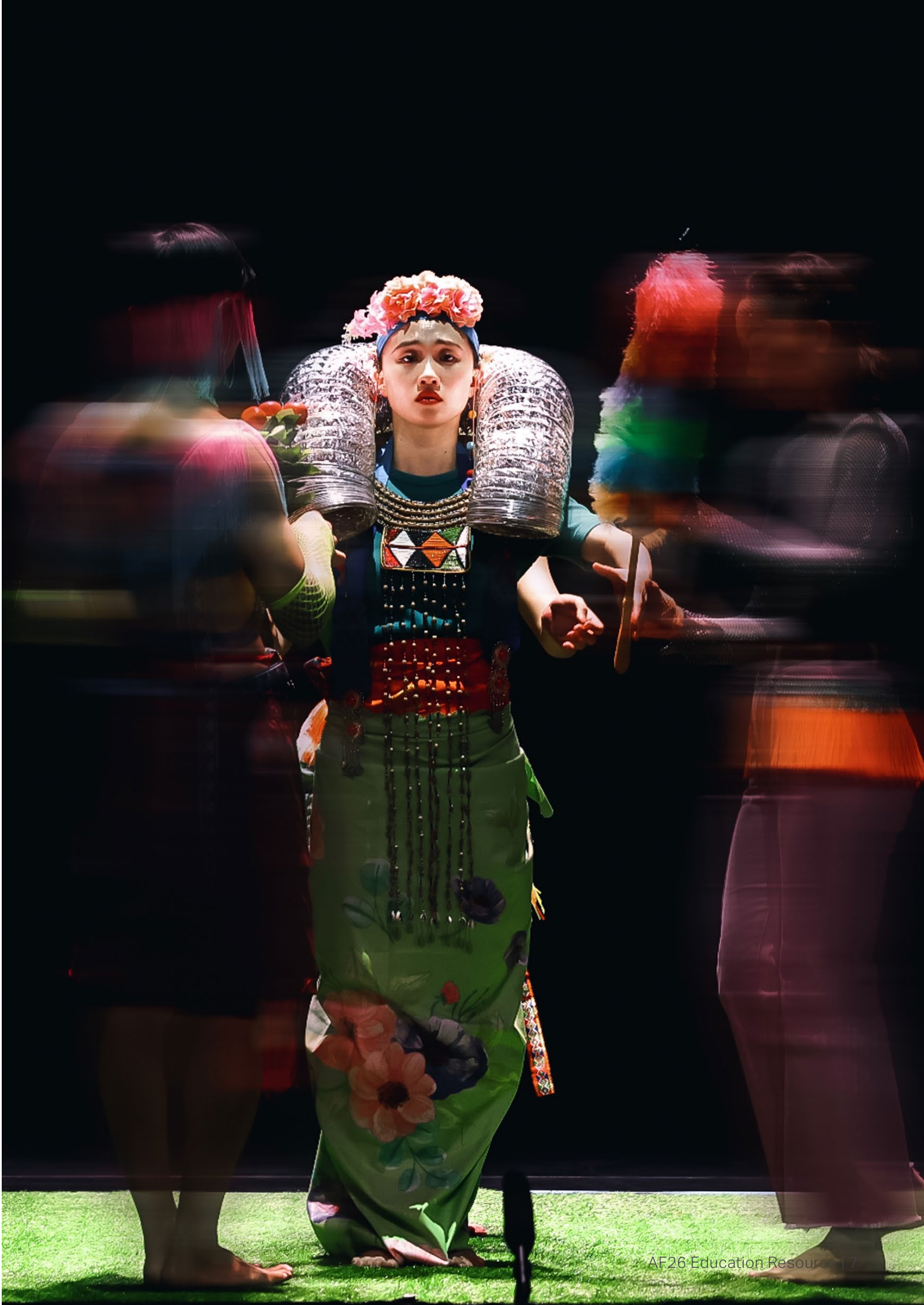
Investigation and Analysis

IA1 Investigation and analysis of different aspects of and issues related to contemporary societies and cultures, in local and global contexts.

IA2 Investigation and analysis of ways in which power structures operate in societies.

Evaluation and Communication

EC2 Communication of informed ideas about societies and social and cultural issues.





Production

Music/Sound

The sound design functions as an active storytelling element, shaping emotional tone and reinforcing the exploration of identity. The production uses a hybrid soundscape combining electronic ambient layers, field recordings, and performer-triggered sounds. The impact is the creation of a landscape that feels both intimate and expansive, reflecting how identity is formed through internal experiences and external environments.

Electronic textures create a sense of the dancer's emotional landscape – while field recordings such as footsteps, breath, or environmental noises provide a sense of lived reality. This tension between digital and organic sound mirrors the dancers' journeys as they navigate fluid, changing identities.

Sound operates as an emotional landscape rather than traditional musical accompaniment. At different moments it becomes breathy and delicate, percussive and fractured, or dense and atmospheric. These shifts signal the emotional states within the choreography enhancing sections of unity and collaboration, and moments of disconnection and isolation.

Looping motifs of short repeated sonic fragments that gradually evolve complement the cyclical nature of memory and identity reconstruction. These loops shift, distort, or resolve over time, mirroring the dancers' own transformations.

Set Design

The overall aesthetic leans toward minimalism, giving the dancers' bodies dominance in the production. The set design is essentially a bare stage that is transformed through the storytelling of the dancers and lighting. In one section, a large square carpet of fake grass is rolled out by the formers transforming the stage into a simple natural environment where one of the performers grew up as she recalls her childhood memories. This fluid use of space supports the work's exploration of identity reconstruction by showing how environments shape human experience, and the way in which the stage itself can be transformed, re-imagined and re-shaped as the characters move between memories and present reality in their dance.

Lighting

The lighting design shifts in intensity, colour, and direction to reflect changes in identity, memory, and interpersonal dynamics. Soft, diffused lighting often accompanies introspective or intimate sections, suggesting vulnerability or the blurred nature of personal memory. In contrast, stark side-lighting or sharp contrasts create fragmentation, echoing moments of conflict.

Colour palettes are intentionally minimal which, like the sparse set design, highlights the body as the main expressive instrument while still enhancing the dramatic storytelling.

Costumes

Initially, the costume design appears simplistic and unremarkable as the dancers appear in contemporary Western clothing: baggy pants, coloured jeans, t shirts and skirts feature highly in the design concept. However, over the duration of the performance, embellishments are added to the costumes such as fringing and waist-ties that seem reminiscent of aspect of traditional Asian cultural dress but in contemporary fluroescent colours. The aesthetic appears to suggest the dancers' quest to reclaim and re-shape aspects of their traditional culture, and that elements of tradition have informed their evolution and growth.

Characterisation

In *Re-shaping Identity*, performers do not portray traditional characters. Instead, they function as physical embodiments of emotional states, cultural histories, and collective tensions. Characterisation emerges through movement quality, spatial relationships, and group dynamics rather than dialogue or narrative.

Ensemble work is central. Moments of unison signal belonging or shared experience, while breakaways express individuality or otherness. Tension between group and solo performance becomes a key storytelling device, as dancers navigate closeness, resistance, and the desire for connection.

Dramatic Structure

Non-linear, fragmented dramatic structure

The non-linear and episodic structure of *Re-Shaping Identity* unfolds through sections where each dancer addresses the audience directly in a monologue or testimonial about aspects of their heritage, culture, family, past experiences and present circumstances that have contributed to shaping their identity. These stories are often accompanied by traditional folk dance sequences that evolve into a contemporary interpretations.

Dramatic Form/Convention

Reshaping Identity draws on conventions of contemporary dance, physical theatre, and postdramatic performance.

Movement as Narrative

Rather than presenting a fixed storyline or traditional characters, the work prioritises embodiment, sensory experience, and thematic exploration. A key convention is movement as narrative—the idea that gesture, pattern, and physicality communicate meaning in place of dialogue.

Ensemble Devising Practice

The production uses ensemble-based devising practices, where performers contribute movement vocabulary shaped by personal experience. This aligns with physical theatre traditions that emphasise collaborative authorship and embodied storytelling. Repetition, stillness, and contrast operate as structural motifs, helping audiences interpret emotional and thematic shifts.

Postdramatic Theatre

Elements of postdramatic theatre appear in the integration of sound, set, and lighting as equal narrative agents. These components do not support a traditional plot but instead create layered sensory metaphors.

Breaking the Fourth Wall

Borrowing from the experimental theatre conventions from German Expressionist, Bertolt Brecht, the dancers interrupt the action with moments of direct audience address where they speak directly to the audience to narrate or tell a story from their past.

The Fourth Wall is a convention of realistic theatre whereby the actors and audience believe there is an imaginary see-through wall between the characters and the audience. In these performances, the actors perform their characters with a sense of being unaware of the audience. When the fourth wall is broken, such as by performers stopping the perofmrance to speak directly to the audience, the illusion of the performance is fractured and a more intimate relationship between the performer and the audience is established.

in *Re-shaping Identity*, breaking the fourth wall helps to establish intimacy between the dancers the audience which is both poignant and impactful to the honest, vulnerable, and exposing nature of the subject matter.

Other aspects of alienation that redirect the audience focus to the social and political messages being explored in the work include the sparse and transformational set and costume design and performers playing multiple roles.

Further reading about Brecht's Epic Theatre: thedramateacher.com/brecht-study-guide/



Suggested Tasks

BEFORE THE SHOW

Questions for students:

- How do movement and gesture communicate aspects of identity that words cannot?
- What influences shape a person's identity (culture, family, heritage, community, environment, events)?
- What influences have shaped your identity? How?
- How can dance explore abstract ideas like belonging or loss?
- Why might artists use multimedia or interactive set elements to explore contemporary themes?
- What emotions or questions do you expect a production titled Reshaping Identity to raise?

Activity 1: Identity Movement Fragments

Students personal identity through shape, gesture, and spatial design. They translate personal ideas into movement using choreographic elements intentionally and exploring identity as physical expression

Identity Brainstorm

Students complete an identity brainstorm and write brief notes on:

- aspects of who they are (cultural, personal, emotional, social, family, interests)
- three adjectives describing themselves
- a place, memory, or object important to them

Identity Gestures

Students create 2–3 small gestures that symbolise parts of their identity:

- A gesture that represents where you come from
- A gesture that represents what grounds you
- A gesture that represents how you move through the world

Shape and Pathway

Students develop 2–3 shapes using:

- curved or angular forms
- open or closed body positions
- large or small scale

They also choose one spatial pathway (straight, circular, diagonal, zig-zag).

Task: Create a Movement Phrase

Students create a movement phrase by combining:

- 2–3 meaningful gestures
- 2–3 shapes or transitions
- a chosen spatial pathway

Encourage them to:

- vary levels (high/mid/low)
- choose dynamics (sustained/sharp/flowing/percussive)
- consider intention: What story is your body telling?

Share & Reflect

Students can present in pairs or small groups or to the class and then reflect

Reflection questions:

- Which movements represent your identity most clearly?
- How did your identity influence your choreographic choices?
- How did you feel about presenting this movement phrase? Why?

ACADAM020 *Improvise to find new movement possibilities and explore personal style by combining elements of dance*

ACADAM021 *Manipulate combinations of the elements of dance and choreographic devices to communicate their choreographic intent*

ACADAM023 *Structure dances using movement motifs, choreographic devices and form*

ACADAM024 *Perform dances using genre- and stylespecific techniques and expressive skills to communicate a choreographer's intent*

ACADAR025 *Evaluate their own choreography and performance, and that of others to inform and refine future work*

Suggested Tasks

AFTER THE SHOW

Questions for students:

- Which moments in the performance most clearly explored the idea of identity being “reshaped”? What movement or staging choices communicated this?
- How did the dancers express experiences of belonging or otherness through physicality or spatial patterns?
- In what ways did the production suggest that the body can store memories? Which gestures, motifs, or sections supported this idea?
- How did the work represent community versus individuality? Where did you see tension, harmony, or conflict emerge within the group?
- Did you notice examples of intersectionality (e.g., culture, gender, class, identity markers) influencing the choreography or character stories?
- Identify one movement phrase or duet that felt emotionally significant. How did the performers’ dynamics, weight, or rhythm communicate meaning?
- How did repetition and variation of movement motifs deepen your understanding of the themes?
- Which section showed the greatest physical or emotional transformation, and why?
- How did the sound/music shape your emotional experience of the work? Identify a moment where sound shifted your interpretation.
- What role did lighting play in framing identity, memory, or tension? Give an example of a lighting cue that stood out.
- How did the set influence the dancers’ movement or relationships? Did it act as a barrier, support, or extension of identity at any point?
- What symbolism or meaning did you notice in the costumes? How did they reflect themes of identity, visibility, or change?
- Which aspect of the performance resonated most with your own experiences or ideas about identity?
- Did the work challenge or deepen your understanding of how identity is formed or reshaped?
- Were there sections you interpreted differently from your peers? What shaped your perspective?
- If you were to create a short piece inspired by the work, which element (sound, gesture, motif, design) would you borrow, and why?
- How could the ideas explored in the production be developed further in your own choreography or devised work?

Year 9 and 10 Dance

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ACTIVITY 2: Thinking Routine – See, Think, Wonder

This thinking routine provides a structure for students to observe carefully, and begin interpreting meaning from what they saw.

Task: On a large piece of paper or a new electronic document ask students to create a table with three columns labelled See, Think and Wonder then give the following instructions:

See: In the See column, write down 5–7 things you saw in the performance that stood out: movements, images, patterns, relationships, staging, lighting moments, or gestures. Focus on observations, not interpretation.

Think: For each observation, note what you think it might reveal about identity, memory, belonging, or transformation.

Wonder: Write 3–5 “wonderings” (questions or curiosities) about the performance. These might relate to dancers’ choices, choreography, themes, symbolism, or design elements.

Share: Compare your “wonderings” with a partner and identify any shared ideas or new insights.

ACTIVITY 3: Thinking Routine – Creative Metaphor Map

This conceptualisation routine will help students link choreography to symbolic meaning and develop interpretive language.

Ask students to draw a page with three sections labelled:

- Movement as Metaphor
- Space as Metaphor
- Sound/Light as Metaphor

Students select movement moments, spatial formations, or design elements from the performance. For each, create a metaphor or symbolic description.

Examples:

“The repeated falling motif felt like a metaphor for collapse or emotional exhaustion.”

“The narrow corridor of light became a metaphor for transition or uncertainty.”

Students annotate their metaphors with:

- What artistic choice created the meaning?
- How does this link to themes such as identity reconstruction or otherness?

Share in groups and build a collective metaphor wall.

Year 9 and 10 Dance

ACADAR025 *Evaluate their own choreography and performance, and that of others to inform and refine future work*

ACADAR026 *Analyse a range of dance from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their dance making, starting with dance from Australia and including dance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider dance in international contexts*

Year 9 and 10 Dance

ACADAR025 *Evaluate their own choreography and performance, and that of others to inform and refine future work*

ACADAR026 *Analyse a range of dance from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their dance making, starting with dance from Australia and including dance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider dance in international contexts*

ACTIVITY 4:
Movement Memory Reconstruction

Students recreate a moment or gesture they recall from the production, then develop a variation inspired by their own identity.

Step 1 – Recall

Individually list 3–5 moments, gestures, formations, or spatial patterns that stood out.

Choose ONE that feels the strongest, most interesting, or most emotionally resonant.

Step 2 – Recreate

Reconstruct the physical moment as accurately as possible:

- Body shape/level
- Direction
- Dynamics
- Spatial relationship

Step 3 – Transform

Apply THREE choreographic transformations:

- Change level
- Alter timing or dynamic quality
- Change facing
- Fragment or distil movement
- Expand/contract
- Shift spatial pathway

Step 4 – Personalisation

- Layer in one personal movement idea connected to identity, belonging, memory, or transformation.
- Focus on meaning: What are you communicating through your changes?

Step 5 – Reflection (written or verbal)

- What moment did you select and why?
- How did your variations change the meaning?
- How does your final movement phrase express your own identity?

Year 9 and 10 Dance

ACADAM020 *Improvise to find new movement possibilities and explore personal style by combining elements of dance*

ACADAM021 *Manipulate combinations of the elements of dance and choreographic devices to communicate their choreographic intent*

ACADAM022 *Practise and refine technical skills to develop proficiency in genre- and stylespecific techniques*

ACADAM023 *Structure dances using movement motifs, choreographic devices and form*

ACADAM024 *Perform dances using genre- and stylespecific techniques and expressive skills to communicate a choreographer’s intent*

ACADAR025 *Evaluate their own choreography and performance, and that of others to inform and refine future work*

ACADAR026 *Analyse a range of dance from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their dance making, starting with dance from Australia and including dance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider dance in international contexts*

ACTIVITY 5: Thinking Routine –
Values, Identity, Action

This thinking routine will help students to unpack the performance through the lens of identity and transformation by tracing how their personal values, lived identities and chosen actions can inform their creative choices. Students use the Values and Identities prompts to determine a practical Action in response to the production for a hypothetical work the explores the theme and ideas of identity reconstruction.

Step 1 – VALUES (V)

Students compile a list of up to 10 values that matter them you right now and elaborate on why are they important to them.

Examples: resilience, belonging, independence, cultural continuity, transformation, community, memory, vulnerability.

Next to each value, students write one moment from the performance where they noticed this value expressed through:

- a spatial composition
- an object or prop
- a sonic choice
- a performer’s movement quality

Students answer the question: How did the artistic choices express or challenge these values?

Step 2 – IDENTITIES (I)

Students consider which part of their identity feel present, changing, or emerging?

Students choose 2–3 aspects of identity they want to explore (e.g., cultural identity, digital identity, family role, internal vs external self, identity in transition).

For each aspect, students complete:

- What does this identity feel like (emotionally, physically, visually, sonically)?
- What symbols, textures, shapes, or sounds could represent this identity?

This could be done in a table with three columns: Identity Aspect; Feeling/State; Possible Sound or space Metaphors

Students map identity → artistic metaphor using a simple table:

Identity Aspect Feeling/State Possible Space or Sound Metaphors

e.g., Transition unstable shifting lights, broken shapes, glitching audio

Step 3 – ACTIONS (A)

Prompt: How will your artistic choices communicate the theme of identity to an audience?

Students choose SET or SOUND and answer:

ACADAM021 Manipulate combinations of the elements of dance and choreographic devices to communicate their choreographic intent

ACADAM023 Structure dances using movement motifs, choreographic devices and form

ACADAM024 Perform dances using genre- and stylespecific techniques and expressive skills to communicate a choreographer’s intent

ACADAR025 Evaluate their own choreography and performance, and that of others to inform and refine future work

ACADAR026 Analyse a range of dance from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their dance making, starting with dance from Australia and including dance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider dance in international contexts

If choosing SET:

- How will performers move within, around, or against your space?
- How might the set transform over time?
- What actions will your design invite, restrict, or highlight?

If choosing SOUND:

- What emotional or identity transitions will your soundscape guide the dancers through?
- What actions (breath, repetition, rupture, pause, layering) will the soundscape emphasise?
- How will sound shape tempo, atmosphere, or tension?

Students then commit to 3–4 design actions, e.g.:

- “Use rough textures to symbolise conflict.”
- “Use rising drones to show reconstruction.”
- “Create an asymmetric floor pattern showing fragmentation.”

Option A: Set Design Concept

Step 1 — Brainstorm

Select 3 – 4 identity themes important to YOU.

Write down shapes, materials, textures, or symbolic objects that could represent those themes.

Step 2 – Draft the Design

Create: A floor plan or a sketch/render with labels or a diorama or model

✚ A brief written rationale (100–150 words)

Include:

- How dancers interact with it
- How it might transform
- How it communicates a message about identity

Option B: Sound Design Concept

Step 1 – Brainstorm

Choose 3 emotional states or identity phases (e.g., rupture, memory, reconstruction).

Find sounds that symbolise each:

- Ambient textures
- Rhythmic patterns
- Breath/voice
- Field recordings

Step 2 – Create or Compile

Students may:

- Layer sound clips
- Use loop-based software
- Record simple sound textures
- Describe the soundscape in writing if tech is unavailable

Step 3 – Rationale

Explain:

- How your soundscape reflects identity themes
- How dancers might respond to it

ACTIVITY 6: Choreographic Task – Reshaping Self

Students create a short choreographic solo (30–60 sec) inspired by identity reconstruction and transformation.

Step 1 – Concept Definition

Choose ONE identity-related theme:

- Loss to rebuilding
- Fragmentation to reformation
- Pressure to growth
- Tradition to reinvention
- Marginalisation to empowerment

Write a 1–2 sentence intention statement.

Step 2 – Movement Generation

Using improvisation, create 3–5 gestures or movement ideas connected to your theme.

Step 3 – Structure

Shape the work using a simple structure:

- Beginning: the identity state before transformation
- Middle: disruption / conflict / discovery
- End: re-formed or reimagined self

Step 4 – Choreographic Devices

Apply at least TWO:

- Manipulation of time (acceleration/deceleration)
- Change in energy quality (percussive → fluid)
- Spatial expansion or contraction
- Repetition
- Motif development

Step 5 – Add Production Considerations

Choose ONE:

- A lighting idea
- A sound or silence component
- A prop or object
- Costume quality (texture, colour, layering)

Step 6 – Perform & Review

Peer or self-assessment:

- What was your intention?
- How did the movement choices communicate it?
- What could be strengthened?

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GuoGuoHuiHui

GuoGuoHuiHui is a contemporary dance collective from China that brings together dancers from a range of Chinese ethnic backgrounds — including Tibetan, Yao, Uyghur, and Han. Their work fuses traditional dance practices with contemporary movement, exploring how heritage can be re-imagined in the present. Through ensemble performance, live transformation of dance forms, and deep engagement with memory and identity, they offer a powerful vision of cultural hybridity and personal empowerment.

Guo Rui

Guo Rui is a cross-disciplinary artist focusing on choreography, theoretical research, and curatorial practice. He graduated from P.A.R.T.S. in Belgium, and previously studied Chinese folk dance and modern dance at the Beijing Dance Academy (B.D.A) and The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (H.K.A.P.A).

In Europe, he encountered a wide range of dance approaches and was deeply influenced by artists such as Thomas Hauert, David Zambrano, Deborah Hay, Trisha Brown, Chrysa Parkinson, Salva Sanchis, Jonathon Burrows, Jérôme Bel, and Xavier Le Roy. The postmodern movement research from New York’s Judson Dance Theater also had a profound impact on his work. Amid Belgium’s open and diverse dance scene, Guo rejects fixed definitions and categorizations of dance. He continuously challenges the boundaries between dance and non-dance, tradition and the contemporary, striving to expand or even re-invent the value of dance itself.

Guo approaches dance as a fluid, ever-evolving art form rather than a fixed system of meaning-making, deliberately avoiding literary, theatrical, or documentary-style narratives. Through practical and theoretical research, expanded choreographic practice, and an inquiry into the relationship between creation and curation, Guo aims to rethink and cultivate the intimate ties between dance, daily life, and contemporary China.

In recent years, in response to the impacts of postcolonialism and globalization on Chinese dance, Guo has shifted his focus toward reevaluating his own cultural background and identity, exploring the transformative potential of dance in contemporary China.

Since 2017, he has been a curator at T Theatre in Macau, leading the “Dance Lab Project” and “Next Step” programs, with a particular interest in works and practices that pose questions rather than provide answers.

Guo currently lives in Guangzhou and works as a freelance dance artist.

In 2018, he co-founded the artist duo “Guo Guo Hui Hui” with artist Wu Hui,

The Body as a Code of Identity (link to PDF)

From “One Land Nurtures One People” to “The Body Is the Land”:

Reconstructing Identity in the Post-Globalization Era

By GUO Rui

WuHui

WuHui is a cross-disciplinary artist, choreographer, and dancer based in Guangzhou. Her work is deeply rooted in a distinct female perspective, utilizing diverse choreographic approaches to evoke imagination and emotion. In recent years, her artistic inquiry has centered on the concept of the ecological body, drawing from the evolutionary intelligence of plants. She explores the plant body as both a reflection of its environment and a manifestation of survival strategies, proposing an alternative way of sensing, responding to, and engaging with the world.

A former dancer with the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, Wu Hui has presented her works—including *Self-Portrait*, *The Moving Canton Tower*, *Me Here*, *Dance Aerobics*, *Cracks*, and *The Great Wave*—at many international festivals and platforms such as Guangdong Modern Dance Festival, Beijing Dance Festival, China Dance Forward (Hong Kong), Documentaries of Chinese Performance Art (Macau), Shenzhen Fringe Festival, Macau Fringe Festival, and Fabbrica Europa (Italy).

WuHui is currently engaged in the research and practice of Expressive Sight, a series that includes *Take Root*, *The Sights of Femininity*, *Domestication: Taboo Love*, along with the dance film *Collection of Expressive Sight*. Her work also extends into architectural spaces and residency-based research through projects such as *Seven Small Gardens* and *About to Be Born*.

This ongoing series marks a significant evolution in her artistic trajectory, opening new directions in ecological dance. By studying plants as dynamic, responsive entities, Wu Hui challenges anthropocentric perspectives, cultivating a model of interdependence and mutual influence—an evolving symbiosis where autonomy and entanglement coexist. In this framework, each element remains distinct yet interconnected, growing organically in a continuous state of transformation.

Through Expressive Sight, Wu Hui re-imagines the dancing body as a site of transformation, questioning social norms and reshaping perceptions of the “known” and “real” within contemporary China. Her work proposes dance as a medium for critical inquiry—one that interrogates, disrupts, and redefines how bodies move, interact, and communicate in the world today.

Gunika Aniva

Independent Creator / Practitioner of Body and Performance Art

Born in Urumqi, Xinjiang, currently based in Shanghai, her practice resides at the intersection of body, performance, and the moving image. Driven by intuition and acute observation, her work explores the undercurrents between personal experience and social structures, with particular attention to the act of “watching” itself and the formation—and distortion—of bodily language under the gaze. In recent years, she has participated in numerous cross-disciplinary art projects and theater productions, working across forms such as physical theater, performance art, and video.

Selected performance credits include: *Sleep No More (Shanghai)*, *Nian Hua*, *Twenty-Four Solar Terms*, *Qing Yi*, *Shambhala*, *OUVERTURE*, *Dance of the Folk*, *Something Not Right*

Theatrical performances: *NAWAL*, *Sugar Daddy*, *Who Will Daisy Marry Tonight?*

The Ghetto; performance art pieces: *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*, *Watching*, *Overwhelming Love for You*

Wang Huaili

Independent Choreographer / Theatre Director / Founder of Sifangguan Body and Dance / Graduate Instructor, School of Dance, Sichuan Normal University

Wang Huaili studied Contemporary Dance and Choreography at SEAD (Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance) in Austria in 2017. He is currently based in Chengdu. Using the body as his primary medium of expression, Wang’s artistic practice focuses on the relationship between individuals and society, as well as between humans and their environment. His work emphasizes interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration with artists from diverse fields, valuing research and inquiry through practice.

Inspired by his years of study and artistic exploration in Europe, Wang founded Sifangguan Body and Dance after returning to China. Conceived as an open, co-creative platform that embraces diverse perspectives and possibilities, Sifangguan is dedicated to inspiring people to perceive and develop the potential of the body, while fostering organic interactions between individuals, society, and the surrounding environment.

Professional Experience | 2024–2025

- Created the interactive theatre dance work *Around Here* inspired by Tibetan Guozhuang dance. Commissioned by the Shanghai International Dance Center Theatre in 2024, co-produced with Sifangguan Body and Dance, and premiered on December 26, 2025 at the Experimental Theatre of the Shanghai International Dance Center.
- Taught and presented the thematic lecture series How the Body Reawakens the Vanishing “Nearby” as part of the Performing Arts General Education Program jointly organized by Xunlu Library and LOOKLIVE.
- Led a body-and-video workshop themed Landscapes of Homeland within the A4 Exhibition Public Program series.
- Collaborated with Ryoichi Kurokawa’s work re-assembli to present Folding the Senses: A Bodily Response, premiered at Chengdu Times Art Museum.
- Performed in *Strange Tales* premiered at the Shanghai International Dance Center, Aranya Art Center, and Chengdu City Concert Hall.
- Performed in *A Rose for Emily*, presented at the Shanghai International Dance Center, Aranya Art Center, and Banshan Dancer Art Week.
- Performed in *Re-shaping identity*, presented at Yunmu Theatre (Guangzhou), T Theatre (Macau), Ming Contemporary Art Museum (Shanghai), Shenzhen Fringe Festival, and the Contemporary Young Dancers Biennale.
- Created the immersive theatre work *There Is Red Inside Me*, presented at Town Game, A Thousand Plateaus Art Space (Chengdu), and Family Diary (Chengdu).

Yijie Chen

Yijie Chen (MA in Creative Practice: Dance Professional, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance) is a transdisciplinary dance artist whose primary research interests focus on subaltern and marginalised groups in China. Born and raised in China and educated in the UK, Yijie will be based in Melbourne starting from September 2025. With more than a decade of professional dance experience, she was a full-time dancer with Guangdong Modern Dance Company (2014–2018)—the first contemporary dance company in mainland China—and City Contemporary Dance Company in Hong Kong (2019–2020). With these two companies, Yijie collaborated with renowned choreographers both nationally and internationally, touring extensively across Europe, Asia (West, East, and South), South America, and Oceania. Since 2021, she has been working as an independent artist. Community engagement is at the heart of her practice, and she has collaborated with diverse groups including ethnic minority dancers, disabled, neurodiverse, and LGBTQ+ communities, as well as precarious workers and migrants. Her creative output encompasses performances, dance films, and interactive projects. Since 2023, she has participated in Reshape of Identity as a performer with choreographer Rui Guo—a project exploring Chinese ethnic minority folk dance and street dance. Since then, Yijie has embarked on her own research into ethnic minorities in relation to Indigenous studies and feminism. Her dance film, *The Portrait of Revisiting Disability* (2025), has been featured in film festivals, including the International Dance Festival New Orleans.



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