

Dr Stephanie Burridge

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*Shifting paradigms for 21 century dance research:*

*Singapore and the Asia Pacific*

## Research...

*Why? ...what for? ...Who for?*

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... to innovate, create, share, provoke, advocate, evidence, transmit, reveal, argue, document, archive, educate, progress the field, critique, take ownership, contribute, augment, confirm, mentor, contextualize, situate, resistance, promote...

# What is the meaning of the term 'dance research'?

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- Currently, many dance researchers work within a dance praxis where research, performance, documentation and articulation in multiple texts co-exist.
- The body is the predominant site for creative expression embodying the roles of researcher, creator, performer, documenter and more.

## 21 century performative practice

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- Graduate and post-graduate practice-based research degrees encompass performative components including reflection and analysis. These are supported by literature in the field and beyond to incorporate a critical lens and frame the investigation.
- After graduation, the expectation is to continue practice-based choreographic research through collaborative, co-operative processes that empower a group to work collectively together.
- There are an increasing number of such independent artists in Singapore – many who have completed post-graduate dance degrees overseas in Europe, the US, Australia and New Zealand.

- **Dance Nucleus**

*...Dance Nucleus aims to INSPIRE artists, allowing them to INITIATE ideas, projects and conversations, by providing them with the space and time to INCUBATE these ideas and projects in fruition.*

- **Centre 42**

*...We recognise that in order for the artists and writers to create significant and meaningful new work and/or texts, they must work at their own pace while operating within a rigorous and specified incubation framework. We aim to customise a developmental process that is appropriate to both the work and its creator(s).*



## Transference as a research process

### *Sovannahong* (Cambodia)

*Sovannahong* (2008) – re-staged by her royal highness Princess Norodom Buppha from the Khmer classical repertoire (1955).

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#### *Special features of this process:*

- *Sovannahong* was transferred through a process of cultural and collective memory.
- A concern about ‘authenticity’ and re-creating as accurately as possible to the original work
- When filling in missing gaps care and consideration was taken to the period when the dance was made and identifying it within the historical context
- Attention to detail to the costumes, music and production elements to evoke the traditions and context of the original work.

## Methodologies that could apply to ALL dance research

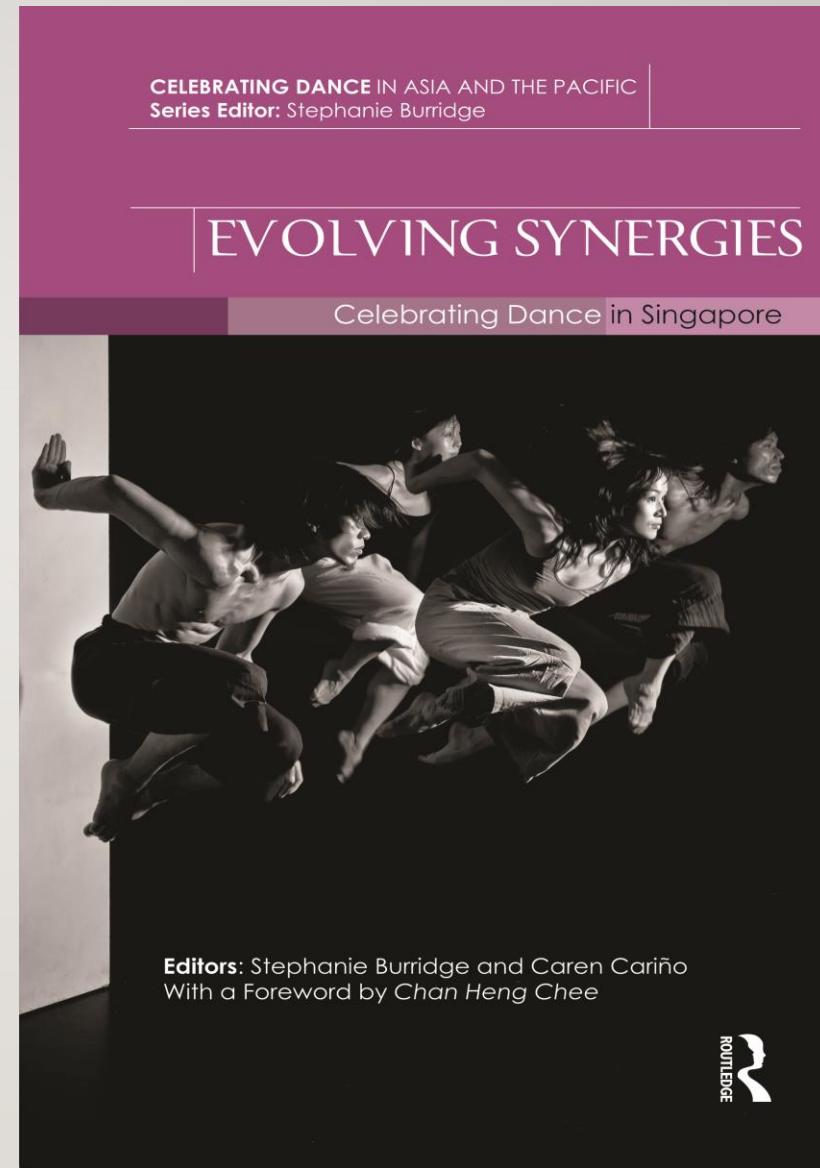
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- processes and procedures – materials used, site of the research, parameters of time, space, place.
- case studies
- mapping
- surveying
- observing
- action research
- interviewing – one on one, focus groups
- mixed methods
- qualitative and quantitative data collection methods

## Course-based written post-graduate thesis and beyond

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- In Singapore a course-based written post-graduate thesis about dance might be completed outside of the dance faculty via a 'non-practitioner' route through academic areas like Asian studies, cultural studies, women's studies, dance anthropology, education to name a few.
- Thus, there is some separation between dance scholars engaging in writing books, journal articles, book chapters, critiques, articles and those engaged in practice-based research.



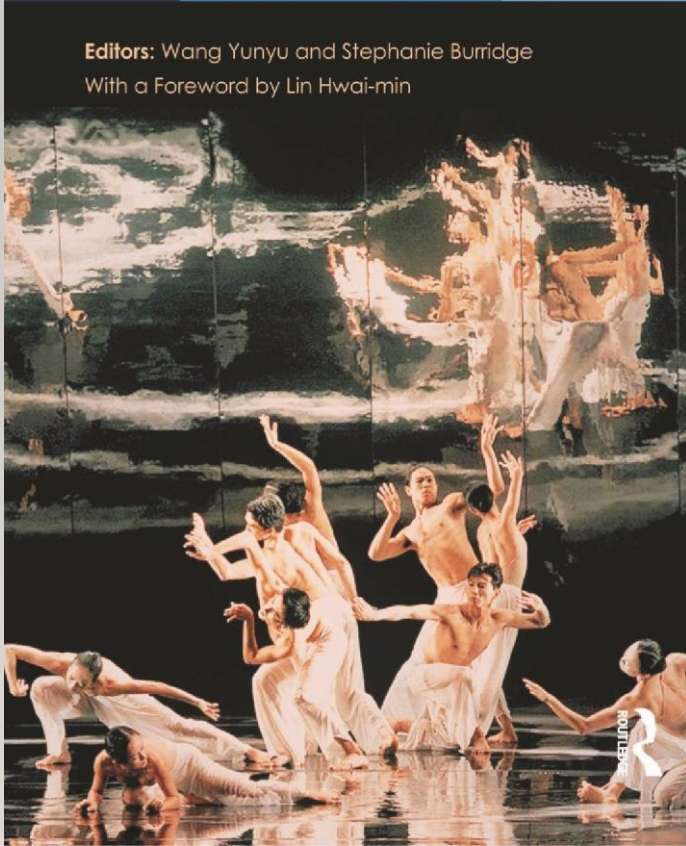
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CELEBRATING DANCE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC  
Series Editor: Stephanie Burridge

## IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY

Celebrating Dance in Taiwan

Editors: Wang Yunyu and Stephanie Burridge  
With a Foreword by Lin Hwai-min



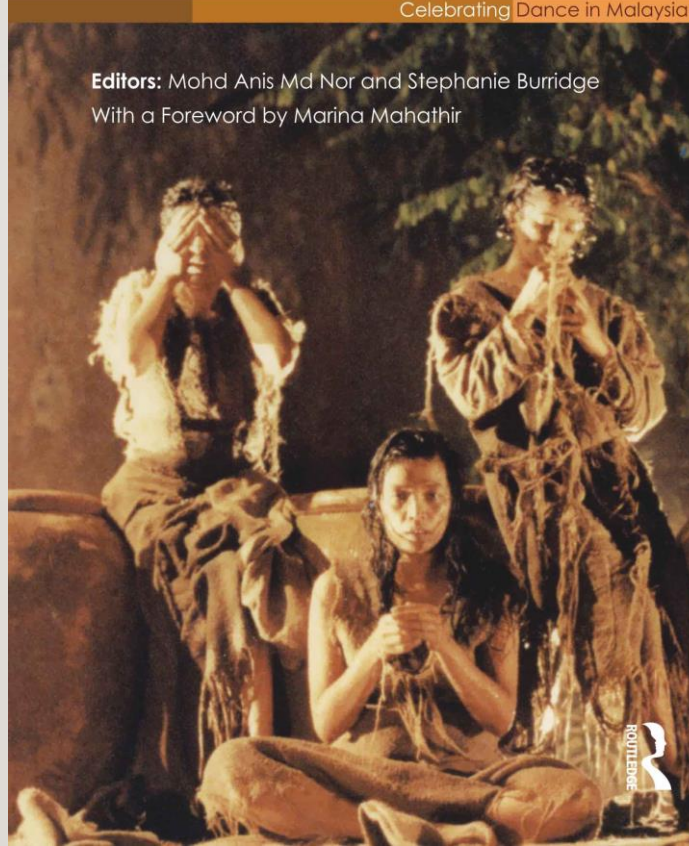
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CELEBRATING DANCE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC  
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## SHARING IDENTITIES

Celebrating Dance in Malaysia

Editors: Mohd Anis Md Nor and Stephanie Burridge  
With a Foreword by Marina Mahathir



## Singapore as an international research base

### Routledge series - I

### *Celebrating Dance in Asia and The Pacific*

- 7 books to date – Australia, Cambodia, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, The Pacific
- Collectively – around 200 Artist Voices





# DANCE EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD

Perspectives on dance, young people and change

Edited by **Charlotte Svendler Nielsen and Stephanie Burridge**  
Foreword by **Sir Ken Robinson**



## Routledge series 2

*Perspectives On Dance, Young People  
And Change, Routledge U.K.*

- Burridge, Stephanie and Svendler Nielsen, Charlotte (eds) (2017) *Dance Access and Inclusion: Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, Routledge U.K. (Contracted and in process)
- Nielsen, Charlotte Svendler and Burridge, Stephanie (eds) (2015) *Dance Education around the World: Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, Foreword Sir Ken Robinson, Routledge U.K.

## Concluding remarks

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- The ephemeral nature of dance often means that much can be lost and memories become blurred as the dance moves on through time and space.
- Dancers have distinctive philosophies, intentions and diverse approaches to their practice— their thoughts and insights are as important to document as the dance itself. Documentation through their own voices enables authentic perspectives.
- An evolving ecology of dance criticism, documentation and archiving is urgently needed for future generations and research studies.
- A community of practice for Singapore dance researchers is an ideal rather than a reality that is further impeded by a lack of post-graduate courses specifically in Dance Studies.
- This would serve to bring people together for seminars, conferences and projects and enable Singaporeans to complete post-graduate studies that incorporate local case studies and pertinent contextual research.