

DRAGONS

EUN-ME AHN

Premiere March 26,27,28th, 2021
Yeongdeungpo Arts Hall
Seoul



DRAGONS

2020 is a turning point : the first generation born in the third millennium is coming of age. The future is theirs and they will be making the world what it will be tomorrow.

How does the world look like when you are 20 years old and have your whole life ahead of you?

How do you see it when you are a dancer coming from Asia?

What could be the future of dance in this part of the world, embodied by a young generation intensely living with its time and yet custodian of millenary traditions?

It is to these questions that Korean Eun-Me Ahn intends to find answers, bringing together 5 young dancers born in 2000 - the year of the Dragon – virtually and the dancers of her company based in Seoul on stage.

INTENTION NOTE

«A mythical creature, the dragon, whose form and significance has fluctuated over time, following the generational quirks and turns of human civilization, large and small; the dragons of the East, for example, have always been different from the dragons of the West, and there are regional distinctions—in looks and in personality—even among the dragons of the East. What remains consistent between all contexts is the beast’s bricolage origin, a cobbling-together of various animals to make up its major anatomical parts and special characteristics.

And when we look farther, actually taking apart the iconic structures of meaning around this compound image, what we find is twofold: first, the deep fear of fate, that which is too powerful for us to control with our merely-human strength; and second, the anticipation of and aspiration toward a construction of truly unlimited potential.

In any cultural landscape rooted in Christianity, of course, such a being could only ever be a monster to be eliminated—but in most other areas of the world, the dragon has long functioned as a symbol of transcendent authority and wisdom, able to bestow upon humanity the power and courage necessary to overcome great worldwide upheaval, not to mention the flexibility and resilience to adjust and thrive amidst rapid change.

Given these terms, then, how are we to understand the dragon? The “we,” that is, of today, who find ourselves disillusioned with the promise of shared prosperity through globalization; the “we” who fear not knowing what lies ahead; the “we” who have lost those sparkling twentieth century visions of the future. If we were to imagine a true dragon of the 2020s, say, looking ahead to the 22nd century, what should it look like? What if we could free ourselves from the molds of taxidermied tradition, those shackles of approval and safety that take the form of endless reinterpretation, and create an entirely new monster of infinite transformation, belching flames into the future — what might that be like?

During its early stages, we sometimes called this project—which was ultimately titled, simply, “Dragon”—the “Millenium Baby Project,” and in truth I have worked hard, researching many different regions of Asia to find and better understand dancers born after the year 2000 and come of age in a world already ruled by technology; dancers, in other words, that belong to Generation Z. And while the cultural homogenization that results from our shared reality of smart phones and globalization is undeniable, the fact still remains that the different regional traditions of dance across Asia continue to be passed down each in their own way, and that even seemingly similar contemporary vernacular dance cultures are actually each unfolding in singular fashion. I was determined to create, using the backdrop of these dancers’ vitality and irreproducibility, a new time-space of the dragon, guiding us into a future we have never before seen.

Five young dancers flown in from five different countries across Asia, gathering up the inherited legacies of their bodies and, through the process of projection onto each screen-body, actually exploring new strata and topographies to build a time and space of the dragon. At the point where the world itself overflows, where place becomes moment and moment becomes place—here, all things become possible.»

Eun-Me Ahn



TEASER

<https://vimeo.com/472945017>

DRAGONS

Choreography and artistic direction: Eun-Me Ahn

Music: Young-Gyu Jang

Costumes and set design: Eun-Me Ahn

Lighting design: Jinyoung Jang

Video: Taeseok Lee

Dancers: Piece for 14 dancers (8 on stage, 6 through video)

Eun-Me Ahn, Kyoungmi Hwang, Hyekyoung Kim, Jeeyeun Kim, Jeongwan Cho, Uiseong Jeong, Ojung Kwon, Jinmin Oh, Jiwan Jung (Corée du Sud), Akari Takahashi (Japon), Siko Setyanto, Dwi Nusa Aji Winarno (Indonésie), Nur Syahidah Binti Hazmi (Malaisie), Guan Ting Zhou (Taiwan)

Production: Eun-Me Ahn Company

Coproduction:

Yeongdeungpo Cultural Foundation (Korea), Busan Cultural Center (Korea), Théâtre de la Ville – Paris (France), Biennale de la Danse de Lyon (France), Festspielhaus St. Pölten (Austria), Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg (Luxembourg), Les Halles de Schaerbeek (Belgium), National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts – Weiwuying (Taiwan)

with the kind support of : Indonesian Dance Festival, ASWARA - Akademi Seni Budaya Dan Warisan Kebangsaan, Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse N°1

Running time: 70' without intermission

Eun-Me Ahn is associated artist to Théâtre de la Ville - Paris



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EUN-ME AHN



*« Laugh and grow
fat...
Dance and grow
fat... »*

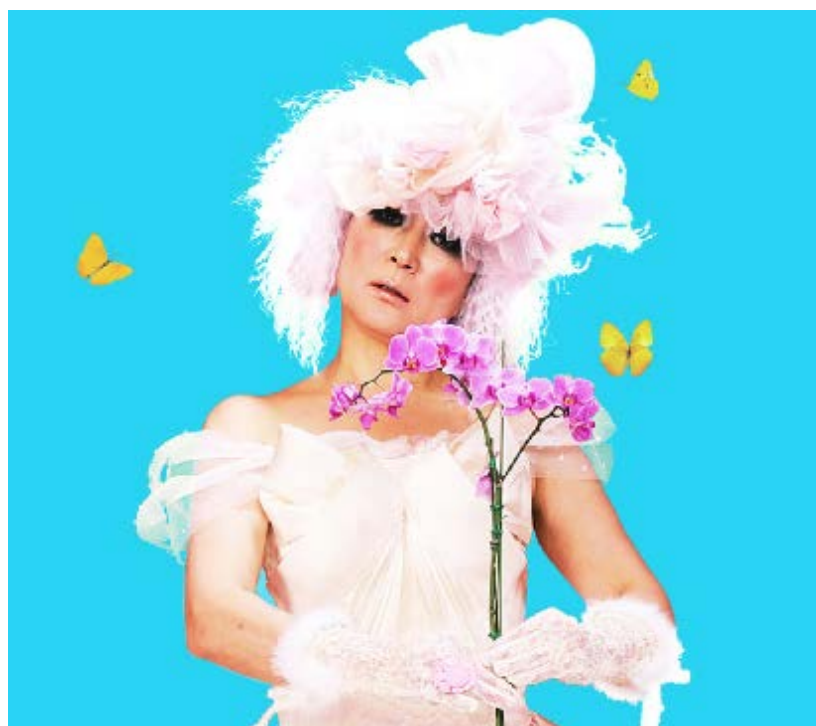
Ah, the famous custard pie that is the confrontation “between tradition and modernity”...

How many creators have struggled to find the way to describe what is finally the lot of every artist : on the one hand to know, understand, integrate what the ancients did ; on the other to forget them, overcome them and hope to find something new. Quite a vast program...

On this level, Eun-Me Ahn that France discovered in 2013 and 2014 thanks to Festival Paris Quartier d’Été, has found new, unexpected and

exciting ways. This comes first from her own itinerary, marked as much by the learning and exploration of shamanic traditions as by the many years spent in New York or a profound friendship with the missed Pina Bausch (who invited her many times in Wuppertal). Korean and cosmopolitan, figure of the avant-garde but also choreographer of the very official opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup in Daegu in 2002 and presented in the most important international festivals, she knows how to improve the beauties of contrast, mix polka dots, stripes and flowers, how to play with the most pop colors before switching to the most solemn austerity, how to play with the most subtle shades of androgyny, or use slowness to make trance rhythm burst...

Educated at the school of rigor, precise, demanding and of a all Korean discipline, Eun-Me Ahn is also a daredevill performer, ready for all kind of piracies. One have seen her jump from the top of a crane, then attack a piano with axe and scissors, rip off herself her fairy dress made of white ties to distribute the pieces to the audiences while performing a teddybear dance, bury herself with a clown costume under a rain of balloons, locked up behind bars in a duet with a chicken, or dressed up as a mushroom... But one would be wrong thinking it is provocation. It is rather the affirmation of a curiosity and a freedom held by work and style pushed to their most unexpected limits.



EUN-ME AHN IN A FEW DATES

1963 - Birth in Republic of Korea

1974 - Begins to dance, initiates herself to Korean shamanic practices, discovers the work of Isadora Duncan and western countries contemporary dance

1986-1992 - Dances with Korean Modern Dance Company and Korean Contemporary Dance Company in Séoul

1989 - Graduated from Seoul E-Wha University

1994 - Departure for New York City. Graduated from Tisch School of the Arts

1999-2000 - Receives Manhattan Foundation for the Arts Award and New York Foundation for the Arts Award

2001 - After several visits to the Pina Bausch Festival à Wuppertal, she presents three solos from the *Tomb* there.

2001-2004 - Returns to live in South Korea where she is appointed Artistic Director of Daegu Metropolitan City Dance Company for which she creates, among others *The Little Match Girl* and *Sky Pepper*

2002 - Choreography of the Fifa World Cup opening ceremony in Daegu in South Korea

2007 - Creation of *Symphoca Princess Bari*, a choreographic adaptation of a Korean legend, that will be presented at Seoul ARCO Art Center in Korea, Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch Festival in Germany, BOZAR in Belgium, Edimburgh Autumn Festival in Scotland...

2011 - Creation of *Dancing Grandmothers*, a work inspired by the gestures of Korean old ladies.

2018 - Creation of *North Korea Dance*

Eun-Me Ahn becomes associated artist to Théâtre de la Ville-Paris