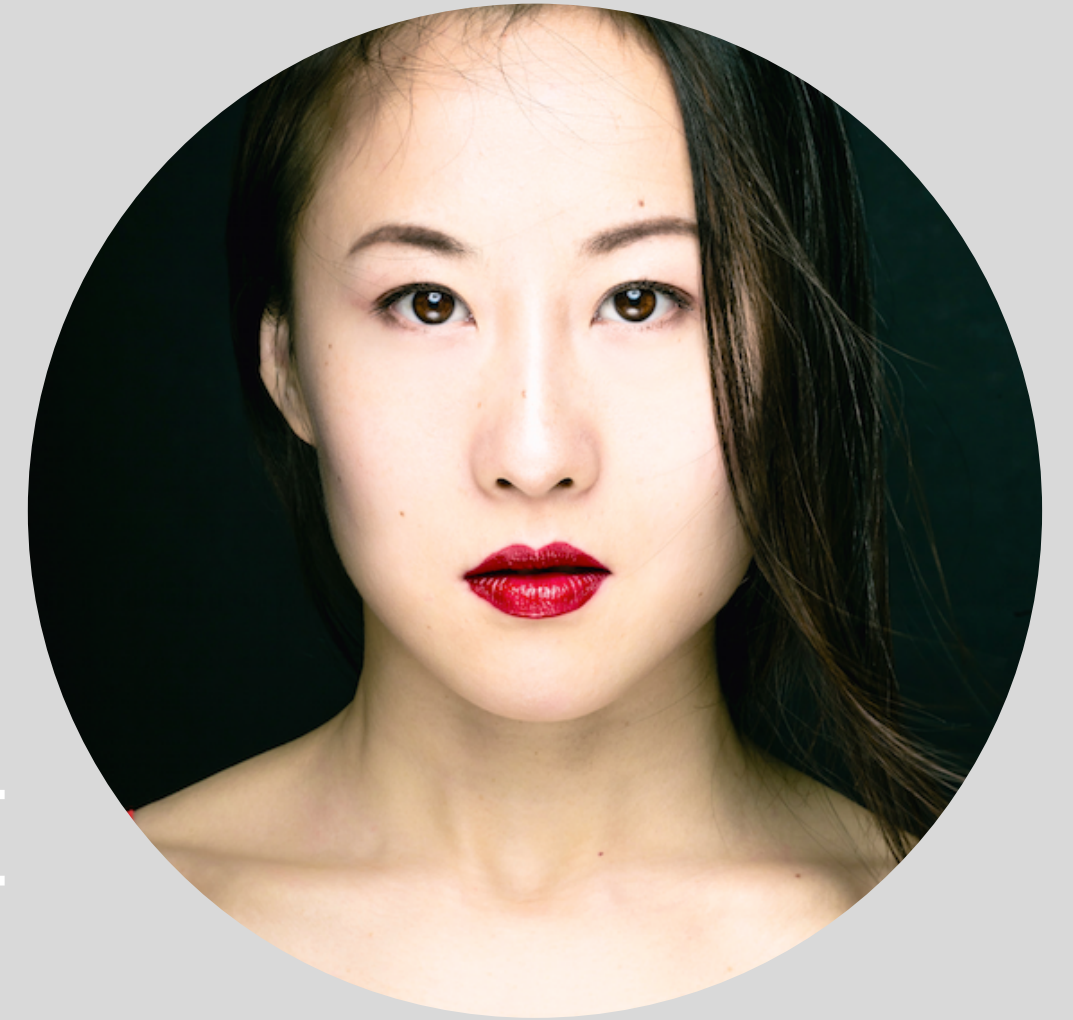


# unboxed

[tea]

WITH YIN YUE



## Discussion Guide

This guide contains videos, discussion questions, activity prompts and pre-recorded activities to accompany Yin Yue's Chinese Tea variation created for the *Unboxed* project as we invite you to CONNECT, EXPLORE, CREATE, AND RESPOND.

# LET'S GO!



- WHAT IS UNBOXED?
- MEET THE CHOREOGRAPHER
- ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS AND ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS
- VOCABULARY & INFLUENCES
- YIN YUE'S TEA
- DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
- YOUR TURN! EXPLORE MOVEMENT WITH YIN YUE
- MEET OUR PARTNER - FINAL BOW FOR YELLOWFACE
- REFLECTION
- STANDARDS

# WHAT IS UNBOXED?

***Unboxed*** is a project created and developed by Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and made possible through collaboration with **Final Bow for Yellowface**. We asked choreographers **Yin Yue, Edwaard Liang, and Peter Chu** to use their voices and vocabularies to reimagine the Chinese Tea variation from *The Nutcracker* on their own terms. These Asian-American dancemakers engaged in three-day workshops with the Hubbard Street Dancers. Their creative processes were not only artistically fascinating, but they also prompted the deep exploration of fundamental questions: **What are the traditions we want to protect? What do we want to leave behind?**

We are humbled by the work of Yin Yue, Edwaard Liang, and Peter Chu, without whose artistry this project could not exist. We are grateful for the insight of Phil Chan and Georgina Pazcoguin of Final Bow For Yellowface, who have led the conversation on eradicating cultural stereotypes from the dance field over the last 5 years.

*Unboxed* was created by Jessica Tong, Hubbard Street's Associate Artistic Director, and developed in collaboration with Jonathan Alsberry, Hubbard Street's Artistic Liaison. The project is championed by Artistic Director Linda-Denise Fisher-Harrell.



The founder and artistic director of YY Dance Company (YYDC), Yin Yue is an internationally recognized performer and choreographer. Yin studied at the prestigious Shanghai Dance Academy and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts where she received her MFA in 2008.

In 2018, Yin founded YYDC, a NYC-based, non-profit contemporary dance company dedicated to the teaching, production and performance of original choreographic works by Yin. Yin's signature FoCo Technique™ represents a dynamic fusion of Chinese folk and contemporary dance. YYDC's mission is to incorporate Yin's signature movement style into live performances and choreographic commissions as well as educational endeavor.

Under Yin's direction, the company has presented its work to live audiences on U.S. and international stages. The company boasts international touring credits, including Schrittmacher Festival (Germany), SummerStage in New York City, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, New York International Fringe Festival, The Open Door Dance Festival in Iowa City, Iowa, DancenowNYC at Joe's pub and many more. In addition, YYDC has performed at venues such as International Choreographic Competition Hanover, BAM Fisher, Joyce SoHo Theater, Peridance Center, Lincoln Center Rose Hall, New York Live Arts and many others. In addition to performance, the company also re-staged repertoires at universities, companies and dance studios around the world.

As choreographer, Yin Yue was the winner of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago 2015 International Commissioning Project, winner of the 2015 BalletX Choreographic Fellowship, and winner of Northwest Dance Project's 5th Annual Pretty Creatives International Choreographic Competition in 2013. Through these high-profile successes, Yin was commissioned by all three widely-recognized companies as well as other companies and organizations namely Pennsylvania Ballet, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Limon Dance Company, Alberta Ballet, Balletto Teatro di Torino, Gibney Dance Company, Peridance Contemporary Dance Company, Whim Whim, Bruce Wood Dance, Ririe Woodbury Dance Company, Boston Dance Theater, 10 Hairy Legs, New Dialect, Backhausdance, Tisch School of The Arts, George Mason University, Rutgers University, Point Park University, West Michigan University and Juilliard School for Dance.



[You can learn more about Yin and her company here.](#)

# A NOTE FOR OUR TEACH ERS



## **Essential Questions**

What are stereotypes?  
What is your relationship to your culture?  
What do we think of as canon/who decides?  
How is dance a part of your culture?  
What is appropriation?

## **Enduring Understandings**

Dance is varied and diverse.  
Ideas can have multiple interpretations.  
Dance has lineage and history.  
People have lineage and history.  
Dance steps evolve.  
Cultural dance is not a monolith.  
Cultural dance can be theatrical.  
Culture is a part of all dance.

## **Discussion Objectives**

Students will know ...  
It is important to explore the lineage of the movement you are embodying.  
I can create movement that is authentically me.  
Appropriation is not inspiration.  
Choreography is an act of self expression.  
There are infinite ways to create dance.

Students will be able to ...  
Define stereotype, appropriation, and cultural dance.

# VOCABULARY



# CULTURAL DANCE



Forms of dance [that] reflect the cultural traditions within which they developed.

An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance, Joann Kealiinohomoku

# VOCABULARY

## \* Stereotype

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular group of people based on selected traits.

## \* Appropriation

The action of taking something for one's own use, often without the permission of the owner. - definition from Oxford Language

## \* Cultural Appropriation

The unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society. - definition from Oxford Language

## \* Canon

Often defined as a traditional collection of dance works, against which other dance works are evaluated. In other words, it means "a long list of works taken as authentic." Frequently critiqued for excluding non-western/European work. Note: This does not refer to canon as a choreographic device.



# YIN'S VOCABULARY

## \* Folk Dance

A folk dance is a dance developed by people that reflect the life of the people of a certain country or region. Folk dance is not a universal movement, figure, form, style, or function. There are many different variations of folk dance; they derive from different cultures and can widely vary.

- *Britannica & Wikipedia*

## \* Western Contemporary Dance

Western contemporary dance tends to combine the strong but controlled legwork of ballet with the stresses on the torso, contract-release, floor work, fall and recovery, and improvisation characteristics of modern dance. These elements derive from Western artists. The style frequently uses a narrative style that defies conventional story-telling techniques. -

- *Ballet & Modern Dance, Susan Au & Wikipedia*

## \* Chinese Classical Dance

Traditional Chinese dance is also often referred to as classical Chinese dance. Its origins are thought to date back thousands of years ago when common folk people began developing and playing instruments. Inevitably, the listeners of such music wanted to take part in the shows and began dancing. Folk dancing later moved to the imperial courts and kingdoms of China where skilled performers were often brought to entertain royalty and other wealthy members of their society.

# YIN'S INFLUENCES



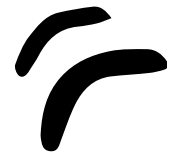
*Mongolian Dance*



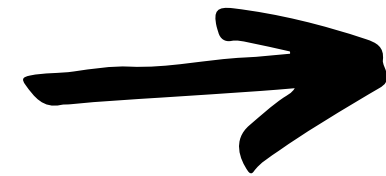
*Tibetan Dance*



*Classical Chinese Dance*



# YIN'S TEA



"My Chinese dance background — the ballet, the classical Chinese dance, the folk dance — all play a huge role in my choreography. Whenever I think of creating something, there's always a trace of classical Chinese dance. In the three-day process with the Hubbard Street Dancers, I listened to the music, and I did find that it's very tightly constructed. And immediately I felt like, it would be fun to make the dance on the music — on the note — to challenge your body as if you're talking with your body, with the music."



# LET'S DISCUSS!

QUESTION



Where did you notice the influences of Classical Chinese dance and folk dance in Yin's work? (refer back to videos & vocabulary as needed.)

01

QUESTION



What makes up your culture? Where do you see dance in your culture?

02

QUESTION



How does your culture influence the way that **you** dance?

03

QUESTION



Can you think of contemporary cultural dances? Some examples would include footwork or voguing.

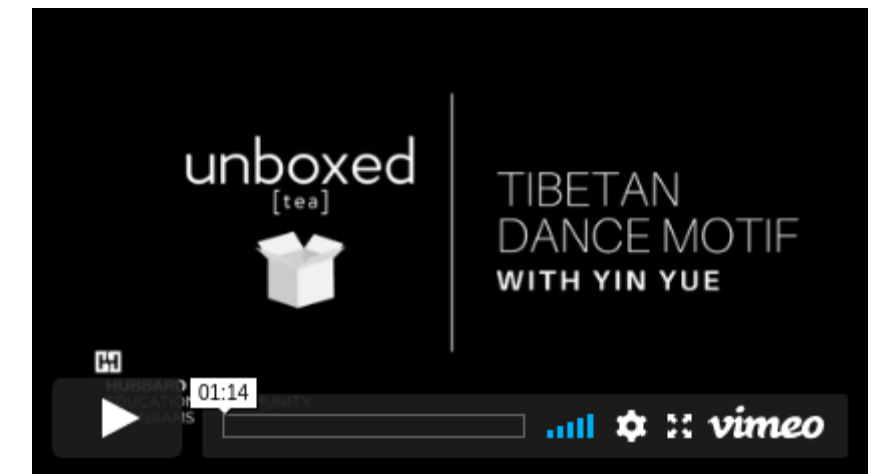
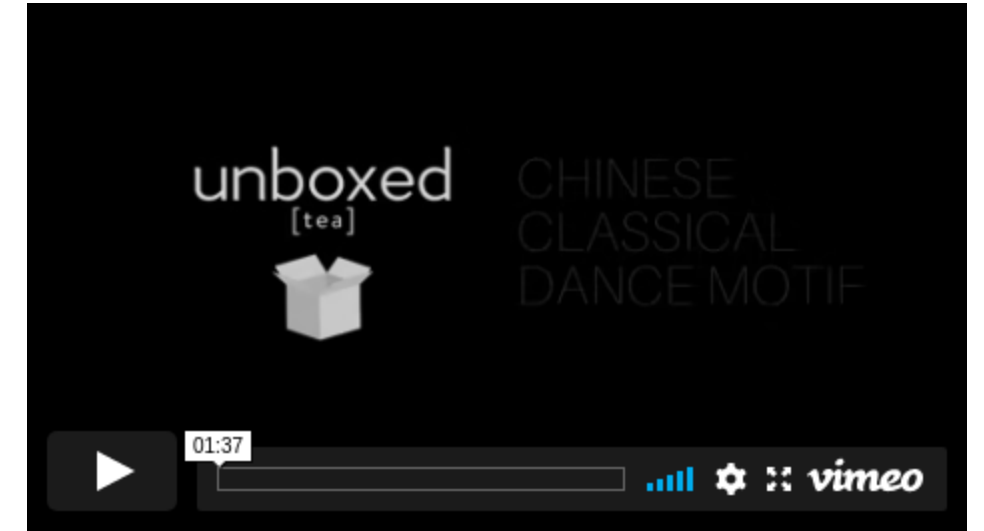
04



# YOUR TURN!



Join Yin Yue in exploring dance inspired by traditional Chinese, Mongolian, or Tibetan dance forms. If these styles feel unfamiliar, remember you can pause the video and go back until you've got it.



# WORKSHEET



Where did you notice the influences of Classical Chinese dance and folk dance in Yin's work?

## WHAT DOES YOUR EYE SEE?

As you watch the piece, note the dance elements you see below. Refer to the BEST dance vocabulary (Body, Energy, Space & Time) to describe what you see.

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## WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

What are elements of classical Chinese dance, Mongolian & Tibetan dance, and Western Contemporary Dance? Watch the piece again. How do the dance elements you noted relate to any elements of the above forms?

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## RECORDING INFLUENCES

Using information from both columns, write where you see influences of classical Chinese dance that Yin references, such as movements influenced by the idea of heavy boots and long sleeves. What did your mind imagine with these movements? What story did you see when you watched this dance?

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# MEET OUR PARTNER

# FINAL BOW FOR

# YELLOWFACE

Inspired by positive changes at New York City Ballet in 2017, we began to ask ourselves why other companies in America still present outdated representations of Asians in the Nutcracker and other ballet performances. We recognize that this conversation has been happening across the country every December, in communities large and small, from dance studios to professional companies - and want to consolidate the conversation. We also recognize the work happening in other performing arts disciplines, especially the great and productive conversations happening in opera and theatre, and wanted our ballet community to engage in the same self-reflection.

In the same way that Blackface is limiting and degrading to African Americans, continuing to present an 19th century view of Asians does not allow for character nuance for Asian American dancers today. If all audiences see is the bobbing and shuffling coolie from a bygone era as the only representation of Asians on stage, what message does that send to our Asian students who dream of dancing the Swan Queen? What does that say to the Asian audience members who want to see themselves on stage, only to find themselves as the butt of the joke? What does that say to the Board member, who writes checks and involves their friends, only to see a one-dimensional representation of their heritage?

In the spirit of making the ballet more inclusive, we invite you to join us by signing our pledge and committing to speak up against Yellowface on our stages, and working to create more positive and nuanced representations of Asians in ballet.

It's time for us to replace caricature with character; it's time for Yellowface in ballet to take a Final Bow! Sign the pledge now!

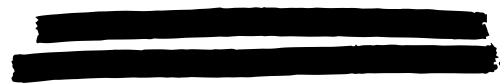
Phil Chan  
Georgina Pazcoguin



Georgina Pazcoguin and Phil Chan  
Photo by Kenneth Edwards

# REFLECTION

*How is dance a part of your culture?*





# Standards Addressed

## National Core Arts Standards

DA:Cr2.1.3b Develop a dance phrase that expresses and communicates an idea or feeling. Discuss the effect of the movement choices.

DA:Cr2.1.4b Develop a dance study that expresses and communicates a main idea. Discuss the reasons and effectiveness of the movement choices.

DA:Cr2.1.5b Develop a dance study by selecting a specific movement vocabulary to communicate a main idea. Discuss how the dance communicates nonverbally. TH:Cr1.1.3c Collaborate to determine how characters might move and speak to support the story and given circumstances in drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.4c Imagine how a character might move to support the story and given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.5c Imagine how a character's inner thoughts impact the story and given circumstances in a drama/ theatre work.

MU:Pr4.2.3 Demonstrate understanding of the structure in music selected for performance.

MU:Pr4.2.4 Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, and form ) in music selected for performance.

MU:Pr4.2.5 Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony ) in music selected for performance.

## Common Core Standards

ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.5 Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.5 Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.



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For more information about all of available our education programs, please visit our website.



# Hubbard Street Dance Chicago Education & Community Programs

Study Guide created by Kathryn Humphreys and Isabelle Taylor. ©2021