



臺北
表演
藝術
中心

TAIPEI
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

— 2026 北藝嚴選 —

《轉轉生》

Qudus Onikeku & The QDance Company

Re:INCARNATION

庫德斯·奧尼奎庫 & Q 舞團



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演出日期 / 時間
Date / Time

2026.5.2 Sat. 14:30
2026.5.3 Sun. 14:30

演出場地
Venue

臺北表演藝術中心 球劇場
Globe Playhouse,
Taipei Performing Arts Center

演出注意事項
Notice

- ◎ 節目全長約 90 分鐘，無中場休息。
 - ◎ 建議 12 歲以上觀眾欣賞。
 - ◎ 演出部分含裸露、煙霧效果、性暗示，請留意並斟酌入場。
 - ◎ 遲到及中途離席的觀眾，須依工作人員引導等候入場。本場演出最後遲進點後即無再入場機會，無法因此退換票，請您特別留意。
 - ◎ 演前導聆：每場演出前 30 分鐘於太陽廳東南角。
 - ◎ 演後座談：5/2 (SAT.) 演後於球劇場觀眾席舉行。
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- ◎ **90 mins, no intermission.**
 - ◎ **Suggested Age 12+ years old.**
 - ◎ **The performance contains nudity, smoke effects, and sexual content. Please consider these factors before attending.**
 - ◎ **Latecomers and re-entry subject to discretion.**
 - ◎ **Pre-performance talk: 30 minutes before each performance at the TPAC 2F Sun Hall.**
 - ◎ **Post-show talk: After the performance on May 2 in the Globe Playhouse auditorium.**

節目介紹

★在生死輪迴中，行走、試探、甚至遊玩

★奈及利亞重量級編舞家—庫德斯·奧尼奎庫，追尋「奈及利亞當代美學」的顛峰之作

★融合 音樂 X 時尚 X 視覺藝術 展現古老約魯巴文化智慧

《轉轉生》(Re:INCARNATION) 融合舞蹈、音樂、時尚與視覺藝術，展現古老約魯巴文化智慧，纏揉當代奈及利亞年輕世代色彩，挾帶強大氣勢，吐納家族、街頭和社會養分，反轉壓迫體制，看破掙扎與革新不過一線之隔，重新定義身體與傳統，激情動能不再收斂，提取勇氣和自信，創造出鋒芒畢現的 90 分鐘。

★不只舞蹈，全世界都在關注的奈及利亞美學

奈及利亞青年文化大興，推動近年全球黑人藝術表現浪潮，流行音樂更是無法抵抗 Afrobeats 的魅力，從 Burna Boy、Wizkid、Ayra Starr、Tems，就連全球巨星碧昂絲也對這股感染力十足的音樂深深著迷。時尚產業同樣被這股能量驅動，年輕世代設計師 Lisa Folawiyo 與 Mowola Ogunlesi 多次登上英國版《Vogue》。

英雄成群結隊而來，藝術家庫德斯·奧尼奎庫自 2014 年從巴黎回到拉各斯重振旗鼓，他說《轉轉生》是第一次將他腦海中長久追尋的東西給真實呈現出來，「這部作品追尋的是一種獨特的『奈及利亞當代美學』，並將年輕人置於這些美學運動的前沿。」

他在奈及利亞多座城市展開工作坊，和年輕人一起工作，也和年輕人一起學習，他觀察到當地年輕人積極擁抱傳統，同時對流行文化敞開心胸。他們逐步展開一連串關於身體記憶的探索工作，開創出一種屬於新世代的當代編舞語彙——如催眠般的肢體起伏、流動的手臂線條、憤怒狂喜的大腳步聲，Afro House 在舞者血液裡流竄，豐富而炫目，玩弄嘻哈和雜技並行的巧思，這是只有在奈及利亞才能長出的身體與舞蹈。

★不怕死，就怕沒有好好活過

庫德斯·奧尼奎庫提到：「我覺得十分有趣的是，年輕世代如何吸收六〇、七〇年代的能量，並將其重新啟動、更新、再生於當下——無論是有意識或潛意識地，都承載著過去與現今的社會政治掙扎。在深厚的約魯巴文化理解之下，我們將核心概念——『輪迴』——置於這場多重感官的作品之中，以 Ibi（誕生）、Iku（死亡）、Atunbi（重生）為軸，呈現出一種非線性而循環的時間觀。」

節目介紹

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盤踞在舞台中央的年輕舞者，自信而大膽，他們抗拒被任一藝術形式定義，但絕對全神投注於音樂、時尚和人群；他們身著繽紛色彩服飾、面具和人體彩繪，呼應澎湃而熱情的心靈，以永不停歇的身體能量，演繹生命的無限循環歷程，舞蹈對他們而言，是慶祝，也是致敬。

而在場的觀眾是見證，也是助燃的火種。

《轉轉生》從地板開始發出吼叫，激盪生命力、聲響與身體的交織力量，緊密節奏接連化為連結喜悅，由單人舞、雙人舞形式，再到舞者們如蜿蜒滑行的姿態展現，所有的動作風格都難以化約，街舞與約魯巴傳統文化是他們的取徑，出於置身於愛、好奇與迷惑的回應。

不再著眼於二十世紀思維的延續，甚至無視邊界，庫德斯·奧尼奎庫帶領舞者「打開內心深處」，讓舞蹈轉為一種祈禱，一種提供能量的衝動——也帶給觀眾能量，進而建造我們都想要的未來。

★差異不會消失，但此刻我們都在跳舞

啟動—更新—再轉世，舞者的身體皆承載著過去，但他們時刻轉換角色，透過換裝展現各種狀態：鮮活大膽的自己、充滿能量的精靈，甚至是調皮搗蛋的角色。

主創者介紹

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藝術總監與編舞家 |

庫德斯·奧尼奎庫 (Qudus Onikeku) / 奈及利亞

出生並成長於奈及利亞拉各斯，5歲時愛上雜技，中學接觸舞蹈，醉心至今，高中畢業後，他先在拉各斯州舞團工作，之後接受 Victor Uwagba、Isioma Williams 與 Christopher Abdul 的指導，並於二十歲時前往法國土魯斯，與編舞家 Hedy Maalem 合作。2006 至 2009 年間，進入著名的法國國家馬戲藝術中心 (CNAC)。25 歲畢業後，在巴黎成立了自己的第一個舞團 YK Projects。推出作品叫好叫座，獲獎不斷，展開國際巡演生涯。

2014 年庫德斯決定返回拉各斯，同年 8 月創立了 QDanceCenter，結合藝術能力、人力資源、創新與創意的社會企業孵化器，幫助年輕奈及利亞藝術家啟動專業生涯。同時，他也累積了大量備受讚譽的作品，涵蓋獨舞到群舞，他與視覺藝術家、建築師、音樂家、詩人、多媒體藝術家、科技專家、科學家甚至神秘學者合作，他的作品使他成為當代最具創新、合作精神、社群意識與挑戰性的編舞家之一。



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主創者介紹

藝術總監與編舞家 |

庫德斯·奧尼奎庫 (Qudus Onikeku) / 奈及利亞

他的作品曾受各大國際藝術節與場館委託與呈現，包括：
法國 | 龐畢度中心、亞維儂藝術節、里昂雙年展、巴黎愛樂廳、瓦爾德馬恩雙年展

義大利 | 羅馬歐洲藝術節、都靈舞蹈節、威尼斯雙年展

加拿大 | 跨美洲藝術節、加拿大國家美術館、加拿大國家藝術中心

美國 | 貝茲舞蹈節、亞特蘭大 Elevate 藝術節、紐約 PS21

希臘 | 卡拉馬塔舞蹈節

斯洛維尼亞 | Kino Siska 藝術節

日本 | 日本橫濱舞蹈節

巴西 | Correios Em Movimento

墨西哥 | Encender un Fosforo

南非 | Dance Umbrella、National Arts Festival、Jomba Dance Festival

馬來西亞 | Nyoba Kan Butoh Festival

以及 TED Global 舞台與 50 多個國家的巡演。

他的舞蹈作品亦被加拿大國家美術館永久典藏。

此外，他也曾在多所大學任教：

2013 | 加州大學戴維斯分校客座教授

2018 | 芝加哥哥倫比亞學院客座教授

曾任佛羅里達大學藝術學院研究教授，以及 Center for Arts, Migration and Entrepreneurship 的首位駐館創作者（至 2023 年）。



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演出團隊介紹

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Q 舞團 (The QDance Company)

奈及利亞的舞蹈文化核心，集結在地觀點與國際視野的當代舞蹈團隊，匯聚不同文化背景與藝術能量的舞者。過去十年，藝術總監庫德斯·奧尼奎庫 (Qudus Onikeku) 以巴黎 YK Projects 名義，創作多部作品，巡演全球並獲得國際矚目。如今，他將編舞與創作重心帶回奈及利亞拉各斯，與舞者、音樂家和創作者一同創作。

庫德斯表示：「我希望世界能感受到我們在藝術與美學思考上的深度，能看見青年文化的厚度，以及今日奈及利亞社會中純粹而毫不妥協的喜悅。」

培育下一代藝術家是近年目標，2024 年更於拉各斯推動一座永久性創意空間的落成——The QDance Hub，開創奈及利亞首例，透過募資計畫，提出社會文化發展企劃專案，惠及更多社群。



演出製作團隊



概念與藝術總監：Qudus Onikeku

舞團舞者與合作舞者：Emmanuel Henry David、Bethel Wisdom Henry、
Angela Uchenna Okolo、Ruth Efigo Felix、
Bright Samuel Bassey、Ugochukwu Henry Oba、
Grace Diepreye Okilo、Gift Chinedu Eze、
Evangel Chibueze Austin、Abok Michael Ezekiel

音樂總監暨作曲：Olatunde Obajeun

現場音樂：Abiodun Samuel Fabiyi、Simeon Lawrence

燈光設計：Michel Abdallah

服裝設計：Mary Peter Ochei

舞台監督：Isaac Lartey

面具製作：Nas Magnificent、Yusuf Aina Abogunde

製作人：Hajarat Alli

巡演經理：Olajumoke Rafiat Tayo

製作單位：THE QDANCE COMPANY LAGOS

法國協力製作：YK Projects

共同製作：里昂舞蹈雙年展、龐畢度中心 Les Spectacles vivants、
布魯塞爾 Les Halles de Schaerbeek、法國貝宗保羅·艾呂雅劇院、
法國瓦茲河谷 Escales Danse、布列塔尼國家劇院

延伸閱讀

快樂，也是抵抗：一支來自西非的身體記憶之舞《轉轉生》

文 / 魏琬容

「Black Life Matters 運動時，到處都在談黑人的創痛，我想，我可以來創作一支黑人的愉悅作品。」來自西非奈及利亞拉各斯 (Lagos) 的編舞家庫德斯·奧尼奎庫 (Qudus Onikeku) 說到做到，他結合西非約魯巴人 (Yorùbá) 的文化、奈及利亞的城市活力、當代舞劇場形式，推出了《轉轉生》(Re:INCARNATION)，本作有著原汁原味的 Afrodance，也有著對於當代社會的反思。

奈及利亞高失業率、警察暴力等社會政治與經濟困境，讓許多青年心懷遷徙的念頭，庫德斯·奧尼奎庫身為其中的一份子，20 多歲便決定移居法國追求藝術。在法國創立自己的首個舞團 YK Projects，發表作品並在歐洲取得藝術成就後，30 歲的他毅然決然返鄉，成立 QDanceCenter，培育奈及利亞的舞蹈人才。

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延伸閱讀

《轉轉生》是庫德斯·奧尼奎庫長達六年「身體記憶」研究的成果，他與年輕舞者合作，在奈及利亞各城市舉辦工作坊。他認為無論有意識或潛意識，當代的身體都承載著過去與當前的社會政治鬥爭：「我相信身體會記得，身體會記得你的情緒、你的回憶……身體能夠記得被奴役的創痛，也能記得在淪為奴隸之前的快樂時光」，雖說《轉轉生》的起心動念是想做個黑人文化的快樂作品，但事實上，《轉轉生》架構完整，可說是他藝術旅程集大成之作，如此深刻的作品來到臺灣，實在不應該被埋沒。

《轉轉生》作品結構源自約魯巴人的輪迴觀—Ibi（誕生）、Iku（死亡）、Atunbi（重生）。約魯巴族是奈及利亞最大族之一，他們的世界觀有幾個核心—生命是循環的，祖先的精神會延續在後代之中、而音樂與舞蹈是與神靈及大自然連結的方式，這樣的世界觀深深體現在作品中的每一個細節。

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第一段〈誕生〉是個街頭派對，舞者們像是一整座城市在跳舞、彼此的碰撞、喧囂的對話、揮舞的手臂、輕踏的腳步，襯著嘻哈、Afrobeats、奈及利亞傳統節奏的混血音景。



延伸閱讀

第二段〈死亡〉調性轉向沉靜，音樂旋律像是一條深沉線索，串起交織的雙人舞、獨舞，舞者的律動依舊，只是這律動不再歡快，而更像心跳。在線性生命觀中，死了就是死了，死了就是沒了。但在輪迴生命觀中，死亡是另一種開始。所以《轉轉生》有了第三段〈重生〉。

〈重生〉由女舞者獨白開始，沿著樂音堆疊，舞者們把自己塗黑，戴上面具，西非舞蹈的律動串起每一位舞者，獨舞者肢體表現力強，雖然他一個字都沒說，但他的肢體已經講完了兩千個字。

《轉轉生》的舞者們，以高強度的表演，帶領觀眾穿過一重又一重的山頭，感受當代奈及利亞的活力以及約魯巴人的傳統。我最喜歡這類的作品了，熱鬧的時候非常熱鬧，滿場都是派對，但靜寂的時候會讓你想起生命中的傷痕，《轉轉生》來自西非，卻很適合臺灣。



延伸閱讀

作品中有一段話攫住我的注意力：

「要成為 Orisa (約魯巴信仰中的神)，你必須先死亡—離開現代性。」

“To become Orisa, you must first die. Exit from modernity”

對於曾經歷殖民統治的社會而言，「現代性」不只是進步的象徵，同時也象徵權力、規訓、強加的外來文化標準與被抹滅的原生文化，深深思索過（被）殖民經驗的藝術家，才能把現代性與輪迴觀從容的放在一起。

非洲幅員廣大，廣饒的土地上有著豐富的文化，這一回，來自西非的《轉轉生》，結合了青年文化、古老的約魯巴哲學來呈現奈及利亞當代美學，也展現了編舞家對於社會的思索，這份思索不僅是非洲獨有，對於同樣曾歷經殖民的臺灣土地而言，《轉轉生》更顯深刻。透過《轉轉生》，非洲不再是只是遙遠的他者，而是一群有血有肉的人們正在透過藝術來思考自身，進而改變全球藝術風貌。



線上訪談

混亂自成編舞 《轉轉生》尋回殖民前的非洲節奏 ——專訪編舞家庫德斯·奧尼奎庫

文 / Stella Tsai

拉各斯 (Lagos)，擁有 2 千萬人口的奈及利亞最大城市，有最生猛的活力，與充滿混亂的日常。而在編舞家庫德斯·奧尼奎庫 (Qudus Onikeku) 的眼中，拉各斯自成一個世界，「這裡非常吵雜、充滿流動，同時又現實到沒有浪漫的空間。」談起拉各斯他笑得燦爛，直言在這裡生存要很實際，每個人都豎著神經面對每一天。「如果說創意是藝術家賺錢的工具，在拉各斯就是人們存活下來的關鍵。」他說。

城市中隨處都有人在大聲叫喊，「人們覺得唯有如此，別人才能聽見自己的聲音。」庫德斯笑說，「要想在拉各斯生活，必須感官全開、用力生存，久了甚至能笑看混亂的發生。那種鮮活的生命力，就是我最喜歡拉各斯的地方。」在庫德斯眼中，這座城市本身就是一種編舞。混亂、節奏、碰撞與生命力相互交織，人們用盡全力活著，也用盡全力地演奏自己的人生。

而當人們開始跳舞，城市的節奏也會進入身體裡。



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線上訪談

庫德斯 13 歲開始跳舞，後前往法國與編舞家一起工作，23 歲才開始正規的舞蹈訓練。移動是他年少時期的主旋律，帶著原生家庭的約魯巴文化（Yoruba），他像塊海綿般大量學習、閱讀，建立自己的哲學觀，最終在 2014 年返鄉創立 QDanceCenter，開始與年輕的奈及利亞舞者工作。「當你成為跳舞的人，身體就成為承載記憶的空間。」庫德斯將身體視為檔案庫，讓舞蹈成為傳遞記憶、延續文化的載體。

殖民佔據了奈及利亞近 50 年的歷史，政權和教育形塑了人們的思想，也累積成身上的檔案。庫德斯細數自己身上的標籤，「出生在穆斯林家庭、在約魯巴傳統中長大、成為異性戀男人、在法國成為藝術家……這些都是我身體檔案的一部分。」他不會像拌沙拉般將所有檔案混在一起，而是如圖書館分門別類，需要時才去找出對應的檔案。

庫德斯認為跳舞的人對身體記憶的理解較常人來得深刻，也能意識到自己的身體有傳遞訊息的能力。因此他相信，當舞者運用身體檔案庫傳遞訊息時，同時也在建立某種群體與連結。有如基因透過身體來延續，記憶也會在傳遞中輪迴，「我相信留下記憶，就是人們跳舞的原因之一。」



線上訪談

轉、轉生——找到殖民前最純粹的模樣

庫德斯的祖父見證了殖民者的到來，父親出生在殖民時期，他本人則成長在獨立的時代。三代人生，皆因殖民而與最原始的民族文化產生斷層，唯有祖父真正見過未經殖民的純粹非洲模樣。

而他沒有要回到過去，是要找到那個還沒有殖民包袱，最最原始的奈及利亞民族面貌。從生活在當時的人們、生活狀態到社會氛圍，在那個時空下，沒有白人視角的側寫，也無關乎美國的 Black Lives Matter，「黑人就是黑人，可以醜陋也可以美麗，當人們說奈及利亞有兩億的黑人，我會說奈及利亞就是兩億的人口，跟是不是黑人毫無關係。」

沒有外來文化作為比較級，《轉轉生》(Re:INCARNATION) 是轉生的再轉生，庫德斯相信，唯有擺脫殖民的包袱，找到民族最初的模樣、音樂與身體的能量，才能重新想像屬於奈及利亞的未來。

集體能量的交響樂章

隨著「Afrobeats」席捲全球樂壇，攻佔葛萊美、成為排行榜上令人著迷的潮流音樂，人們卻不知道 Afrobeats 就來自奈及利亞，更不知道音樂與舞蹈背後的文化從何而來。「非洲的音樂和舞蹈其實是同一件事。」庫德斯解釋，「是音樂召喚身體的韻律，也是舞蹈帶出節奏和聲音。」對他來說，《轉轉生》的創作正是一次引導觀眾回看文化根源的嘗試，帶大家看見那個充滿律動、節奏、無法被浪漫化，且極為真實的非洲文化。

「要想看懂這支舞，就必須理解這支舞從何而來。」庫德斯並沒有為《轉轉生》「編」特定的動作，而是將舞者各自的「身體檔案」推到前線，透過抽絲剝繭的挖掘、找出每個人獨一無二的人生故事、個性與能量，讓舞者在舞台上放肆奏鳴，以最自然且原始的狀態。「拉各斯這座城市，本身就不是一個『編』過的地方，這座城市就是『編舞』本身。」

因此《轉轉生》中的每個舞者都是一件獨立的樂器，各自演奏，彼此也許衝突、不平衡，但終究是交織成這座城市的模樣。庫德斯認為，當所有人都用盡全力演奏自己的人生，這座城市也就自成一曲氣勢滂薄的交響樂。

線上訪談

數據之外，人類之所以為人類的身体檔案庫

對庫德斯而言，如果舞者在這世界上扮演了某種角色，那就是保存記憶的身体。隨著 AI 席捲全球，炫技的舞蹈機器人層出不窮，他認為真正重要的「是什麼讓我們（而非 AI）成為人類？」如果身体只是數據的累積，那就是機器；然而人工智慧永遠無法企及的靈魂與內在精神世界，才是唯有人類身体能擁有的。

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因此庫德斯強調，如果表演藝術只是動作與風格的堆砌，那終將被人工智慧取代。「一場好的演出應該是一張白紙，觀眾得以在上面書寫自己的故事。」他相信當人們能用自己的身体、記憶與精神，用藝術去建立更深層的連結，我們就不用擔心被 AI 取代，表演藝術也會有未來。

身体不但是檔案庫，更是留下記憶的重要載體。《轉轉生》不僅要透過劇場將大家帶往遙遠的奈及利亞，看見拉各斯的獨特生命力，也要透過舞蹈與身体這座檔案庫，讓大家感受人類無法被取代的盎然生機。



Introduction

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Re:INCARNATION is an interdisciplinary art creation that showcases the depth of Yoruba philosophy, mixed with the current Nigerian youth culture. It features the work of Nigerian dancers marked by the rhythm and groove of Lagos. Paying tribute to this richness, the choreography is written with a highly musical structure, combined with an intricate and carefully designed visual aesthetics, all layered in three parts. Birth | Death | Rebirth.

The work is the result of six years of continuous movement research around body memory with young dancers in Nigeria, all undertaken since Qudus returned from Paris to Lagos in 2014, with subsequent workshops taking place around various cities in Nigeria.

Qudus says: "I found it rather interesting, how the young generation appropriates the energy of the 60s/70s, and reactivates it, renews it, re-incarnates it in the present, consciously or subconsciously loaded with past and current socio-political struggles. Coming from a deep Yoruba cultural understanding, we have placed at the core of this multi-sensorial composition, the Yoruba central concept of reincarnation Ibi (birth), Iku (death), and Atunbi (re-birth) which offers a distinct way of thinking about time in a non-linear, but cyclical manner.

Artist

Artistic Director, Choreographer: Qudus Onikeku

Qudus Onikeku is the CEO/Centre Director of J.Randle Centre For Yoruba Culture and History, he is also the founder and Artistic Director of The QDanceCenter, a world-renowned artiste, researcher, innovator, and social impact engineer, who subliminally uses art for non-art outcomes. Over the decade, he has established himself as a major international artiste, working with different media: performance, installation, curating and community organizing.

His international artistic practice intersects between his interest in visceral body movements, kinesthetic memory, and embracing an artistic vision and a futurist practice that both respects and challenges Yoruba artistic traditions. He has created a substantial body of critically acclaimed work that ranges from solos to group works, as well as artiste-to-artiste collaborations with visual artists, architects, musicians, writers, multimedia artistes, data scientists or technologists.

After his higher education in France in 2009, Qudus created his first company YK projects in Paris, with which he created several solo and group dance pieces of critical acclaim. In 2014 he returned to Lagos with his partner Hajarat, and together they co-founded the QDanceCenter, an incubator with which they examined and experimented the possible intersections between arts and society.



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Artist

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Artistic Director, Choreographer: Qudus Onikeku

Qudus has been a favorite on major international stages, and festivals across 60 countries including Biennale de Lyon, Festival d'Avignon, Centre Pompidou, Philharmonie de Paris etc in France, TED Global, Venice Biennale, Torino Danza, Roma Europa in Italy, Kalamata Dance Festival Greece, Dance Umbrella UK, Bates Dance Festival USA, Festival TransAmerique Montreal. His dance works are in the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Canada. He has been a visiting professor of dance at the University of California Davis and Columbia College Chicago. Qudus is currently the first "Maker in Residence" at The Center for Arts, Migration and Entrepreneurship of the University of Florida.

His current research ATUNDA, explores a deep tech solution, an AI-ready dataset for dance recognition and movement analysis, to lay a background for cutting-edge interactive systems to synthesize, preserve, protect, and securely share dance and movement data in the age of virality.



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Production

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The QDance Company

The QDance Company is a contemporary dance ensemble with a global outlook.

Founded by acclaimed choreographer Qudus Onikeku, it has:

Worked with 100+ artists.

Toured in 50+ countries.

Evolved into a vital force in global contemporary dance.

Now anchored in Lagos, the company creates bold, boundary-breaking performances that unite cultures and inspire audiences worldwide.



Production Team

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Creative and Production Team

Conception and Artistic Direction: Qudus Onikeku

With the company dancers and collaborators:

Emmanuel Henry David, Bethel Wisdom Henry, Angela Uchenna Okolo,
Ruth Efigo Felix, Bright Samuel Basse, Ugochukwu Henry Oba, Grace Diepreye Okilo,
Gift Chinedu Eze, Evangel Chibueze Austin, Abok Michael Ezekiel

Music Director & Composer: Olatunde Obajeun

Live Music: Abiodun Samuel Fabiyi, Simeon Lawrence

Lights Design: Michel Abdallah.

Costumes Design: Mary Peter Ochei

Stage Manager: Isaac Lartey.

Mask Makers: Nas Magnificent and Yusuf Aina Abogunde.

Producer: Hajarat Alli

Tour Manager: Olajumoke Rafiat Tayo

Production: THE QDANCE COMPANY LAGOS

Associate Production France: YK Projects

Coproduction: Biennale de la danse – Lyon, Les Spectacles vivants – Centre Pompidou,
Les Halles de Schaerbeek – Bruxelles, Théâtre Paul-Éluard – Bezons, Escales danse
en Val-d’Oise, Théâtre national de Bretagne

Further Reading

Joy as Resistance: Re:INCARNATION, a West African Dance of Bodily Memory

By Wan-Jung Wei

“During the Black Lives Matter movement, everyone was talking about Black pain. I thought I could make a piece about Black joy.” Lagos-born choreographer Qudus Onikeku turned that intention into action. Drawing on West Africa’s Yorùbá culture, the urban vitality of Nigeria, and the language of contemporary dance theatre, he created *Re:INCARNATION*. The work features Afrodance in its raw, authentic form while offering a critical reflection on contemporary society.

Nigeria’s political, social, and economic challenges—including high unemployment and police violence—have led many young people to consider leaving the country, and Qudus Onikeku was among them. In his early twenties, he moved to France to pursue his artistic career. There, he founded his first company, YK Projects, presented his work, and gained recognition within the European art scene. Yet at the age of thirty, he made the decisive choice to return to Nigeria, where he established QDanceCenter to nurture and support the next generation of Nigerian dancers.

Re:INCARNATION is the result of six years of research into “bodily memory,” during which Onikeku collaborated with young dancers through workshops held across cities in Nigeria. He believes that, whether consciously or unconsciously, the contemporary body carries both past and present sociopolitical struggles: “I believe the body remembers—it remembers your emotions, your memories... the body can remember the pain of enslavement, and it can also remember the joy that existed before enslavement.” Although *Re:INCARNATION* began with the intention of creating a work centered on Black joy, it ultimately emerged as a fully realized and structurally rigorous piece. It can be seen as the culmination of Onikeku’s artistic journey. As a profound work presented in Taiwan, it deserves greater attention.

Further Reading

The structure of *Re:INCARNATION* is rooted in the Yorùbá understanding of cyclical existence—Ibi (birth), Iku (death), and Atunbi (rebirth). As one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Yorùbá conceive of life as a continuous cycle, in which ancestral spirits persist through future generations, and music and dance function means of connecting with the spiritual realm and the natural world. This worldview is deeply embedded in every detail of the work.

The first section, “Birth,” unfolds as a street party. The dancers move like an entire city in motion—colliding with one another amid noisy exchanges, waving arms, and light, quick steps—set against a hybrid soundscape of hip-hop, Afrobeats, and traditional Nigerian rhythms.



Further Reading

The second section, “Death,” shifts into a quieter, more contemplative register. The music unfolds like a deep, continuous thread, weaving together intertwined duets and solos. The dancers’ movement persists, but the rhythm is no longer buoyant or celebratory. Now it pulses more like a heartbeat.

In a linear view of life, death is final—an absolute end. But in a cyclical worldview, death marks another beginning. It is from this understanding that *Re:INCARNATION* moves into its third section, “Rebirth.”

“Rebirth” opens with a female dancer’s solo. As layers of sound accumulate, the dancers darken their bodies and put on masks, while the rhythms of West African dance bind them together. Though the soloist speaks not a word, his body tells a thousand.

Through their high-intensity performance, the dancers of *Re:INCARNATION* lead the audience across ridge after ridge, allowing them to feel both the vitality of contemporary Nigeria and the traditions of the Yorùbá people. This is exactly the kind of work I love: at its most exuberant, it becomes a full-blown party that fills the entire space; in its moments of stillness, it calls forth the wounds carried within life itself. Though *Re:INCARNATION* comes from West Africa, it resonates deeply with Taiwan.



Further Reading

One passage from the work particularly caught my attention:

“To become Orisa (deity), you must first die—exit from modernity.”

For societies that have experienced colonial rule, “modernity” is not merely a symbol of progress. It also signifies power, discipline, imposed cultural norms, and the erasure of indigenous cultures. Only an artist who has deeply reflected on the experience of (being) colonized can so calmly and convincingly place modernity alongside a cyclical worldview of life.

Africa is vast, and its expansive lands are home to richly diverse cultures. *Re:INCARNATION*, a work from West Africa, articulates contemporary Nigerian aesthetics through the convergence of youth culture and ancient Yorùbá philosophy. The piece also reveals the choreographer’s sustained reflection on social realities. Such reflection, however, is not unique to Africa. For Taiwan—an island that has likewise experienced colonial rule—*Re:INCARNATION* resonates with particular depth. Through this work, Africa is no longer framed as a distant “other,” but as a community of living, breathing people who use art to think through their own conditions, and in doing so, actively reshape the global artistic landscape.



Online Interview

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Chaos as Choreography: *Re:INCARNATION* Recovering Precolonial African Rhythms— An Interview with Qudus Onikeku

By Stella Tsai

Lagos, Nigeria's largest city, is home to some 20 million people and pulses with vibrancy amid a chaotic everyday life. In the eyes of choreographer Qudus Onikeku, however, Lagos is a world unto itself. "It's very loud, noisy, and active, always moving, yet so concrete that there's no room for romanticism." Speaking about Lagos, he smiled brightly, noting that survival here demands a deeply practical mindset. Everyone remains on edge, navigating each day with heightened alertness. "If creativity is a tool for artists to make a living, in Lagos it is a means of survival," he said.

People are shouting loudly everywhere in the city. "People feel this is the only way to be heard," Qudus said with a smile. "To live in Lagos, you have to keep all your senses open and stay fully alive in your body. After a while, you even learn to smile at the chaos. That vibrancy is exactly what I love most about Lagos." In Qudus's view, the city itself is a form of choreography. Chaos, rhythm, collision, and vibrancy constantly intertwine. People try their best to live and try their best to perform their life.

And when people begin to dance, the city's rhythms enter their body.

Online Interview

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The body as archive; dance as the continuation of memory

Qudus began dancing at the age of 13, later moving to France to work with choreographers. He did not receive formal dance training until he was 23. Moving defined his youth. Grounded in the Yorùbá culture of his upbringing, he absorbed knowledge like a sponge through learning and reading, gradually forming his own philosophy. In 2014, he returned home and founded QDanceCenter, where he began working with young Nigerian dancers. “When you become a dancer, the body becomes a space that carries memory.” Qudus sees the body as an archive, and dance as a medium for transmitting memory and sustaining culture.

Colonial rule took up nearly fifty years of Nigeria’s history. Political power and education have shaped people’s ways of thinking, accumulating as archives within the body. Qudus reflected on the labels he carried: “Born into a Muslim family, raised within Yorùbá traditions, becoming a heterosexual man, and later an artist in France... these are all part of the archive of my body.” He does not mix these archives together like a salad, but instead organizes them like a library, retrieving the relevant file when needed.

Qudus believes that dancers have a deeper understanding of body memory than most people, and are more attuned to the body’s capacity to transmit messages. He suggests that when dancers draw on their bodily archives to transmit messages, they are also forming a sense of collectivity and connections. Just as genetic information is passed on through the body, memory, too, recurs through acts of transmission. “I believe that keeping memory alive is one of the reasons people dance.”

Online Interview

Re:INCARNATION —returning to the precolonial state

Qudus's grandfather witnessed the arrival of colonial rule; his father was born during the colonial period, while he himself grew up in an independent era. Across these three generations, colonialism created a rupture with their original cultural roots. Only his grandfather had experienced Africa in its uncolonized state.

However, Qudus is not seeking to return to the past, but to recover a Nigerian identity unburdened by colonialism—its most original form. From the people and their ways of life to the broader social atmosphere, this means a time and space free from whiteness, and unrelated to the U.S. Black Lives Matter movement. “Black is just Black—it can be ugly or beautiful. When people say Nigeria has 200 million Black people, I would say Nigeria has 200 million people. Whether they are Black or not is beside the point.”

Without an external cultural frame of comparison, *Re:INCARNATION* becomes a kind of reincarnation of reincarnation. Qudus believes that only by shedding the burden of colonialism—by rediscovering an original cultural state and the energies of music and the body—can one begin to reimagine Nigeria's future.



Online Interview

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A symphony of collective energy

As Afrobeats sweeps the global music scene, winning Grammys and dominating the charts, many people remain unaware that it originates in Nigeria, or of the cultural roots behind its music and dance. “In Africa, music and dance always go hand in hand,” Qudus explains. “Music calls forth the body’s rhythm, and dance, in turn, brings out beats and sound.” For him, *Re:INCARNATION* is an attempt to guide audiences back to these cultural origins: to encounter an African culture that is rhythmic, dynamic, resistant to romanticization, and grounded in concrete reality.

“To understand this dance, one must understand where it comes from.” Qudus did not choreograph fixed movements for *Re:INCARNATION*. Instead, he brought each dancer’s “body archive” to the forefront, uncovering their unique life stories, personalities, and energies through a process of careful excavation. In doing so, the dancers are able to perform freely on stage, in a state that is both natural and primal. “The city of Lagos is not something that has been ‘choreographed.’ It is ‘choreography’ in its own right.”

Each dancer in *Re:INCARNATION*, then, is like an independent instrument. They perform individually. At times they clash or fall out of sync, yet ultimately they interweave to form the texture of the city. Qudus believes that when everyone strives to perform their own lives with full intensity, the city itself becomes a vast and powerful symphony.

Online Interview

Beyond data: the body as the archive of what makes us human

For Qudus, if dancers play any role in this world, it is as bodies that preserve memory. As AI sweeps across the globe and ever more technically dazzling dance robots emerge, he asks what truly matters: “What makes us human—and not AI?” If the body is merely an accumulation of data, then it is no different from a machine. What artificial intelligence can never attain, however, is the human spirit. They are the qualities that belong uniquely to the human body.

Qudus therefore emphasizes that if the performing arts become nothing more than an accumulation of movements and styles, they will inevitably be replaced by AI. “A good performance should be like a blank sheet of paper, on which the audience can write their own stories.” He believes that when people use their bodies, memories, and spirit to forge deeper connections through art, there is no need to fear being replaced by AI. And the performing arts will continue to have a future.

The body is not only an archive, but also a vital medium through which memory is preserved. *Re:INCARNATION* does more than bring audiences to distant Nigeria to see Lagos’s vibrant life; it also uses dance and the body as an archive to show us the abundant vibrancy that makes us human and irreplaceable.



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