CONTEMPORARY ASIAN DANCE IN SINGAPORE

Wednesday, 3 Sept 08
6.30pm-7.30pm
Celadon Room, NUS Museum

FREE ADMISSION

To register, email museum@nus.edu.sg
Maximum 60 pax

Abstract

The eventual emergence and development of contemporary dance in Singapore sets an exciting but thorny ground for artistic creation due to the dilemmas and complexities that surround it because it is often associated with Western knowledge and aspirations. When contemporary dance, i.e. modern dance techniques and styles were introduced in Singapore and utilized as components in an expression unique to contemporary Asians, the tension of its Western origins was encountered. Contemporary dance in Singapore became a vehicle to express progressive ideals of modernism, as in the West, yet it carried Western notions that were not necessarily Asian. Contemporary dance was thus defined or adapted on local terms, i.e. local forms, values and ideals were re-asserted or re-invented by contemporary Asian artists, and inherent in these new contemporary dance forms is the search for the contemporary Asian identity. However, contemporary Asian dance forms have not evolved homogeneously throughout Asia largely because its transference from the West has sometimes been recognized and at other times improvised or rejected. Thus, contemporary dance also means the contemporization of traditional/ethnic dance forms, also called neo-traditional claiming little or no Western influence. The concept of contemporary dance, therefore, does not refer only to Western forms but includes a variety of contemporary dance forms that may or may not be associated with the West. This talk focuses on contemporary Asian dance, particularly performance expressions of Asian-ness through the creation of different contemporary dance forms by selected Asian artists located in Singapore.

Biography

Dr. Cariño’s professional career includes being a dancer with Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company (USA) and Head of Dance at LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts (Singapore). She has published papers, articles and reviews with World Dance Alliance (Asia-Pacific) and The Arts Magazine (Singapore). Dr. Cariño is presently Head of Dance, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts; President, World Dance Alliance (Singapore) and a dance adviser to Singaporean government agencies. Her Ph.D. in the Southeast Asian Studies department, National University of Singapore was recently conferred in April 2008.