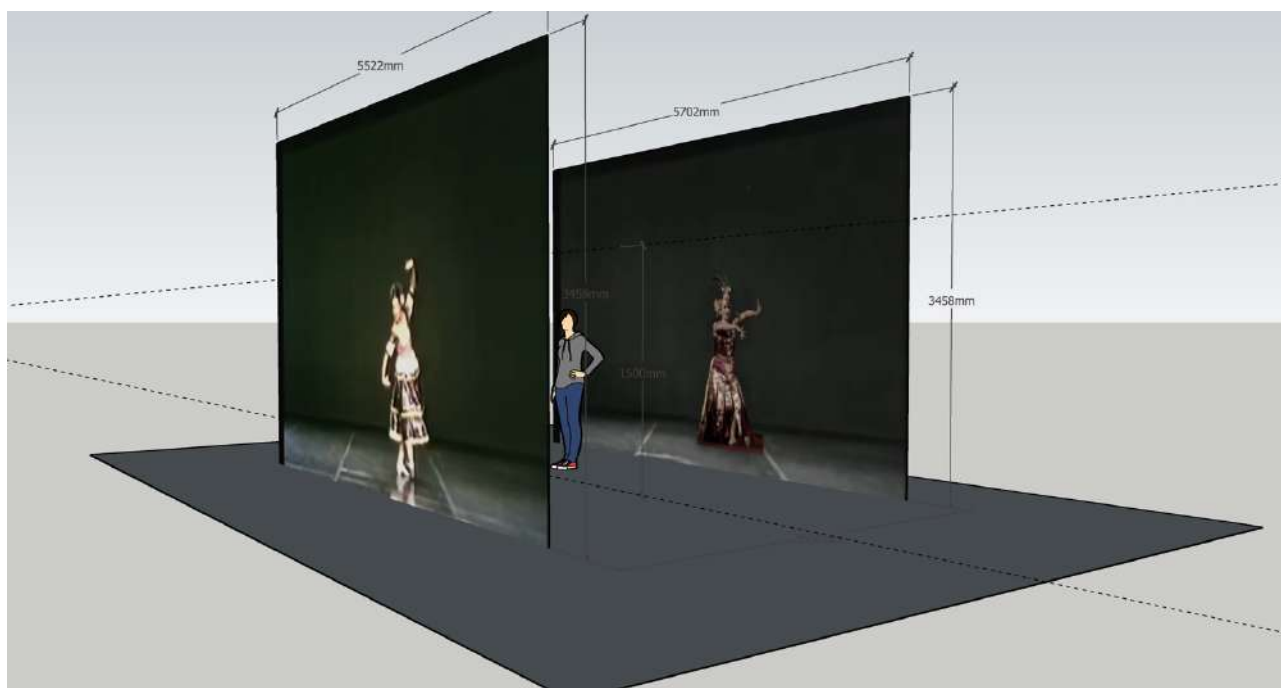


Dos Cachuchas

Tintin Wulia 2018

2-channel synchronised dance video installation with translucent projection screens, loop, colour, stereo, 14'58"

First exhibited at Nest Den Haag, the Netherlands, 8 September – 11 November 2018



(sketch – the two translucent screens, one showing the 1980 interpretation and the other the Balinese translation, with a member of the audience in between)

In *Dos Cachuchas*, dance is proposed as a language, with its political implication for identity and belonging. Dance has been described as a global language that transcends borders and communicates beyond intercultural boundaries. However, the reality of dance, like that of languages, shows that there are differences and divisions. If dance is a language, how does the translation of a dance compare with migration? A migrant settling into a new home is constantly faced with the complexity of translation, and the power dynamics between the languages of their past and present homes.

Dos Cachuchas pays homage to Fanny Elssler's *La Cachucha*, a dance that shook the West in the mid-19th century. Wulia engages with this dance's migration through time across variegated performing bodies, mediums, geography and acts of translation. As such, the dance embodies the complexity, and – as cultural theorist Stuart Hall discusses – the “impossibility” and “necessity” of identities.

La Cachucha carries a monumental migration history that began with Elssler's translation of an “exotic” Spanish folk dance of Cuban origin, amidst the wave of *espagnolisme* in 1830s France. Spain was, to France at the time, “half Asian, half African.” Set against the emerging conception of the nation state and national identity (and therefore Othering) in the West, Elssler's adaptation of *La Cachucha* into the “courtly” balleticised form established her as a legendary ballerina of the Romantic period. Her distinctive dance characteristics were often referred to as “pagan”, in contrast with what was considered to be supreme “Christian” ballet dancing of the period.

Elssler first performed *La Cachucha* in Paris Opéra in 1836, before the invention of film, and therefore detailed documentation of her movements was not possible then. However, as the dance brought Elssler to fame, her touring across Europe and the Americas roused many followers around the world. Visual and literary artists immortalised her fiery performances and *Cachucha* poses on lithographs, literary, and sculptural works. Combining these texts and inanimate visual materials with a Zorn notation of the dance

from the end of 1880s, distinguished authority on dance notation Ann Hutchinson Guest reconstructed the dance in 1967, more than a century after it was first performed.

In *Dos Cachuchas*, almost two centuries after Elssler first performed *La Cachucha*, Wulia brings the dance into her personal realm, translates *La Cachucha* further into Balinese dance, and performs it in sync to a film excerpt of the reconstructed dance. Wulia's intimate act of performing this translation with her Balinese dancing body is a manifestation of her complex relationship with her own “impossible” and “necessary” identity. Continuing the legacy of the Dutch colonialism, the Indonesian government implemented discriminatory regulations during the second half of the 20th century on a group they define as Chinese Indonesian. During this legal ban of Chinese culture in Indonesia, Wulia – who began dancing Balinese as early as she started to walk, making Balinese dance a kind of “native language” to her – often had to assert her Balinese dance skills as a proof of her identity to avoid Othering and stereotyping based on her so-called “Chinese looks”.

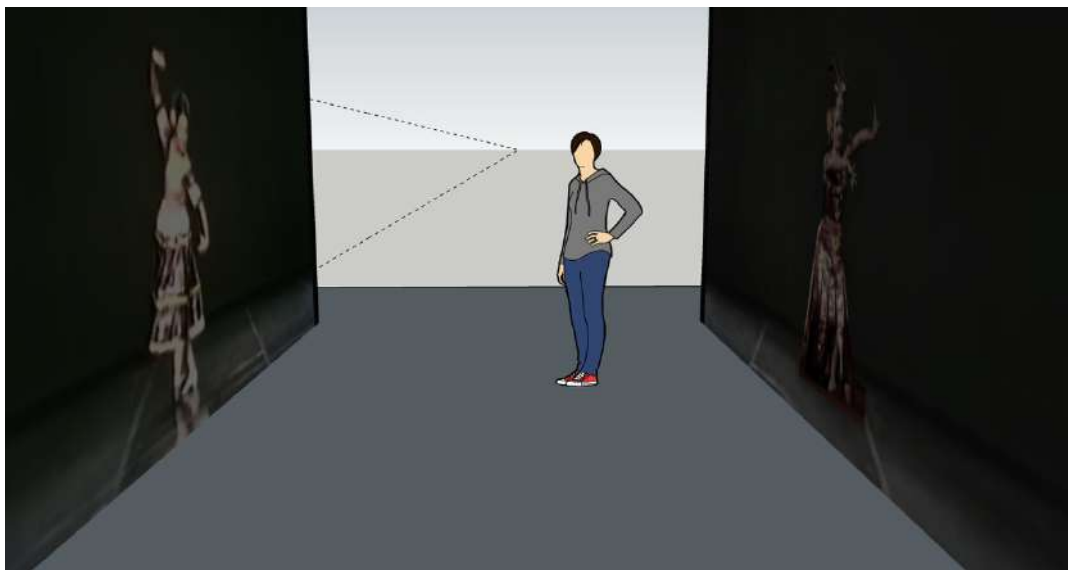
Wulia's re-translation is staged as a two-channel synchronised video projection on translucent screens. On the one screen a 1981 film shows Margaret Barbieri of the Royal Ballet performing Ann Hutchinson Guest's 1967 reconstruction of *La Cachucha*, and the other screen shows Wulia's Balinese performance of the dance, shot on a stage at the Institut Seni Indonesia (Indonesian Art Institute) in Denpasar. The two screens create a physical space between them, inviting the audience to find themselves in between the two translations.



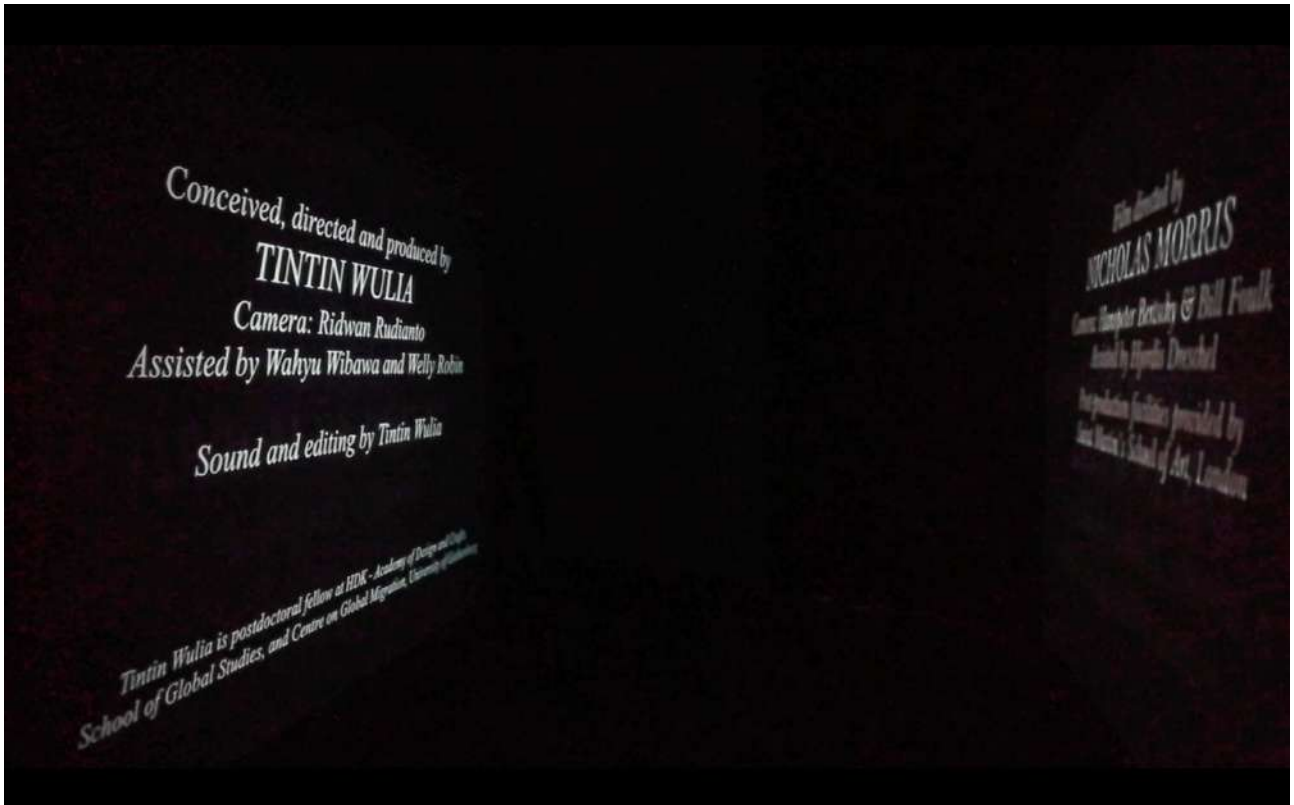
(sketches – superimposed translucent screens, one showing the Royal Ballet's footage and the other showing the stage at ISI Denpasar)



(sketches – superimposed translucent screens, one showing Margaret Barbieri footage and the other showing the artist dancing the Balinese translation. This is the image seen from the outside of the screen area.)



(sketches – the two footages are mirroring each other, projected from the outside of the screen area – because the screens are translucent, the dancers



Dos Cachuchas (Tintin Wulia 2018), installation view at Nest Den Haag, the Netherlands. Image courtesy of the artist.



Dos Cachuchas (Tintin Wulia 2018), installation view at Nest Den Haag, the Netherlands. Image courtesy of the artist.



Dos Cachuchas (Tintin Wulia 2018), installation view at Nest Den Haag, the Netherlands. Image courtesy of the artist.



Dos Cachuchas (Tintin Wulia 2018), installation view at Nest Den Haag, the Netherlands. Image courtesy of the artist.