

Preview: SIDES 2020 by Frontier Danceland



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Following their exploration of movement on film with [Dancers' Locker 2020](https://bakchormeeboy.com/2020/09/15/dance-with-me-dancers-locker-2020-by-frontier-danceland-review/) (<https://bakchormeeboy.com/2020/09/15/dance-with-me-dancers-locker-2020-by-frontier-danceland-review/>), Frontier Danceland returns this January with SIDES 2020, a digital double bill comprising *B().I().O()* by Zhuo Zihao and *Apple Diary* by Chiew Peishan, created in collaboration with local filmmaker Koo Chia Meng.



An open-ended investigation into the nature of human sentiments through the set-up of a microscope in a laboratory, *B().I().O()* explores the roots of human emotion and how it shapes both conscious and unconscious behaviour. “The piece came about with the discovery of what may be common among the performers and me as we learnt to know more about each other,” says choreographer and director Zhuo Zihao. “I treated the work as if I’m looking through the microscope, observing the very authentic nature of sentiments at play while at the same time knowing that I am the experiencer of my own sentiments as well.



Meanwhile, *Apple Diary* meditates on themes of trauma and agency through surreal reenactments that blur the boundaries between history and memories. “Apple Diary is a musing of a personal failure – the inability to speak up against being silenced,” says choreographer and director Chiew Peishan. “Embracing the failure, I begin to reimagine encounters of the silenced to be absurd and passionate.” Through the creative process, Chiew examines her compulsion to repeat traumatic past memories as a paradoxical positive confrontation of the past, and wonders if healing can occur coming out of the other side.



SIDES 2020 extends Frontier Danceland's recent audio-visual exploration in Dancers' Locker 2020 last September to delve deeper into investigating the potentiality of performance and choreography in the digital space. Ms. Low Mei Yoke, Artistic Director, shares "Though the pandemic may have impeded our original plans for the live theatrical experience of SIDES 2020, it has not dampened our passion to create these works of art that we call dance. With the online migration of SIDES 2020 as a purely digital experience, we hope to cultivate and connect with new audiences who may come to learn and appreciate the art of live performance to join us in the theatres in the future."



"It was very interesting for me to explore dance from a filmmaking lens and for Peishan to understand how her work can potentially translate to this digital medium. The overall experience yielded creative discoveries that we would not have otherwise chanced upon, if we had not collaborated on this film together," says Koo about his experience working with the two choreographer-directors. "While Zihao communicates his intentions clearly, I had the freedom to design how his work would be shot as a film. He was very involved in the process and that was something I appreciated."



“Both choreographers emphasised an authentic, organic quality and encouraged us to find our own stories and interpretations of the movements, which was quite liberating,” says company artist and performer Ma YueRu about her experience performing for the screen. “It takes a different sense of focus and mental preparation to dive into the performance right away and adapt to the various technical and spatial elements, but this also helped in evolving a new set of performative tools and understandings.”

Photo Credit: Alfonse Chiu

SIDES 2021 streams on SISTIC Live from 29th January 2021, 8pm to 6th February 2021, 11:59pm. Tickets available [here \(http://sistic.com.sg/events/SIDES2020\)](http://sistic.com.sg/events/SIDES2020)

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