

ArtsCross/Danscross Hong Kong 2025: *Dancing on the Edge*

The theme for this year's project is *Dancing on the Edge* and we hope that participants can find inspiration from the thoughts, impressions, ideas or images that arise from this theme. The words that follow are intended to spark ideas, movements or open a creative space for participants.

The word 'edge' is used in many ways in English, including in catchphrases or idioms across a range of contexts. In the rapidly developing world of digital technology, we often refer to a new development being at the 'cutting edge', and in contemporary art something that is risky, bold and provocative is frequently called 'edgy'.

Edge can also refer to time, when we feel we are at the edge of a new age or new dawn; and according to some scientists, (Muller, R. *Now: The Physics of Time*, 2016), the expansion of the physical universe not only creates new space but also creates time. The edge of that time is called 'now', and we inhabit this time as it flows through and around us – a concept that seems linked to the flow of *dào* in Chinese thought. So, when we dance on the edge we are embodying and demonstrating the flow of 'now', expressing the condition of being human through the unique power of dance.

Another use of the word edge is particularly relevant for Hong Kong as it has existed over centuries at the water's edge. The natural harbour made Hong Kong a maritime meeting point and brought together people from all over the world; and still today this deep water port gives Hong Kong a 'competitive edge' (<https://logfret.com/hong-kongs-strengths-as-a-maritime-hub/>) as it continues to link people and far-off places.

In many places in the world the water's edge is moving higher due to rising water levels caused by climate change, but in Hong Kong land reclamation has changed the water's edge over centuries, from the Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE-24 CE) when the land was extended for salt production, to 1998 when the current Hong Kong airport opened after the world's greatest land reclamation project; and in Hong Kong land reclamation is ongoing today.

Another edge visible in Hong Kong is the horizon where the edge of the sea meets the edge of the sky. This special meeting point was noted by the Táng Dynasty poet, Lǐ Bái, as expressed in the English rendition of *Seeing off Meng Haoran for Guangling at Yellow Crane Tower*: "The lonely sail is a distant shadow, on the edge of a blue emptiness"

In language too, the ArtsCross/Danscross project has edges as the Sinophone artists and scholars meet their Anglophone colleagues. We employ the working languages of the dance studio, the immediacy of the physical 'language' of dance and artistic and scholarly discourses to explore the edges of our understandings of dance as physical and metaphysical expressions of human experience.

This is the meaning of ArtsCross/Danscross – to move towards new edges, creating new meeting points that open a shared space where we work together and celebrate the richness and diversity of dance and our shared commitment to our art form in process, practice and research.

Professor Christopher Bannerman

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