

HOME: A Process Deconstructed

by [Gregory King](#), Visiting Professor of Dance, Swarthmore College for the Dance Journal/ on May 16, 2015 at 8:26 pm /



photo credit: *Bicking Photography*

My first introduction to the *Home /S.9th* street project was at Temple University's faculty concert. The excerpt left me longing to experience more. Set to premiere in November at The Philadelphia Fringe Festival, *Home/ S. 9th St.*, continues to take shape, evolving into an endeavor that is part dance documentary, part community dialogue, and part social commentary.

This choreographed pie is the brainchild of **Kun-Yang Lin**, and abstractly explores the meaning of home, the confusions of displacement and the beauty in adjusting.

Lin's exploration began with a question; what does it mean to move from one place to another?

Lin's initial question forced me to ask of additional questions;

Is home a place and is that place the same for everyone?

In an information session, **KYL/D**'s executive director **Rev. Kenneth Metzner**, explained that *Home* for Lin is a geographical amalgamation of Taiwan – and ancestral home, Indonesia – a spiritual home, and Philadelphia – a physical home.

Metzner also clarified that *Home* was neither narrative nor linear but an abstract representation of the immigrant's story.

His explanation made me latch on to the fact that home can be both a departure and an arrival.

An immigrant myself, I have rested my head on the shoulders of my lineage while continuing to walk in the path created for me by my life in America.

I understood all too well, the journey, the fight, the justification, the anger, the resentment, the joy, the resolve, and the possibilities.

Knowing this, I took Lin's journey home?

The *Home S/9th Street* Project employed the colorful voices of Lin's Philadelphia neighbors living on the block that houses Chi Movement Arts Center, the home of Kun-Yang Lin Dancers. Important to Lin was the plurality of the immigrant experience, attached to the notion of connecting the past to the present, the traditional to the contemporary and the individual to the collective.

With highly effective gestures, texts, and a robust movement vocabulary, the six dancers of KYL/D embarked on a journey to tell the story of leaving home – arriving home. Section by section, they held on to their directives so that the audience could be transported.

Home was solid.

Multi-layered, multi-textured and rich with information, *Home* gave us the license to question citizenship. A huge undertaking and sophisticated handling of a delicate topic, *Deconstructing Home* was the gateway to what the November premier holds.

For curious dance lovers who yearn to find meaning in movement, *Deconstructing Home* offered insight into the inspiration, the process, and the journey.

While Q and A sessions at the end of performances allow an individual to feel somewhat connected to their experience, deconstructing the process allowed a different kind of connection. Lin's explanation and description was laden with information that unraveled the complexity of any unanswered questions. He addressed three major parts of the piece – the gestures, the prop, and the process, by asking the dancer to relive *Home*.

- Their gestures arose from improvisation sessions, tailored to the individual, and specific to self.
- They each had a chair, which represented something different from person to person. Lin explained that the chair was an abstraction of boxes he would witness his neighbors using to pack and unpack along the culturally rich block of [9th street](#) in Philadelphia.
- The process grew out of extensive research and using his 9th street studio as a choreographic lab.

While Lin's dancers were spectacular at delivering carefully executed steps, *Home* was not about dance, it was about acceptance, pride, and identity. A research project that has blossomed over time, *Home* shone the light on a topic we often neglect.

***Home* is poignant, full-bodied and relevant.**

***Deconstructing Home* was not only welcomed and helpful; it was necessary.**