

## Yuxin (Valkyrie) Yao

Artist, Researcher, Educator, Producer  
Founder and Executive Director, ELSEHERE  
Founding Editor, STRATUM Journal  
[www.valkyrieyao.com](http://www.valkyrieyao.com)

Valkyrie Yao

Biography

Long Version

795 Words/ 5555 Characters

Yuxin (Valkyrie) Yao is a multidisciplinary artist, researcher, educator, and producer working across choreography, moving image, installation, performance art, and editorial practice. Her work moves between live event and image, body and archive, composition and publication, and is driven by a sustained interest in how form carries philosophy, pressure, memory, and public life. Born and trained in China, Yao began dance at an early age and was formed through years of rigorous professional training before gradually moving from performance into choreography, direction, visual art, and research-based practice. She received her BFA in Choreography from Shenyang Conservatory of Music and her MFA in Dance in Interdisciplinary Digital Media and Performance, with distinction, from Arizona State University.

Her artistic practice is shaped by Daoist and Tibetan Buddhist cosmologies, performance studies, posthuman inquiry, and a long engagement with the body as a site of transmission. Across stage works, installations, and films, she investigates how ritual, spectatorship, ecological and political rupture, and symbolic materiality enter composition. Rather than treating Eastern philosophical systems as reference or ornament, she works with them as operative structures of thought, bringing them into dialogue with contemporary composition, moving image, and interdisciplinary art. The resulting works often resist quick explanation while remaining highly structured, asking how a body can hold contradiction, how an image can carry residue, and how abstraction can become a precise social and ethical form.

Yao's choreographic and directorial works have been presented across theaters, museums, festivals, and artist-centered platforms in the United States and abroad. Her stage and live works have appeared at Ailey Citigroup Theater, Gibney Dance, Dixon Place, The Tank NYC, Mark O'Donnell Theater, Abrons Arts Center, National Sawdust, the Ruth Page Center for the Arts in Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and venues in Phoenix, Tempe, Los Angeles, and Brooklyn. Major recent choreographic works include *Ash and Bone*, *Off to On*, *Desire Path*, *In Between the dusk and dawn*, *ENTROPY*, *N.U.O*, *HUNGER*, and *Tamer*. Her visual and performance art practice has been presented at Phoenix Art Museum, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Le Petit Versailles in New York, and the XV Florence Biennale in Florence.

Moving image occupies a central place in her practice. Her film *Insert Coin to Play* was officially selected for the Beijing International Film Festival and has been screened internationally in China, France, and other global dance film contexts. The work received the New Youth Feature Film Award at the 2025 New Youth International Dance Film Festival, Best Dance Video Art Film at The Way Dance Video Art Exhibition in Nanjing, and the Special Jury Prize and Creativity

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Award at Compagnie des oeillets MATUVU in Paris. Earlier film and media works, including *What's Left, I SEE*, *In Flux: The Bipolar*, and *The Hollow Man*, continue her interest in the relation between choreography, editing, spectatorship, and mediated memory.

Alongside her studio practice, Yao has developed a substantial body of research and pedagogical work. Her scholarship asks when micro-sequences of action become publicly legible as evidence, and how embodied knowledge, cultural heritage, and spectatorship remain teachable, circulable, and accountable across contexts. She has presented practice-based research and public scholarship through the National Dance Education Organization, including sessions on Nuo ritual, decolonial pedagogy, and ableist aesthetics in dance, as well as through the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable and invited lectures at colleges and universities. At Arizona State University, she served as Instructor of Record across contemporary and ballet courses and taught in settings ranging from higher education to independent studios, guest workshops, and public-facing educational contexts.

Yao is also active as a builder of artistic and editorial infrastructure. She is the Founder and Executive Director of ELSEHERE, an international arts nexus operating across development, commissioning, production, publishing, artist support, and cross-border partnership. She is the Founding Editor of STRATUM Journal, a publishing platform developed to hold long-form artist conversations, research-driven writing, and durable documentation pathways for work moving across institutions, geographies, and languages. Through these initiatives, she has extended her practice beyond object and event into the longer questions of how art is contextualized, circulated, and remembered.

Her work has been recognized across choreography, film, research, and teaching. She received Arizona State University's Outstanding Research Award and Teaching Excellence Award, and her broader support includes the Folger Institute Artistic Research Fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library, the LMCC Manhattan Arts Creative Engagement Grant, The Laundromat Project Create Change Fellowship, the CIPA Emerging Producers Fellowship, and the CIPA x ISPA Congress Fellowship. She has also held leadership, curatorial, and moderating roles through Quadrant International Art Association and related artist-centered initiatives. Yao is a member of the International Dance Council, an official partner of UNESCO, as well as ISPA, NDEO, CIPA, DSA, APAP, and other professional organizations across dance, arts leadership, and international cultural exchange.