

DANCE

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Contemporary dance and ballet are the most popular dance genres. However, audience of these genres are seldom interested in other genres.

Genres participation

Mainstream	Occasional participation	Low participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contemporary dance Ballet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinese dance Street dance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Folk dance Jazz dance Ballroom/ Latin dance Dance theatre/ Choreodrama

Active and lapsed participants# share some common views and characteristics.

- Dancing is more than sheer appreciation of the beauty of body movement. It is contagious because the performers express energy and emotions via movement and their interaction with the stage and other dancers.
- Viewers of different dance genres seldom overlap – there is little interest to explore and support other dance genres.
 - Music, stage, costumes and lighting further add richness to the performance, especially in the genre of ballet and Chinese dance.
 - Contemporary dance inspires people through its ability of implicit story-telling, with body movement as a medium. The inspiration can have lingering effects when a good storyline is presented.
 - Many audience are dancers themselves thus frequently engage in practice, cross-group collaboration and competition. Participation in street dance is hard to quantify as it often happens in studio or on street.
 - Relatively low participation in Chinese and folk dance could be explained by limited number of performances by foreign dance groups due to COVID-19 restrictions, and also a limited interest to learn about a foreign culture and history.
- There is a general preference over performance of foreign performing groups than local dance groups.




61 – # Active participants: those who have participated in >2 paid dance performances in P1Y (N=6 identified); Lapsed participants: those who ceased participation since COVID-19 outbreak (N=6 identified)

Learning dance and an interest in music paved the way to become an audience. A handful of participants also attended performance to support dancer friends.



Learners

- Nearly half of the respondents have learnt dancing in their early years.
 - 5 learners are observed (3 active participants + 2 lapsed participants)
- The experience instilled respondents a positive association to dance, especially the appreciation of skills used on body movement.



Transferred from music performance

- Consensus across groups that music and dancing complement each other.
- Some respondents delved into dancing due to interest in a specific form of music (e.g. classical shows → ballet; pop music concerts → hip-hop).



Friends/ social circle

- For those with no previous relevant training, a key trigger of trial dance performance is to support friends who are dancers. It is particularly common in tertiary students.
- Dancers and their friends (and students) formed solid social circles. The influence is particularly high in hip-hop dance and contemporary dance.

Feeling the beauty in body movement is the essence of dance performance participation. For this, respondents are fine with compromising on repetitive plays/ distant venues etc.

Definitions of beauty differ across genres –

Ballet/ Chinese Dance/ Choreodrama

- Pleasant to watch because of elegant and fluid movements
- Grand production – stunning stage set-up, costumes, lighting, live music, etc.
- Clear story plot

Epic; elegant; grand; story-telling

Contemporary dance

- Well-thought-out choreography to express emotions/ thoughts
- Body movement echoing with music and space

Creativity; imagination; one-of-a-kind; rich emotions; power of expression; story-telling



“I watched Annie Wong’s performance after she got back into shape. The body movements were impressive. She used Leslie Cheung’s song as background music, the performance was touching.”

Active dance participant



“The creativity is aspiring, Dancers can create beat and rhythm with only body movement. Then, you feel astonished by how they think out of the box.”

Active dance participant

Hip Hop/ Street dance

- Demonstration of teamwork and concerted effort
- Delivering hot-blooded vibes
- Similar to contemporary dance, audience pays huge attention to choreography. Famous choreographer is a plus.

Teamwork; hot-blood; blast; strength; creativity; edgy; cool; power of expression



“It all started with a movie relating to ShanXi Huangtu plateau. It triggers me to watch folk dance. Then I watched some relating to DunHuang. Tango, and tap dance afterwards. The beat is very strong.”

Lapsed dance participant

Foreign folk dance

- Exploration journey to a completely new culture
- Often feature foreign music and more upbeat
- More difficult to appreciate as it requires elementary understanding of specific culture

Exotic; exploration; newness; out-of-the-box; rich culture



Image for illustrative purpose

Performers and diversity – two cues to help illustrate the beauty of dance also motivate participants to attend a show

Performers

Across groups, there are very few recalls of performers' names, yet they do play a critical role in delivering the good performance

- Dedication of the dancers



"I think the performers are beautiful because they look so dedicated. I like those dancing contests very much, from there I ponder how much hardship they have endured being this capable."

Active dance participant



"The scene where the performers shed sweat is drawing my attention because I can feel how the dancers are into the show."

Lapsed dance participant

- Versatile body movement



"Their body is so versatile. The movement together with the costumes is so vivid that makes you feel like part of the show."

Active dance participant

Diversity/ Crossover

While "creativity" is the backbone of the beauty of dance, crossover is a good showcase of such. Audience are often amazed by how dance arrangements/ performers think outside of their genre.

- Mixed dance genres



"In many contests in recent years, performers started to merge different genres such as Jazz and hip hop in one performance."

Active dance participant



"Just within street dance, there are variations. Funky and tic tac can actually cross over."

Active dance participant

- Dance mixed with popular music



"You can play pop songs in contemporary dance. My friends listen to MC Cheung's songs and dance spontaneously."

Active dance participant

Additional factor – non-local big performing groups

- Perception of beauty could be affected by the halo of foreign performing groups/ performers
- The scarcity of big dance groups locally and large-scale production make dance audience trust them in providing a differentiating and attractive show experience



"There is a general perception, or even an illusion that the performance by non-local groups in Hong Kong should be a large production. They can win trust much easier than local small-medium sized groups."




Active dance participant

Billboard works well to draw awareness and trigger information collection. Still, low presence in real settings hinders reachability to new/ lapsed participants.

Mass-facing

Niche



Offline channels	 Billboards	 HKAF/ performing group newsletter	 Poster display at venue
Active	★		✔
Lapsed	★	✔	✔

- Keep the content simple and convey aesthetics – provide more information within a QR code directing to the website

“Information is often delayed as I received the groups’ newsletter half a month after the ticket selling.”

Lapsed dance participant

Improvements

Offline interaction in daily scene settings

- Some respondents pointed out the relatively weak presence of dancing groups offline, especially for small-medium scale groups which have even fewer resources for promotion
- Performing groups shall take initiative to reach out to lapsed/ fresh participants
- Mini exhibitions/booths are well-received

“The performing groups feel a bit distant and indifferent with only online promotion. Some interaction and human touch are better.”
Lapsed dance participant

“Hong Kong Ballet had a mini performance at Taikoo place”.
Lapsed dance participant

★ Important information channel ✔ Information channel mentioned

Participants rely on the dancing circle to keep them posted online. Current online channels lack a platform that consolidates and sustainably provides information to a wide range of audience.

Mass-facing

Niche

Online channels	Social media algorithm	Search engine	Event calendar website	Studio social media page	Art-mate.net e-newsletter	Friends' (including cast) sharing
Active	✓	✓		✓	✓	★
Lapsed	✓	✓	✓	✓		★

Potential touchpoint

U Magazine/ Weekend HK

- The sites are mentioned across groups of different art types, hence a go-to place for hangout inspirations

Recommendations from dancing icons/ KOLs

- Opinions from people in the circle are influential
- KidneyBuster and Yellow@Manner微辣 are mentioned



• Watchouts for Facebook: a single piece of information could be easily buried due to frequent and large information flow

“My friend shared the poster of Nezha: Untold Solitude (一個人的哪吒) on Facebook. The lonely vibe hit me so I decided to search on Google. Then, it brings me to the official performing group website”

Active dance participant

“I have followed Y-Space(多空間) on Facebook but haven't seen their updates on my feed in a year”

Active dance participant

★ Important information channel ✓ Information channel mentioned



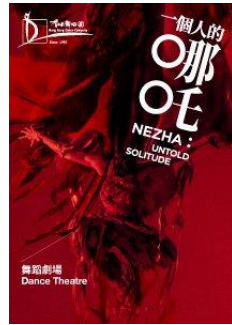
Audience look for a poster with theme (e.g. modernity/ edginess/ artistic) instead of simple outline of factual information (dance type, venue, time, etc.)



Sentimental expression

“The poster is giving out a lonely vibe, and this hit me at the time.”

F, 36 y.o.



Old-school

“This poster isn't appealing or intriguing, and it struck me as outdated.”

F, 30 y.o.



Line-up of performers/judges

“When all different types of dance performances happened at once, you will be interested. Not mentioning the contestants, solely having judges coming from different backgrounds is also attractive.”

M, 25 y.o.



Matching the dance

“The sleeves (水袖) and calligraphy feel very Chinese.”

M, 39 y.o.



Unmatching vibe

“Street dance could look nice too, but this poster is more like to IT product brochure.”

F, 32 y.o.



Inconspicuous image

“If a poster has only words, I might not understand which could not provoke my interest to search it.”

M, 34 y.o.



Modern/ Edgy

“The use of light and shadow and strong contrast impress me.”

M, 46 y.o.



Simplicity

“Simply a moving performer and the costumes look great.”

F, 30 y.o.



Poster design

Clear and simple illustrations could help the audience to understand the show content. They also welcome a QR code to direct them to more information.



Illustrative the theme

“Lady White of West Lake(白蛇) was back in a few years ago. The poster came with a clear theme description.”

M, 46 y.o.



QR codes for further information

“Scanning QR codes is both environmental friendly and less complicated.”

F, 44 y.o.



Dancers engage audience with body movement and passion. The overall watching experience is lifted through matching stage setting and innovation demonstrated.

- Excellent body movement can show the performers are fully into the performance, and eager to express a message/ emotion
- For solo dancers, some mentioned their ability to take the whole stage under control and grab audience's attention
- Some are looking for movement in unison

“To me, nice movement is a mix of strength and versatility. I know the performers are into the show and have put much time into practising.”

Lapsed dance participant

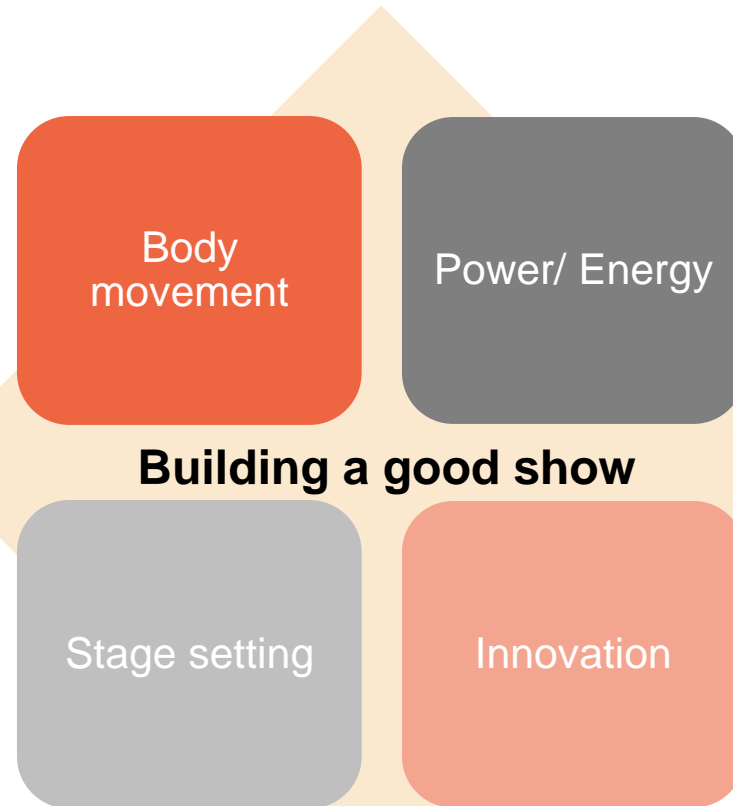
- Music, backdrop and lighting are mentioned by respondents for an engaging show

“Music is crucial for engaging the audience. When the motion merges with the music, it is very touching.”

Active dance participant

“There have been lots of improvements in ballet shows. For example, we now have animation and fog. These have enriched the stage effect.”

Active dance participant



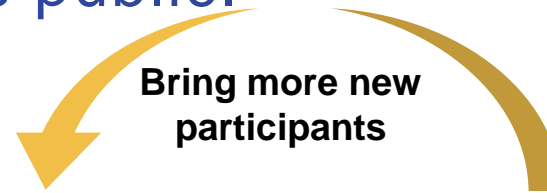
- “Dedication”, “effort”, “teamwork”, and “strength” are some common keywords across dance audience.
- They enjoy seeing a group of people working together for the same goal
- The skilful dancers also remind the audience how they work hard all the way long to be showcasing on stage

- Creativity is fundamental to a good dance show that wins admiration
- In hip-hop/ contemporary dance, creation is expressed via the out-of-the-box dance arrangement. Merging different variations is deemed creative as well
- Although classical ballet performances are repetitive, groups maintain novelty of the shows by making fine tunes on performing techniques and stage settings

“One won't get bored watching Swan Lake and The Nutcracker repetitively...because different versions come with different presentation style...could see their improvements. For example, I recall using wood log to build the backdrop, now we have more interactive elements are also improvements, such as 3D display.”

Active dance participant

An upcoming challenge for the industry is the comeback of foreign performing groups. Besides retaining active audience, groups shall make themselves visible to the mass public.



Post-show engagement

- ✓ Word-of-mouth is prevalent among dance participants
- ✓ Most respondents are willing to follow the performing groups' online pages if they had a good show experience
- ! Bring interaction to the stage. Respondents appreciate crew members having a short welcoming/ wrap-up speech
- ! Address the online reachability issue and update frequently
- ! Solely encouraging "following" within the venue could not reach new audience, especially for small-medium scale groups which own a narrow audience base. Creating wider awareness and talking points to recruit new audience

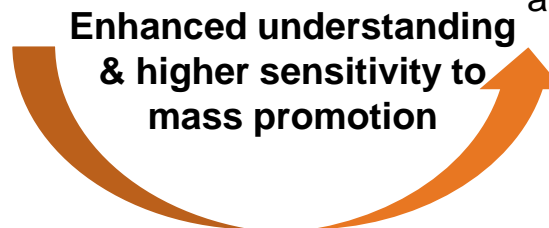


"I will be interested in a performing group only when others tell me it's good or I have watched the show. It is hard to convince myself to like the show/ believe it is of good quality without understanding the group."

Lapsed dance participant

Ongoing promotion

- ! After COVID-19, people need a stronger push to resume art participation, it is time for performing groups to reinforce its presence. Currently, very few respondents could recall group-initiated information channels except billboards
- ! Participants tend to look out for shows during peak season (hip hop shows: summer; festive shows: December). Step up promotion to enhance reachability
- ! Short outdoor performances (for hip hop)/showcases in Book Fairs/ exhibitions are mentioned
- ! **Watchout:** Promotion shall be to the point as disclosing too much about the shows might weaken the sense of anticipation/ aesthetics



"I agree performing groups have to step up both online and offline promotion amid COVID. It is important to have new audience. Maybe they can consider outside venue performances and giveaways in exchange for likes."

Lapsed dance participant

New trends: Novel topics + Cross category collaboration

While the industry seeks breakthroughs via new topics and crossover, performing groups shall stay relevant by delivering shows easy-to-understand/ appreciate

Respondents evaluated some new directions in the industry –

Themes/ topics

- Compared to a specific message, the majority of respondents look at the larger picture – the theme of the show
- Example of an appealing theme is Lady White of West Lake(白蛇) by Hong Kong Dance Company. Without pinpointing the exact plot/ message, it receives likes for its artistic and aesthetic presentation



“Few years ago, there was a performance called Lady White of West Lake(白蛇). The poster is very beautiful and I could get the theme upon looking at it.”

Lapsed dance participant



- Still, few respondents are concerned whether the storyline revolves around a specific message, especially if it is a choreodrama
 - Novel and niche topics (e.g. philosophy & exotic culture) could be hard to understand as it requires some relevant knowledge
 - Audience appreciate some illustrations to help them envision how these concepts are to be presented on stage

Crossover

Folk dances

- Majority of the audience do not have experience with the dances (e.g. Belly Dance & Chinese Dance)
- Bring in features that are familiar to most (e.g. contemporary dance) to provide grounds for appreciation



“Now there are few pure Chinese dance performance. Crossover with contemporary dance and street dance has become more common. These creations are good too.”

Active dance participant

Ballet

- Since ballet is considered “grand” and “elegant”, the collaborating partners should live up to the expectation (e.g. Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra)

Association between dance and arts-tech is limited across groups. Most spontaneously think of image projection.

- Most associated art tech to be light projection on stage
- Majority across groups do not have a strong view of art tech applications. Only 2 could concretely recall impressive performances they have heard of.

Recalls of impressive shows



"I heard of an impressive art tech dance show in Korea. They are 3 world-class dancers. They use mobile phones to project on the stage and create a sea backdrop. When I watched the video, I can also see people watching on-site. Together with the dancers' movements. The overall experience is very good."

Active dance participant



"Is LED dance from Hong Kong doing art tech? This group usually perform on a dark stage where the performers and robots are equipped with LED light."

Active dance participant

Tested with two local art tech trailers, most respondents do not like the application. They find it overshadows the dance and is not able to deliver or strengthen the key message of the performance.



"I had no idea of the theme, nor the message. I can see myself coming out from the theatre feeling totally clueless after 2 hours."

Lapsed dance participant

[Z/Z Twin Lab 《Z / Z雙子實驗室》](#) by Zuni

- The example is negatively perceived and does not lift respondents' impression of art-tech
- Most respondents could not grasp the message
- Technology application is too dominating that the show highlight is no longer dancing
- Few respondents worry it is over-dominating in terms of the duration and suggested a shorter duration of tech display



[VR 影像《凝—武踏行旅》](#)
by Hong Kong Dance Company

- The movement feels too punchy and coarse, contradicting dancing as a fluid demonstration of emotions
- Wearing VR glasses become a pain point, especially for audience who require glasses



Implications: Performing groups shall convey how technology supports, but not overriding the story flow and presentation

To rebound from pandemic, groups shall proactively remind audience of their existence via online and offline means.

Exposure

As restrictions were lifted, people's lives were once again facing change and restoring some previous habits, including art participation. Consider the following to make public aware of the comeback of dance shows –

- ✓ Add offline touchpoints
- ✓ Roadshows and mini-exhibition work well to create talking points
- ✓ Ensure offline promotion materials are regularly updated and inform the subscribers timely

Communications

- ✓ Reduce reliance on performers to acquire new audience. This approach is dot-to-dot, thus ineffective in reaching out to more potential audience
- ✓ Establish own social media page and update regularly
- ✓ Given the viewer base of newly established page could be narrow, consider collaborating with influential content creator
- ✓ Moving offline, aesthetics of poster should be at the top of the list, information can come next or later via QR code



“The way arts groups design their posters tells their level of dedication. We would tend to think that they are serious with their productions if they make an effort in designing the posters, and so we will have more incentives to watch their plays. We pay for the tickets out from our own pockets and with COVID-19, people are more reluctant to go to theatres, so we need to know we are paying to watch a play produced with heart.”

Lapsed dance participant

Showcase as a team

- ✓ As audience enjoy seeing the dancers interacting with each other, create more opportunities for dancers to show collaboration on stage
- ✓ Off stage, consider showing up as a team to reinforce the impression of a cohesive team

New attempts

- ✓ If performing groups would like to use art tech or folk dance as selling points, integrate them into the show gradually and allow time for Hong Kong audience to adapt to these relatively new ideas.
- ✗ Avoid abstract and difficult topics. Convince audience the theme is relevant to them

Respondent profile (Active participants)

Demographics							Arts participation overview		
Gender	Age	Marital status; have kids	Occupation	Education level	Monthly household income	No. of arts event participation in past 1 year	Dance genres participated and frequency	Participation in non-local production pre COVID-19	
R1	F	36	Married/ 1 kid (7 y.o.)	Food wholesale	Bachelor	\$40,000-\$49,999	5	Ballet 1 time; Dance theatre 2 times; Non-dance performance 2 times	N
R2	M	48	Married/ 2 kids (13, 20 y.o.)	Engineering	Associate or equivalent	\$70,000-\$79,999	3	Street Dance/ Hip Hop/ Tap Dance 3 time	N
R3	M	34	Single/N	Aviation	Bachelor	\$60,000-\$69,999	3	Ballet 1 time; Contemporary dance 1 time; Music theatre 1 time	Yes/90%
R4	F	30	Single/N	Garment retail	Bachelor	\$90,000-\$99,999	2	Ballet 1 time; Street Dance/ Hip Hop/ Tap Dance 1 time	Yes/70%
R5	M	25	Single/N	Education	Bachelor	\$100,000 or above	4	Street Dance/ Hip Hop/ Tap Dance 3 time; Non-dance performance 1 time	N
R6	F	39	Married/ 1 kid (3 y.o.)	Education	Bachelor	\$70,000-\$79,999	2	Contemporary Dance 1 time; Street Dance/ Hip Hop/ Tap Dance 1 time	N

Definitions:

“Past 1 year” refers to period from Jul 2021 to Jun 2022

“Pre-COVID-19” refers to period before Jan 2020

Respondent profile (Lapsed participants)

Demographics							Arts participation overview				
	Gender	Age	Marital status; have kids	Occupation	Education level	Monthly household income	Participation in paid performing art in past 1 year	Pre-COVID-19: Participation frequency	Pre-COVID-19: Dance genres participated and frequency	Pre-COVID-19: Participation in non-local production	Participation intention in future 1 year
R1	F	30	Married/ 2 kids (3, 5 y.o.)	Insurance	Associate or equivalent	\$50,000-\$59,999	N	2	Ballet 3 times	Yes/10%	Very High
R2	M	39	Married/ 1 kid (6 y.o.)	Education	Bachelor	\$100,000 or above	N	6	Ballet 2 times Non-dance performance 4 times	Yes/60%	Very High
R3	M	46	Married/N	Furniture trading	Bachelor	\$80,000-\$89,999	N	6	Ballet 2 times Unknown genre 1 time Non-dance performance 3 times	Yes/50%	Very high
R4	F	44	Married/N	Public sector	Bachelor	\$20,000-\$29,999	N	8	Foreign folk dance 1 time; Dance theatre 1 time; Non-dance performance 6 times	Yes/100%	Very high
R5	F	32	Married/N	Furniture production	Bachelor	\$60,000-\$69,999	N	5	Street Dance/ Hip Hop/ Tap Dance 1 time; Choreodrama 1 time; Non-dance performance 3 times	N	Quite low
R6	M	38	Single/N	Information technology	Bachelor	\$80,000-\$89,999	N	2	Ballet 2 times	Yes/50%	Quite high

Definitions:

“Past 1 year” refers to period from Jul 2021 to June 2022

“Pre-COVID-19” refers to period before Jan 2020

“Future 1 year” refers to period from Aug 2022 to Jul 2023

Section appendix

Photo credits

Hong Kong Dance Company (Art-mate.net)

2 images on slide 68 and 71, retrieved from
<https://www.art-mate.net/doc/47456>

**Hong Kong Repertory Theatre (Facebook)**

1 image on slide 65, retrieved from
[上班的途上·遇上兩個話劇團的燈箱。... - 香港話劇團 Hong Kong Repertory Theatre | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/hongkongrepertorytheatre/)

**Jean M. Wong School of Ballet (Facebook)**

1 image on slide 66, retrieved from
[Jean M. Wong School of Ballet 王仁曼芭蕾舞學校 | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/jeanmwongballet/)

**HKAF**

1 image on slide 65, retrieved from
<https://blog.artsfestival.org/en>

**IAC (HKSAR Government)**

1 image on slide 67, retrieved from
<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202206/08/P2022060800325.htm>

**A Craze Group Limited (Klook)**

2 images on slide 66 and 67, retrieved from
<https://www.klook.com/zh-HK/event-detail/101007292-2022-one-dance-nation/>

**Hong Kong Cultural Centre (Leisure and Cultural Services Department)**

1 image on slide 65, retrieved from
<https://www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/hkcc/index.html>

**Hong Kong Arts Development Council (Popticket)**

1 image on slide 63, retrieved from
<https://www.popticket.hk/event/jcnap-hkdf>

**Timable**

1 image on slide 66, retrieved from
<https://timable.com/>



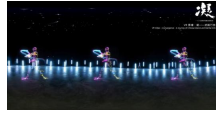
timable

Section appendix

Photo credits

Hong Kong Dance Company (YouTube)

1 image on slide 73, retrieved from
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TyFNLBAK_4

**KidneyBuster (YouTube)**

1 image on slide 66, retrieved from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmH83u5QNKw>

**LEDance Production (YouTube)**

1 image on slide 72, retrieved from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWuoZYBljYA>

**Zuni Icosahedron (YouTube)**

2 images on slide 72 and 73, retrieved from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYjL1UCc2o4>

