

# Hello Vancity

## NGS makes B.C. premiere at 2014 Dancing on the Edge Festival

by Benjamin Yong+ · July 8, 2014

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With 70-plus artists performing over 30 different contemporary dance choreographies, the Dancing on the Edge festival is in full swing for 2014. I had the opportunity to attend the B.C. premier of Lara Kramer's NGS (Native Girl Syndrome) on Monday

evening at the Firehall Arts Centre in East Van and I can honestly say it's not quite like anything I've experienced before.

Starring Canadian dancers Angie Cheng and Karina Iraola, the show is described in a news release as a “raw theatrical performance” and that is as accurate a description as any. Opening with thundering music blaring from overhead speakers in the intimate theatre, the stage was sparsely decorated save for a few bits of prop garbage strewn about and a pair of derelict baby strollers. The two stumble about on stage depicting disassociated personas experiencing the effects of drug addiction, loss and alienation.

In one scene, Iraola pretends to relieve herself in a dark corner. In another, Cheng — who spends a lot of time throughout the performance standing dazed with her head facing the wall — strips down to her underwear and passes out underneath one of the strollers carrying her (few) worldly possessions. One particularly memorable and graphic interaction between them was five minutes of the duo flailing about to a soundtrack, loudly slurring obscenities at each other, all the while never making eye contact. Their level of passion and dedication made me feel like I was witnessing a genuine altercation on the Downtown Eastside.

What makes the production even more interesting is that it is inspired by Kramer's own grandmother who, as a young woman, migrated from a remote First Nations community into unfamiliar urban territory. Kramer is also a First Nations dancer and choreographer whose work is heavily influenced by her Aboriginal roots.

NGS plays until July 9. For more information, and to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.dancingontheedge.org/schedule-of-events>.