



**Prakriti
Foundation**

**The Prakriti Excellence in Contemporary
Dance Awards
(2014)**

About PECDA 2014

Since the inception of the Prakriti Foundation, we have been showcasing contemporary dance as a significant element of our festivals and events. In India, there are few practitioners in this field due to the lack of strong nurturing platforms that provide international exposure.

We at Prakriti Foundation believe that contemporary dance is the new emerging form of expression that weaves its own language and grammar in India. This needs to be recognized and mentored, thus enabling artists to achieve high levels of excellence. Hence, we have instituted the Prakriti Excellence in Contemporary Dance Awards (PECDA), a biennial event, which will be a platform for emerging contemporary dance forms, where by exposing artists to a wider audience.

With PECDA, we have judges look at works in progress of all entrants vetted down to the best. The winning company is provided with two key things. Firstly, they receive funding of Rs. 5 lakhs, to realize their new work into a full-fledged performance over a period of one year, which is then showcased at 6-six cities through The Park's New Festival. And secondly, mentorship by a foreign company that aids the artistes in all areas of production and presentation.

Karthika Nair, noted author, dance producer and curator is the Festival Director of PECDA. Karthika Nair was born in India, lives in Paris, and works as a dance producer and curator. She is the author of Bearings, a poetry collection; DESH: Memories, inherited, borrowed, invented, a dance diary; and The Honey Hunter/ Le Tigre de Miel, a children's book illustrated by Joelle Jolivet. Nair was the principal storywriter and scriptwriter of DESH, choreographer Akram Khan's award-winning dance production. As a dance producer, Nair has worked in several Parisian cultural centers and with choreographers Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Damien Jalet and Mourad Merzouki (Kafig).

The jury members for this edition were:

Saskia Kersenboom (Associate Professor of Theatre Studies, University of Amsterdam), Emma Gladstone (Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Dance Umbrella, London International Dance festival), Arundhathi Subramaniam (Author, Poet, Journalist and Curator), Sanjoy Roy (Critic, Guardian, UK and novelist) and Claire Verlet (Dance Director, Theatre de la Ville, Paris).

Additionally, this edition featured the following mentors:

Leela Samson (Dancer, Choreographer, Instructor and Writer), Nelson Fernandez (Artist and Arts Producer), Sadanand Menon (Arts Editor, Teacher of Cultural Journalism,



Photographer, Arts Curator and Speaker) and Anmol Vellani (Founder and Former Executive Director of the India Foundation for the Arts).

Prakriti Foundation, in collaboration with Kalakshetra Foundation, presented the 2014 edition of the Prakriti Excellence in Contemporary Dance Awards (PECDA).

The winning performance in 2014 was Nerves, choreographed by Surjit Nongmeikapam of Nachom Arts of Contemporary Movement and performed by Purnima Yengkokpam, Senjam Hemjit Meitei, Laiphangbam Suraj Roy, Sumeet Sagolsem, Suresh Kiran Singh Khundrakpam and Surjit Nongmeikapam.

SCHEDULE

DAY 1

Synopsis: The finalists (choreographers) shortlisted for day 1: Archana Kumar, Anjali Nair, Sujay Sapel, Anuradha Venkataraman, Rukmini Vijayakumar, Chitra Arvind, Prasanna Saikia and Surjit Nongmeikapam.

Date: 21st November, 2014

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Rukmini Arangam, Kalakshetra

DAY 2

Synopsis: The finalists (choreographers) shortlisted for day 2: Virieno Zakiesato, Ammith M L Kumar, Binal Shah, Hemabarathy Palani, Nimit Gandhi, Diya Naidu, Avantika Bahl and Mehneer Sudan

Date: 22nd November, 2014

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Rukmini Arangam, Kalakshetra

DAY 3 – Announcement of Award

Synopsis: The winner of PECDA 2014 was declared.

Date: 23rd November, 2014



Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Rukmini Arangam, Kalakshetra

Artiste Profile

1. Archana Kumar

Archana Kumar is an independent performing artist, whose works are always based on real experiences, are evocative and thus experiential. She is greatly influenced by the philosophy of Butoh. She believes that it is integral to discipline the mind and body through rigorous training within a classical form (Ballet, Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Yoga, etc.) or with anything that has a well-defined structure with 'rules'. For Archana it's Kathak, which she practices and teaches in a radical and unconventional manner. Her most recent solo, "Do You Really Care?", was commissioned by the Seoul Arts Center and INKO, Chennai and premiered on Dec 1st 2013 at the HONGEUN Arts Center, Seoul, South Korea.

Note on Performance - A Slice of Qi

Performed by Pervez, Shiroyi Musafir and Archana Kumar.

A Slice of Qi is an honest glimpse into the life of a nuclear (artistically inclined) family. The wife goes through her daily desperation to 'stay fit', to 'be the competitive contemporary dancer', 'to be the liberal mother', 'to be her daughter's best friend'; while the husband goofs around with their little daughter, creates music, and helps keep the family afloat. The thrill in this work is to work around the unpredictability as the artists 'perform' with their 2.3-year-old daughter. Additionally, the artists question and ponder -what is real? How can everything else compliment an improvisational act? In this performance, they would like to blur the lines dividing life and the slice of life being performed.

2. Anjali Nair

Anjali Nair is a performing artist living in Bangalore, India. After acquiring a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, Psychology and English from Christ College, Bangalore, she went on to graduate from l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Lille, France with a Master of Arts in International Relations. Anjali's passion for the performing arts led her to Attakkalari Centre for Movement Arts, Bangalore, where she received a diploma in Movement and Mixed Media, in 2011. Since then, she has worked as a freelance dancer, actor and dance facilitator in Bangalore. Anjali is a founder member of The Kha Foundation, a public charitable trust that aims to foster creative practices among artists and communities. She is



interested in the human experience and how it translates into art. This is her first choreographic work.

Note on Performance - Seeing is Believing

Performed by Anjali Nair, Swapnashree Bhasi, Raksha Kothari, Swasti Sharma, and Nitant Nair.

The idea of this performance is to explore the relationship between perception and reality. For Anjali, the starting point of reality was her environment – the city, the images from TV and billboards, the social scenarios. She also started examining her reality as a woman in India. Putting these realities together, along with her friends at the Kha Foundation, Anjali began working on the frame of an idea and the dancers improvised within that frame. It started with something as simple as a dancer creating a conversation using only their hands; this was then placed in a certain configuration. In doing so, they were constantly discovering possibilities and connections. There were strong themes that were carried through, such as identity, gender inequality, mass hypnosis through media etc., because they actually exist inside and around us. Ultimately, they recognized that it is their perception that dictated the reality of their experience.

Anjali started out thinking that this piece would be about the perception of a shared reality. Poets, philosophers, religions, and individuals across time have addressed this notion – that our outer world is an expression of our inner world. And although Anjali set out to portray her perception of India (her immediate reality), it occurred to her that she *is* (India).

3. Sujay Saple

Sujay is the artistic director of ShapeShift. He has been working in the field of performing arts for over a decade, in various capacities – as a performer, as an assistant director, movement workshop conductor, and as a lighting designer. He started his career with The Company Theatre, Mumbai, and over the years has worked as a freelance collaborator on various projects, notably - 'Voices', 'Noises Off', 'Smell', 'The Con Artist' and 'Elsinore' (directed by Atul Kumar), 'Hamlet the Clown Prince' (directed by Rajat Kapoor), 'Hedda Gabler' (directed by Rehaan Engineer), 'K to the Power of Zero' (directed by Jyoti Dogra), amongst others. Sujay won the best lighting designer award at the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards in 2008. He teaches performance at the Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute of Architecture. Sujay's debut as a choreographer/ director – 'Unselfed' (2012), under his own banner ShapeShift, performed at various festivals around India and received rave reviews. 'Moonfool' is his second choreographic offering after 'Unselfed'.

Note on Performance – Moonfool

Performed by Arpit Singh, Dipna Daryanani, Himanshu Singh and Maithily Bhupatkar.

Moonfool is a devised performance which celebrates the moon and all things lunar. It explores the human cycle of love, longing and loss through ideas connected with the moon – using myths, folk-tales & poems; rituals & practices; astronomical & scientific phenomena; and several other narratives that mankind has created over the ages to grasp the essence of the moon. Sensing the deep connection between menstrual cycles and lunar cycles, the ancients believed that it was the ‘magical moon blood’ which was used to create life, and that we are all, therefore, ‘made of the moon’. In Zen Buddhist philosophy, the ‘Buddha aspect’ of the human being is represented by the moon – perhaps we look up to the night sky to fulfill this upward longing to return to ‘what we are made of’. Tracing a voyage through eclipses & tides, werewolves & vampirism, lunacy & hypnosis, moon rituals & lunar festivals, Moonfool explores the impossible love story between the human being and the moon. Moonfool is the second project by ShapeShift, and continues their rigorous search for a hybrid visual-physical performance language.

4. Anuradha Venkataraman

Anuradha Venkataraman is a trained Bharatanatyam dancer and has been performing at various national and international forums for over 10 years. She has been awarded the national and state level scholarships by Dept. of Culture and Sahitya Kala Parishad. Anuradha has performed at various international festivals in Bosnia, Poland, Denmark and Luxembourg. She has performed in major festivals in India, such as the Khajuraho festival, Mahaballipuram festival and Sangeet Natak Akademy’s Festival. She has been a visiting dance faculty at the department of World Ethnic dance at the Korea National University of Arts in Seoul. She has choreographed and produced the following solo performances - Pratham Parth, on the life of Karna, based on Ram Dhari Singh Dinakar’s poetry Rashmirathi; Jananyey Namah, inspired by the journey of motherhood; Vaidehi, based on the life of Sita, mainly from Adbhuta Ramayan. Her collaborations include the following - Red Queens of Dark Nights, Secret love life of Ophelia, Fire and Rain, Yayati, Sirisampige and Peacock Prince.

Note on Performance - AN “I” ON ME

Performed by Anuradha Venkataraman, Meera Sitaraman (Light Designing) and Venkatesh Srikanta (Music).

The performance poses to the audience, simple questions such as, ‘Who are you?’, ‘Would you be a number defining your quantified existence on Earth?’, ‘Would you be the

educational capital you have accumulated so far?', 'Would you be the resultant conglomeration of the ascribed sex and achieved sexuality?', 'Or would you be your bank balance?' How we define ourselves isn't easy. Our lives have been turned into boxes to be ticked - female or male, cross out married, single, divorced, widowed; darken the circle that defines your ethnicity, etc. And we all try to limit ourselves within these boundaries.

This piece of modern dance attempts to explore the shades, to break free from the intricate web of survival that we have all compromised ourselves to. It doesn't seek a solution, for there may or may not be one. It attempts to traverse the lives of several to appreciate the complexity of identity; to move away from stereotypes that emerge just at the appearance of an individual- the automated responses that the brain generates. This dance is a calling to the perhaps lost 'I' - a thought-provoking rendition of all these dilemmas and more. In a world where every second is spent being something/ someone, and not just being, it explores what it might actually mean to 'be' - and to 'be' not the 'other', but the 'I'. Would then the answer to 'Who are you?' be 'I am I.'?

5. Rukmini Vijayakumar

Rukmini began her formal training in dance at the age of eight. She had an initial exposure to ballet, but her primary training and rigorous practice through her early years was in Bharatanatyam. She had her Arangetram, (debut, solo performance) in 1998 under Guru Padmini Rao, after which she continued her practice under Guru Narmada and Guru Sundari Santhanam. Rukmini was introduced to the teachings of the Natyashastra, and pursued an intense training in the Karanas, under Guru Sundari Santhanam for many years. She was re-introduced to Classical Ballet in her late teens practicing at dance studios in California and New York, and under Yana Lewis in India. She branched out into, Jazz and Modern dance techniques and was accepted into the Undergraduate program for dance at the Boston Conservatory, USA. She graduated with honors, obtaining a BFA in Modern dance and Ballet.

She has performed in many venues in India and abroad and has been appreciated for her unique style, innovative choreography, athleticism, arresting emotions and attention to detail. Her recent performances at the 80th Anniversary of the Jacobs Pillow dance festival, USA and at the Erasing Borders Festival, NY, were well received. Her dance productions "Nayani" and "Prabhavati" toured the USA, and Middle East, in 2012, 2013 raising funds for AIM for Seva. Rukmini's enthuse in theater and acting prompted her study of Film and Theater at the New York Film academy and at the Ivana Chubbuck studios. She has performed in several theater productions in India and has received much appreciation for her delineated character of Aung San Suu Kyi, in the one woman show, "The Lady of

Burma", by Richard Shannon, directed by national award winner, Prakash Belawadi.

Note on Performance - For Sale

Performed by Rukmini Vijayakumar and Diya Naidu.

The piece explores aspects of a lifestyle that we are all accustomed to currently; a lifestyle that primarily revolves around commercialism. Commercialism transcends all classes and genders. There are social idioms propagated through commercialism, with the aid of popular media. These idioms socially define an idea of what one perceives as right or wrong, particularly influencing ideas on appearance, and other aspects of the perceptible external; including clothing, mannerism, language and culture choices. People are pressured to meet the right people, say the right thing, appear happy socially, appear perfect in every picture.

"Appearance" is the driving force behind the commercial lifestyle of today. What we "appear" to be matters more than what we "are". Commercialism forces on the population a desire for physical possessions that we don't need. A new car, a next generation phone, a can opener that has no need to twist, a strawberry peeler, a face mask to wear after 'facemask A', before 'facemask B', to make 'facemask B' more effective! The list is abysmally long. The 15-minute performance presents a few ideas from this thought process, primarily concentrating on the commercialism from popular culture and what that propagates.

6. Chitra Arvind

The Artistic Director of Rhythmotion, Bangalore, Chitra is a choreographer, teacher and performing artist in the dance styles of Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Contemporary dance. Curator of Chalana- Dance for a Cause, a biennial classical and contemporary dance festival, she imparts dance training to the hearing and speech impaired children. She is an empaneled artist of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in Contemporary dance and a graded artist of Doordarshan in Bharatanatyam and Kathak. She has performed for various dance festivals across India and abroad.

Note on Performance - aham....& OTHERS

Performed by Chitra Arvind.

Chitra in her solo dance performance brings out her distinct individuality, while being in tune with her inner rhythm. She draws her wisdom from the past, allowing her future to shape itself around her actions. The performance attempts to portray simplicity in the

midst of complexity, sure in its unease and clear in its purpose – depicting the performer’s ongoing artistic journey.

7. *Prasanna Saikia*

Prasanna is the Associate Director of Rhythmosaic Dance Company and has been trained in classical jazz, contemporary and kathak, under the tutelage of Ronnie Shambik Ghosh and Dr. Mitul Sengupta. His experience in teaching and choreography spans a period of ten years and he has performed extensively in major dance festivals in India, namely Uday Shankar dance festival, Interface, Puri Dance Festival, Lucknow Kathak Mahotsav, Samakala, Dristi Dance Festival, Attakalari Biennial, etc. World-wide, he has performed in countries like Singapore, Malaysia, USA, Denmark, Belarus, Sweden and France. A six months scholarship holder of off jazz in Nice(France), he had an opportunity to perform with Bejart Ballet (Lausanne) in the epic, “Bolero”.

Note on Performance - Mind Diabolique

Performed by Prasanna Saikia.

‘Mind Diabolique’ deals with the darker side of the human mind, which always remains in shade and shadows. The human mind goes through phases in which it is often confronted with questions, confusion, intrigue and identity crises. In this performance, the character is confronted with the psychological journey of self-identity, wherein the artist questions himself, whether he is a criminal, is sane of mind or a victim of mistaken identity.

8. *Surjit Nongmeikapam*

Surjit Nongmeikapam was born in Manipur, India. He has a B.A. in Choreography and has worked with the Natya Stem Dance Kampni and Natya Maya, Bangalore as a contemporary and traditional dancer. He is trained in Kathak, Kalaripayattu, Manipuri dance, contemporary dance and Thang-Ta, a form of martial arts. He continues to learn many other movement styles from various gurus/ mentors. In 2010, Surjit trained under Kolkata Sanved in their 3-month course, Dance and Movement Therapy. He was also a dance therapist at H2H, Human to Humane, Imphal, during 2009-2013. He has given awareness and dance workshops to several trauma victims in Manipur. He has travelled around the globe and performed in countries such as Switzerland, France, Singapore, Belgium, Japan, USA, Germany, Spain, Portugal and UK. His work "One Voice" was nominated for solo piece in Zurich. He is the Managing Director of Nachom Arts of Contemporary Movement, Manipur.

Note on Performance - Nerves

Performed by Surjit Nongmeikapam, Chaoba Thiyam, Senjam Hemjit Meitei, Laiphangbam Suraj Roy and Sumeet Sagolsem.

Nerves is a performance art piece, rooted in the expressions of the voiceless people from Manipur, a state nestled in the Northeast corner of India. Through the medium of contemporary dance performance, the artistes are trying to explore the lives that have been exhausted by the constant questioning of one's world, without any answers. The performance is an expression of helplessness of Manipuri people who have been killed, tortured, discriminated against and their space forcefully occupied by powerful people, leaders and authorities. Thousands of people have been displaced from their homes and the Manipuri youth are wasting their lives away. Rather than focusing on dance technique, the idea of the performance is to focus on shedding light on the disturbed senses from the inner self – expressing the many emotions hidden in the people's nerves. Therefore, the movements in Nerves are raw and strong. All performers are first timers in the contemporary dance field.

9. Virieno Zakiesato

Virieno Christina Zakiesato from Nagaland started training professionally at the Danceworx, Mumbai, in Jazz and Classical Ballet. She headed to Kolkata to do a diploma program in contemporary movement arts from Rhythmosaic, where she further honed her skills in Ballet, Mattmattox Jazz, Modern dance, Tap and Kathak, along with elementary theoretical knowledge in anatomy, dance history and psychology.

A freelance performing artist, she has performed with the Nagaland Folkloric Group for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo Festival 2014 and was associated with the International Center for Cultural Studies, USA, as a part of the Nagaland Folkloric Group cultural exchange, 2014. She also had the enviable opportunity of opening the National Hornbill dance competition, performing a solo contemporary ballet, 2013. Her journey as a solo performer began as a traveler and was initiated during a residency at Shoonya, Bangalore. Desert Wind is her first creative work in progress.

Note on Performance - Desert Wind

Performed by Virieno Zakiesato.

This is an experiential journey of the body-mind stimulation baring the essence of 'nature' (pun intended) and body, where movement and change is the reality of being. Hence, allowing a discovery of movement to take place between the body and the dancer,

embracing universal maxims like the seasonal changes occurring in nature. Desert wind is an expression of the dance and the dancer. The seed and the plant, weaving a perpetual pulse between the two. Desert wind was inspired during the artist's travels, which led her to landscapes across the Indian sub-continent - from sultry summer weather of the Arabian Sea to experiencing diverse vegetation and flora at the Great Indian Desert to subtly embracing the cool chills from the hills of the Western Ghats.

10. *Ammith M L Kumar*

Ammith Kumar joined The Danceworx in 2003 and is trained in Jazz, Contemporary and Classical Ballet. He has also done training workshops in Latin Ballroom, Funk, Hip-hop, Acro-Yoga, Yoga, Choreography Composition and Contact Improvisation. Apart from studying full-time at The Danceworx, Ammith has also attended classes at the Broadway Dance Centre, New York (jazz, funk & hip-hop); at Alvin Ailey, New York (modern) and at the Peridance Capezio Center, New York (jazz & modern). He has also attended The Goa Contact Festival 2013, where dancers, performers and other artists from more than 30 countries come together, focusing on an international exchange of ideas and knowledge through training and discussions. His choreographies for theatrical productions & shows include: The Cascade Project (2012), Bhoomika: Narendra Sharma Festival for Dance (2012), Quarterfest (2011), and The Chrysalis Project (2011 & 2012). His theatrical performances include: The Cascade Project (2012), Bhoomika: Narendra Sharma Festival for Dance (2012), Quarterfest (2011), Travelling Minds (Delhi International Arts Festival, 2011), Ji Saab Ji (2010), Duet by 'Three' (2009), Salaam India (2008), Out of Sight (2008), and About Nothing (2003 & 2007).

Note on Performance – Thithi

Performed by Ammith M L Kumar, Samakshi Siddhu, Kanika Khurana, Shruti Sinha, Surbhi Dhyani, Manas Y, Nikhil Joshi and Sumit Kashyap.

This performance finds inspiration from the following thoughts that the artist has: “What is going on? What is happening? I'm losing control. But was I ever in control? As the people I love leave, I wonder could it be a conspiracy by the universe. I wonder if it's the fault in my stars or the fault in my thoughts. When the black cat crosses, when you sneeze. I stop. Will omens rule me all my life? Amongst the chaos of what could be, a constellation of connections is forged. By the planets above or because I decide? As the world sleeps and you're awake worrying. As people fall in love but your heart breaks. In that moment, am I writing my story or am I puppeteering the movements of stars.” This ensemble dance performance is the manifestation of these thoughts that the author subscribes to.

11. Binal Shah

For Binal, dance has always been her medium of expression. She has always felt an inner drive to move, to create, to express and has always strived to achieve a moment of self-contentment through movement. She started her dance training in Bharatanatyam at the age of 5 and continued to train for 7 years, performing her Arangetram at the age of 12. Later, Binal trained in Ballet, Tap & Jazz under Oscar Unger for 2 years. In 2007, she started her training in Contemporary, Ballet and Jazz Dance at Terence Lewis Contemporary Dance Company (TLCDC) for 3 years, wherein she was exposed to various Contemporary Dance techniques like Graham & Release. She then performed in a production titled “Wonkot” which debuted at NCPA, Mumbai in July 2013. She has also performed a devised piece titled “Everybody has a secret”, at Shoonya Dance Residency in Bangalore, among many others. She believes that the aim of dance is to ‘celebrate’ and to feel one’s inner sense of being.

Note on Performance - Genesis

Performed by Binal Shah.

The coming into being is “Genesis”. The piece explores the realm of evolution, construction & deconstruction of the elements of the universe. Through this work, the artist wants to explore the philosophical question to man’s origin, the rhythmic irregularity, continuous patterns of construction/ destruction and the constant state of flux in the universe.

Genesis is not a story. The purpose of the piece is to express the beauty of ‘being’. It focuses on the idea of human existence and the pulsating process of creation and destruction – without an end. The endeavor is to create a ‘movement vocabulary’ around this idea. The performance further attempts to create an experience that has confounding effects on emotion & reason, mobilizing conscious & non-conscious processes for the viewer. The purpose of Genesis is not the manifestation of the mysterious idea of God or a cosmic creator, but to transcend emotion and explore one’s eternal being. The point of existence in this dynamic, ever changing world is not to aspire or achieve, but to introspect.

12. Hemabarathy Palani

Hemabarathy, Rehearsal Director at Attakkalari Centre for Movement Arts, has a unique movement style, naturally evolved by blending the distilled vocabularies of classical Indian dance forms, such as Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi, with the freedom of Contemporary dance. Hemabarathy has been in the cast of all of Attakkalari Repertory’s productions and performed in several prestigious international festivals with the company. She is also a prominent figure among the emerging new choreographers of contemporary India. She premiered her first work Chaaya (Shadows) in 2009 at the Attakkalari India Biennial. In

2010, she won the Robert Bosch Young Choreographers Award and premiered her second solo work Uruvam. Following her presentation at Attakkalari India Biennial, she was invited to create a solo piece at Ballet National de Marseilles as part of their Open Studio residency resulting in her acclaimed work Trikonanga. She was amongst the 15 international emerging choreographers selected for the prestigious Sadler's Wells (London) Summer University for 2011 - 2014 in London. She has showcased her own choreographies in India as well as in Germany, Sweden, France and the UK.

Note on Performance - C DANCE

Performed by Hemabharathy Palani, Megna Nambiar, Parth Bharadwaj, Silvester Mardy and Nehal Pasha.

The idea of C-DANCE stems from the author being called a C-dancer in college. While she initially did not know what it meant or understand the context of the word, she realized later that she was being teased; she was being called a club dancer and was looked at it with condescension. This led to the author feeling that the society only respected classical dance forms and not contemporary ones. This made her question herself about the type of dancer that she wanted to become. After several years of training and self-discovery, the artist realized the answer to this question and this piece is an attempt to express this very answer. C, here, stands for Cabaret.

When one thinks about cabaret, one thinks about women moving provocatively and seducing the audience with their scantily clad voluptuous bodies, fishnet stockings, and their cherry red pouts. Indian cinema has portrayed a cabaret dancer as a bold woman who knows what she wants, a vamp at times. The piece is inspired by cabaret dancers on the celluloid such as Disco Shanthi, Silk Smitha, and the queen of Indian cabaret - Helen.

13. Nimit Gandhi

An architect and a choreographer, Nimit Gandhi strongly feels a deep resonance in these two artistic fields. He has pursued his dance training in jazz, ballet and contemporary forms. As a choreographer, he likes to explore movement, body and space through a dialectic process. An alumnus of School of Planning and Architecture, he is engaged in individual architectural consultancy alongside his research with the body as an instrument of dialogue with space. His choreographic pieces include: 'No Strings Attached' (October 2013), a solo choreographic exploration as part of Gati Summer Dance Residency; 'Between the Lines' (February 2013), a site-specific choreography in collaboration with Aastha Gandhi; 'Flux' (2008), School of Planning & Architecture, New Delhi; 'Aatmanubhooti - Self Realization' (2007), Lady Irwin College, New Delhi; and 'Aatmantran - The Change of Soul' (2006) Lady Irwin College, New Delhi. His dance productions include: 'Uncoupled Couples' (February 2013), a multimedia production directed by Smitha Bharti, choreographed by

Rakesh MPS; 'Ways of Seeing' (August 2012), choreographed by Swati Mohan as a participant entry in Prakriti Excellence in Contemporary Dance Awards (PECDA), Chennai; 'Carpe Diem' (June 2011), Annual Showcase of Danza Performing Arts Institute; and many more.

Note on Performance - No Strings Attached

Performed by Nimit Gandhi.

Based on Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*; the choreography sets out to explore the present state of our cities, where attention has almost exclusively been concentrated on the practical function of orientation, and identification has been left to chance. As a result, a true dwelling has been substituted by alienation. With a backdrop of a cafeteria that symbolizes and resonates with the anonymity and alienation of a city dweller, the choreography explores the mundane, monotonous and a constantly searching state of its inhabitant. It is an urban narrative of the protagonist, who is seeking to attain an existential foothold in the meaningless dimensions of everyday reality, that leads into shaping out its own identity through unidentified meanings and intangible memories into the physical reality of the space.

The choreographic exploration sets out in search of meaning of 'being in city'. By city, the artist doesn't mean the physicality of it, but the individual act of perceiving, using and being in it. A 'city' dweller never exists outside the domain of a city space. He is constantly shifting within and without his 'sense of being' in a city; reluctance of being, not being, ignorance of being, reciprocating the being and being. These states of being identifies and defines for the user the manner of embodying movement with respect to the space and time the city establishes that characterize the existential foothold of the city dweller.

To be in a city is to dwell, it is not a transitory phase of existence but that of belonging and permanence. This city-user relation creates renewed identities, memories, nostalgia and narratives of the city space as dwelling.

14. Diya Naidu

Diya Naidu is an independent dancer and choreographer based in Bangalore, India. She has been choreographing contemporary work since 2009 and started out with a sort of personal and existential quest. Her first pieces included NADIR (A look at the schizophrenic experience of living in the urban space), and BARDO BEINGS (A duet inspired by Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy). Diya is deeply excited by storytelling and by the kind of research that she feels only the artist can enjoy – which is to experientially integrate different worlds in oneself, and use this experiential research to reflect, manifest and influence

contemporary reality.

She is also an independent performance artist. She has trained with The Danceworx, New Delhi and received a Diploma in Movement Arts and Mixed Media from The Attakkalari Centre for Movement Arts, Bangalore, after which she was a repertory dancer with them for 7 years. She has done shorter projects with Rythmosaic, Kolkata and Lshva and Nritarutya, Bangalore. Recently, she started writing Articles on Dance and also doing administrative work around Art and culture, such a consulting with Shoonya Centre for Art and Somatic Practices.

Note on Performance - RED DRESS WAALI LADKI

Performed by Diya Naidu.

'Red Dress Waali Ladki' is a Work in Progress piece. Eventually, the artist wants to be able to make a complete piece that takes the everyday, functional domestic actions of ordinary people and see them as acts of deep courage, symptomatic of our impetus to survive and maybe even do a little more than just that. As a woman in India, the artist is tired of being seen as a feminist or as anti-male. She does acknowledge that she, like most women she knows, has deep anger at the experiences women are made to endure, unlike men, as humans in a perversely sexualized and gendered world. In this context, the piece aims to look at notions of the female - mother, prophetess, small town girl, item girl, child, activist and fallen woman, among others.

Though one encounters motifs of abuse and violence regularly, the piece is replete with indications of small actions of functionality and survival. It is in a way the story of everyone. The "*ladki*" in the red dress is all of the people she meets, sees, is abused by, potentially married off to and controlled by. She is the voice of the punishing rule giver and the journalist who writes about injustice. She is also the primal animal who wants to protect what is at risk, the angry woman, the Goddess, the small-town girl finding her way in the big city and she is, without question, the men in her life too.

The work in progress piece is, at the moment, a kind of archive of elements of this research and expression. It is a patchwork of starting points of stories that Diya would like to delve into, take longer to tell and create organic, yet surprising connections between.

15. Avantika Bahl

Avantika Bahl started her dance career as a Jazz performer and teacher in Delhi, post which she started working independently. She then moved to London and got a diploma from the London Contemporary Dance School. She has been challenging herself to find forms of

physical expression using the techniques that she has trained in over the years. Avantika premiered her first full length production {Wonkot} in 2013, and currently teaches and is based out of Mumbai.

Note on Performance - Home

Performed by Avantika Bahl.

'Home' is a solo that delves into the idea of home and what it means to contain and be contained in the spaces that exist within and outside the body. Responding to the functional and personal reactions that emerge from one's association with home, this piece maps the process of inhabiting home in the architecture of the body. Through taut, measured movements, this piece plots points in the body, to the body in space, to arriving at expanding these very points in space. This piece aims at abstracting the internal bonds we create to define home for ourselves and deconstructing what the true essence of home really can be and how much of it changes over a period of time. Is home only a sum of past memories and present experiences? How does home become an element of our identity and how do we root ourselves within the private cosmos we create? This performance tries to express the answer to all these questions.

16. Mehneer Sudan

Mehneer Sudan is a dance artiste working in the field of Contemporary and Jazz Dance for over a decade. She is the co-founder of Dance Dialogues (Mumbai), an initiative to build an engaging and supportive dance community in the city; and a founding member of Gati Dance Forum, Delhi. Trained in Contemporary, Jazz, Modern, Ballet and Kathak, Mehneer has been steadily working towards developing her own performative style. She has been engaged in teaching and choreographic assignments with schools and dance academies.

Note on Performance - 8/Women in love

Performed by Mehneer Sudan and Supriya Nayak (Projection).

The piece aims to explore love, beauty and desire through the lens of the *ashtanayikas*, the eight types of lovers described in the *Natyasastra*, the ancient Indian treatise on the performing arts. Usually, each one of the eight *nayikas* (heroines) is described in relation to her lover, her portrayal elaborating on the mechanics of their time together, or the lack of it. In an attempt to reposition and re-imagine the *nayikas* outside of the vocabulary of Classical Dance, the dancer recognizes her own self in this expression of love and intimacy. Shifting between the eight different situations, the dancer seeks to weave the narratives of the *nayikas* together into one presentation.

Jury Profile

1. Krithika Nair

Karthika Nair was born in India, lives in Paris, and works as a dance producer and curator. She is the author of *Bearings*, a poetry collection; *DESH: Memories, inherited, borrowed, invented*, a dance diary; and *The Honey Hunter/ Le Tigre de Miel*, a children's book illustrated by Joelle Jolivet. Nair was the principal storywriter and scriptwriter of *DESH*, choreographer Akram Khan's multiple- award-winning dance production. As a dance producer, Nair has worked in several Parisian cultural centers and with choreographers Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Damien Jalet and Mourad Merzouki (Kafig). She is the associate programmer of Festival Equilibrio in Rome.

2. Saskia Kersenboom

The study of Indian Languages, Cultures and Theatre Studies took Saskia Kersenboom to Tamil Nadu for intensive fieldwork and training in Carnatic music and dance. Her interest in Nityasumangali – Devadasi Tradition in South India emerged from this journey. As a performing artist in Bharatanatyam (trained by Smt. Nandini Ramani), Saskia became curious about the multi-medial character of South Indian performing arts and their vitality as contemporary art forms. In 1995, she published *Word, Sound, Image, the Life of the Tamil Text* with an interactive CD included to argue this potential. As Associate Professor of Theatre Studies (University of Amsterdam), she has worked with several experimental dancers and dance companies such as Emio Greco/ PC at the International Choreographic Arts Centre Amsterdam.

3. Claire Verlet

After a career as a dancer and professor, Claire Verlet became producer for major American artists (Lucinda Childs, Karole Armitage John Cage, Robert Ashley). From 1996 till 2000, she was artistic counsellor at La Filature - Mulhouse as well as consultant at AFAA (now Institut Francais), which, in 1999, appointed her as head of its dance section. Claire Verlet joined the Centre National de la Danse in early 2000 as director of the Maison des companies et des spectacles until 2008 when was asked to take the responsibility of the Artistic programme at Theatre de la Ville, Paris.

4. Emma Gladstone

Emma Gladstone is Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Dance Umbrella, London's long running international Dance festival. Emma took over in November 2013. Her first festival took place in 14 venues across London, and included hip-hop, modern flamenco and ice skating in the programme. Previously she worked at Sadler's Wells 2005-2013, running the

research programme, presenting experimental performances and shows for young audiences. Originally, Emma was a dancer, working independently for 20 years with a variety of choreographers for live performance, film and TV.

5. Arundhati Subramaniam

Arundhati Subramaniam is a poet and writer who has worked over the years as an arts journalist, curator and poetry editor. She has written on Indian classical dance, theatre and literature for several publications over the past two decades, including The Times of India, The Indian Express and The Hindu, among others. She has been a columnist on culture and literature for Time Out (Mumbai), The Indian Express and New Woman. She has worked at Bombay's National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) for several years, as the Head of 'Chauraha', an interactive arts forum, and later as the Head of Dance. She has collaborated with Bharatanatyam dancer Alarmel Valli on a production on love poetry, entitled 'Only Until the Light Fades'. In 2013, she curated a festival of Indian dance and Bhakti poetry at the NCPA, entitled 'Stark Raving Mad'. Widely translated and anthologized, her poetry has won various awards and fellowships. Her recent book of poems, When God is a Traveler, is the Winter Choice of the Poetry Book Society, UK, shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize.

6. Sanjoy Roy

Sanjoy Roy is a London-based dance writer. He has written for the Guardian newspaper since 2002, and has also contributed to several other publications including the New Statesman, Dance Gazette, Dancing Times and Pulse. Formerly an editor and publication designer with Dance Books Ltd, he is currently guest editor for the Dance Umbrella Festival's Definite Article series. He was a jury member for the Place Prize for Dance in London, 2010 and for the Premio Equilibrio in Rome, 2014. Sanjoy has conducted dance writing workshops at Roehampton and Surrey Universities, and has been a writing mentor for London's annual Resolution season of new dance, and the pan-European Aerowaves festival of contemporary choreography.

Mentors

1. Leela Samson

Leela is a Bharatanatyam dancer, choreographer, instructor and writer. As a soloist, she is known for her technical virtuosity and has taught Bharatanatyam at Shriram Bhartiya Kala Kendra in Delhi for many years. Among the many honors conferred on her, Samson was awarded the prestigious Padma Shri by the President of India in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the art of Bharatanatyam, as well as the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in Bharatanatyam (1999–2000), given by the Sangeet Natak Akademi. Chairperson of the Central Board for Film Certification.

2. Nelson Fernandez

Nelson is an artist and arts producer with the experience of working with arts organizations throughout the world in the fields of dance, drama and opera. In 1997, he joined British Council and was seconded to Visiting Arts, a UK Government agency which supports artistic exchange and intercultural dialogue between the UK and the rest of the world. In 2008, he set up his own consultancy, NFA International Arts and Culture. He has been Scottish Dance Theatre's International Producer since 2009. He is also a regular speaker at seminars, conferences, and symposia on issues relating to the arts, cultural policy and diplomacy. Nelson is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and a Chevalier of France's Ordre des Arts et Lettres. He was awarded an OBE for services to the arts in the June 2009 Birthday Honors List.

3. Sadanand Menon

Sadanand a nationally reputed arts editor, popular teacher of cultural journalism, widely published photographer, arts curator and prolific writer and speaker at seminars on politics, ecology and the arts. He is currently adjunct faculty at the Asian College of Journalism, Chennai, where he conducts courses on 'Arts & Culture Journalism' and 'Photojournalism'. Sadanand is a member of the Apex Advisory Committee, the National Museum (Delhi), member (Executive Council, Lalit Kala Akademi, Delhi) and Managing Trustee, SPACES (an arts foundation, Chennai) and a long-time collaborator with Chandralekha.

4. Anmol Vellani

Anmol Vellani is the founder and former executive director of the India Foundation for the Arts. Earlier, he was Program Officer in the New Delhi Office of The Ford Foundation, and was responsible for grant making in the performing arts, folklore and classical learning. He has served in an advisory capacity for government departments, civil society networks, international foundations and cultural organizations. He is also a member of advisory bodies set up by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education, Government of India. He has written on a range of subjects, including the arts and religion, the role of foundations etc. Anmol has helped to design courses on the arts and management, served as faculty for training workshops in grant making, and used theatre methods to conduct creativity workshops. Over the last 40 years, he has directed theatre productions in different languages and locations, both in India and abroad.

Reviews

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