

January 14, 2015

9:30 am

Crawlimal 3

Open Rehearsal with Padmini Chettur

The 'crawlimals' are a part of Padmini Chettur's current research on creating large interdependent moving structures. *Crawlimal 3* resembles a large swimming constellation of 9 bodies. Their movement is interdependent, but also travels through the body in a series of staggered diagonals.

The material proposition of crawlimal becomes a workshop where its 'working' is deconstructed to understand the notions of positive and negative space, symmetry and line, it contains. The crawlimal is a particular space for a dancer to enter within which he/she must adhere not only to the rules of the community of bodies, but also a space that's free from personal narratives and the need to be expressive. It is a space within which we can all realize that the most primal logic of our bodies is often the most complex.

Because we have forgotten.

Padmini Chettur was born in 1970. She began training in Bharatanatyam at an early age. Between 1990 and 2001, she worked with Chandralekha, one of the key Indian artists who contemporised dance in India. During this time, she also began her own study and research of the body's geometry and its relationship with space. The politic of developing a contemporary dance idiom from within Indian physical forms, rather than by a study of western ones, continues in her work. Since 2001, Chettur and her company have performed extensively, across India and at international venues.

11:45 am

Resisting Policing, Evading Polarities – Navtej Johar in conversation with Justin McCarthy and Rizio Yohannan Raj

Practice as I understand it today is not only about what I do and how I make work, but also about what I know, learn, and then unlearn in order to unclutter my mind. The imagination of the Indian dancer is not only heavily policed but also locked between a series of polarities. And it is this policing that I have been trying to resist and the polarities that I've been trying to evade in my work. An informed resistance does not only require a critical reading of history but also a closer look at the premise and thrust of some of the basic texts that inform our classical dances. The 'weight' of these ancient texts, the authority and sanctity that we endow them with, the fervour with which we support and uphold this authority all have a direct bearing on the freedom and span of our imagination. I would like to share a few of my findings, insights, musings and hunches about some nodal texts which have helped me free my head.

Navtej Johar is a Bharatanatyam exponent whose work freely traverses the space of the traditional and the avant-garde. A dancer, teacher and choreographer, Johar trained at Kalakshetra in Chennai, and with Leela Samson at the Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra in New Delhi. He later studied at the Department of Performance Studies, New York University. He has performed at prestigious venues all over the world and has done extensive work with several prominent international companies and choreographers. Apart from classical Bharatanatyam, his work includes contemporary performance pieces, street-theatre, performance-installations, site-specific events, musicals and spectacles. A yoga teacher since 1985, Johar's approach is fluid and adaptable, as he freely merges asana, pranayama, visualization, meditation and Vedic chanting.

1:45 pm

Lecture Demonstration with Jhuma Basak

Dancers' Guild: The Work and Thoughts of Manjusri Chaki Sircar and Ranjabati Sircar

In her session, Jhuma Basak delves into the history of the Dancers' Guild (DG), the Calcutta-based collective that worked towards evolving a contemporary dance language that they termed Navanritya. Basak constructs a timeline of DG, using her personal narrative to trace their creative process. The East-West Dance Encounter of 1984 had a huge impact on their work, precipitating DG's leaning towards 'classical' forms as a fundamental base to its creative work. She also discusses the emotional turmoil experienced by DG members – from sexual tensions to rivalry to personality conflicts to questions of loyalty and legacy. Eventually, Basak's personal sense of loss and quest for a new body language led her to Versedance, an approach that deploys dance-theatre, music and poetry to create performance texts from a literary text.

Jhuma Basak is a choreographer and performer for intimate audiences. She was part of the original group of dancers who formed Dancers' Guild with Manjusri Chaki Sarkar in 1982, and remained with the company till 1992. Her Versedance projects have brought together performers from various disciplines to create non-linear, non-literal forms of expression, often following a multiple narrative pattern, for a holistic presentation of poetry by Shakespeare, Neruda, Meena Kumari and others. Jhuma is also a psychoanalyst, practising privately and at Crystal Clinic, Kolkata. She is an associate professor at the NSHM Institute of Media and Design.

3 pm

Clinics

Book an appointment with any of these experts to get tailor-made feedback about issues that complement and complete the artistic process.

Writing and the Creative Arts: a Contemporary Take

What is the work that writing does for arts practice in our present worlds, where technology has significantly transformed the ecology of arts practice, including its relationship with the written

word? If 'contemporary' performance and arts imply a certain critical mode of engaging with, and being in the world, rather than just a time frame, then how can the relationship between writing and arts practice be gauged in contemporary terms? This presentation explores possibilities of recovering, reimagining and redefining the place of writing and arts practice in new ecologies of cohabitation, with a view to opening out speculative conversations on the arts and writing.

Rashmi Sawhney is Associate Professor, Cinema Studies, at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and was previously faculty at the Centre for Transcultural Research and Media Practice, Dublin. She led the India Foundation for the Arts' Curatorship and Arts Practice programmes from 2012-14, including developing archival and museum fellowships to support creative research and curatorial projects. Her area of research, teaching and publication has mainly been cinema and cultural studies, and she is currently working on a project exploring the visual cultures of science fiction in India. She has been interested in creative research and speculative writing, and in practice-based research.

Law

Choreographing Copyright: Embodied Knowledge and its challenges to Intellectual Property

Choreography and dance constitute the Bermuda triangle of copyright law where many of its foundational principles (originality, fixation, idea-expression divide) are either simply absent or inapplicable. Copyright emerged within the history of a specific technology, paper and its ideas of authorship are rooted within the idea of disembodied works, so what happens when it meets an embodied form like dance? If copyright is not particularly suited to address dance, then how may we imagine a legal system for the ownership and /or sharing of knowledge amongst practitioners and performers. In the 101 session I will pose some conceptual questions about the challenges that dance poses to law, and during the clinic, I will follow this up with a hands on, practical discussion.

Lawrence Liang is one of the founders of the Alternative Law Forum, a collective of lawyers based in Bangalore. He works on the intersection of law and culture, with a focus on intellectual property and access to knowledge and culture. He is also completing a book on law, justice and cinema in India.

Dance Journeys

In our journeys as dancers, dance makers and human beings, we encounter myriad challenges, take false steps and detours, and sometimes lose sight of older gestures, discover new paths; yet, perhaps never envision the larger perspective. This session takes us through a journey where we seek and acknowledge the hero within. A dancing hero.

Stefan Gebert is based in New Delhi and works as a facilitator and coach in organisational change and personnel development. He has vast training experience in non-violent communication and neuro-linguistic programming. Stefan has worked both in multinational corporations and small/medium enterprises with a total experience of 8 years living and working in various countries. Along with Sudha Shankar, he designs and facilitates the Moving Stories workshops, which help dancers create a collective space for sharing and solving issues, through a process of deep communication, listening and engagement within the community.

Dance Injuries

Given the unique blend of athleticism, artistry and discipline that defines dancers, they are at particular risk for chronic and overuse type injuries. Dancers are often the individuals most likely to push through pain, ultimately increasing their risk of injury. Pain is a signal to be heeded: it generally indicates above threshold stress on the body, an underlying dysfunction in the body, or improper coordination of the muscles. Brief one-on-one screening sessions will be offered to help dancers identify and begin to address current limitations to ultimately support improved efficiency in their dance training.

Dr. Katherine Kulp (PT, DPT, CFMT) is a doctor of physical therapy and a certified functional manual therapist at VARDAN, New Delhi, which is a Times Group initiative in association with the Institute of Physical Art (IPA), USA. Katherine received her doctorate in Physical Therapy from the University of Colorado in 2011 and achieved her certification in Functional Manual Therapy from the IPA with honors in 2014. Trained as a classical ballet dancer, she has an abiding love of movement that continues to fuel her passion for facilitating efficiency and function in others. She has had the privilege of working with collegiate and professional level dancers, and finds individualised and innovative approaches to facilitating the untapped potential in each dancer.

5:30 pm

Three Questions, Three Discoveries - 2

Nimmy Raphel

When one creates work, the question always is – how close can you remain to the original inspiration? The expansion of that single image which you see in your mind; the seed, invisible to others, becomes the vehicle for your creative expression. Therefore the difficulty has always been the translation of that image/idea into a word image, a physical image, an aural image and a universal image so that it unpacks the central idea. The process of translating multiple signifiers on stage is challenging, because there are many ways to reach one's creative expression. Being a performer all my life, it is difficult to remove myself from what I am creating. How do you receive all that the character has to offer through the inner landscape of the characters you are

engaged with and be completely surprised by new thoughts and images which come from your deepest moment of struggle during the creative process?

Nimmy Raphael studied Mohiniyattam and Kuchipudi at Kerala Kalamandalam. She is currently a resident actor, dancer, musician and puppeteer at Adishakti, practicing its methodology of theatre since 2001. Nimmy has performed with Adishakti at various venues, and disseminates its performance method through workshops held at the Adishakti space in Pondicherry. In 2010, she received the APPEX Fellowship. She has collaborated with Indonesian dancer Sardono W. Kusumo to create a theatre production called Rama, Hanuman, Rawana. As part of Adishakti's Ramayana Project, in 2011 she created a play called Nidrawathwam which she wrote, directed, and performed. In 2012-13, Nimmy was a recipient of the Junior Fellowship from the Ministry of Culture.

Sanjukta Wagh

Sanjukta Wagh traces her journey as a creator and as director of *beej* through its interdisciplinary work, from *Let Her Be Born* (2009) to *Rage and Beyond* (2014). Through her presentation, she raises several questions. How does one negotiate the space between classical and contemporary sensibilities in one's form, content and methodology? How does one navigate between what is felt and what is manifest? When improvisation becomes an integral part of one's approach, how does that alter one's notion of a choreographed piece? While traversing disciplines like dance (Kathak/ contemporary), music, theatre, literature, multimedia, does one need to define or underline one's primary language of expression?

Sanjukta Wagh has trained extensively under Rajashree Shirke in Kathak and under Murli Manohar Shukla in Hindustani Music. Her engagement with theatre (honed by playwright-director Chetan Datar), her year-long experience at the Laban Centre of Dance, London, her love of literature and deep unease with comfort zones, have led to her interdisciplinary and exploratory mode of work. Her choreographies and performances have won her applause across the country and abroad.