

10:00 am

Panel Discussion

In/Dividual | In/Stitution

The artistic process is not just about personal creation, but also the facilitation and creation of dance contexts, of environments for dance. Perhaps, of institutions. While focusing on the individual, we have also begun to question how these specific trajectories might present to us a broader narrative of dance in India. This discussion is informed by artists whose individual trajectories have influenced the institutions that they have been part of and helped to build.

Moderated by Sadanand Menon.

Panelists

Jayachandran Palazhy

Through Attakkalari, Jayachandran Palazhy has worked on developing the infrastructure for contemporary dance in India. Attakkalari has attempted to provide facilities and support to emerging dance artists, raising ideas and concerns related to education, research, production, presentation and dissemination in the contemporary dance sector. Palazhy speaks about bridging these roles.

The founder and artistic director of Attakkalari Centre for Movement Arts, Jayachandran Palazhy is a leading dancer and choreographer on the contemporary movement arts scene. Through Attakkalari, he has initiated various interlinked programmes, including a diploma in Movement Arts & Mixed Media, research, documentation, education and outreach initiatives, the Attakkalari repertory company, TransMedia Technologies, which provides stage solutions, and the Attakkalari India Biennial, South Asia's largest festival of contemporary dance and digital arts. A physics graduate from Kerala, Jay trained in Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Indian folk dances and Kalarippayattu whilst in India. He later studied at the London Contemporary Dance School, also training in classical ballet, tai chi, capoeira and African dance. In the UK, he set up the Imlata Dance Company, and also received the Barclays New Stage Award for innovative work. His choreographic works include TransAvatar, Purushartha, Chronotopia, MeiDhwani and AadhaaraChakra – A Dancelogue. Recently, Attendance Magazine conferred on him the Uday Shankar Award for Choreography

Leela Samson

How does an individual function within an institution? Leela Samson has been part of several institutions over the course of her career. She will talk about their initial motivations, underscoring the difference between government-run institutions and private institutions for the

arts. What do they mean to the nation; what did they produce? And what happens to them over the years. In raising these questions, she addresses their survival in present times.

Leela Samson received the impulses for her growth as a dancer from Kalakshetra, Chennai, completing its post graduation course and joining the repertory company. She adheres to the mould of the Kalakshetra technique, yet grew out of its binding. She is deeply influenced by Kalakshetra's founder, Rukmini Devi, and its philosophy. From 2005 to 2012, Leela was director of the Kalakshetra Foundation, bringing to the institute a dynamism in performance and a widening of the academic scope of its graduates. From 2010 to 2014, she was chairperson of the Sangeet Natak Akademi. In April 2011, she was appointed Chairperson, Central Board of Film Certification. Leela performs solo and also travels with the Spanda Dance Company, presenting her work at leading national and international dance festivals. It is what she loves best – to dance, to teach, to understand better the relationship between the lyrics, the music and the dance expression.

Parwati Dutta

In her work at Mahagami, Parwati Dutta lives a double life as an artist and administrator. How does she reconcile her artistic vision with the overarching aims of a parent institution? Also, what are the challenges of working within larger institutional frameworks in non-metropolitan regions?

Parwati Dutta is an Odissi and Kathak dancer, guru and researcher. She is a senior disciple of Madhavi Mudgal, Kelucharan Mohapatra and Birju Maharaj. Since 1996, she is the director and guru of Mahagami Gurukul, Aurangabad, an institution that focuses on arts training, dissemination and research. She has choreographed solo and group productions, which have toured widely, in India and around the world. She has studied the sculpture of the Ellora Caves, the tala system of Odissi and the use of percussion instruments, translating her research into performance. She curates many festivals and seminars at Mahagami, besides collaborating with universities and arts organisations.

1:00 pm

Closing Address by Sadanand Menon

Sadanand Menon is an arts editor, teacher of cultural journalism, photographer, stage lights designer and speaker at seminars on politics, ecology and the arts. He is currently Adjunct Faculty, Asian College of Journalism, Chennai, and he also teaches at IIT, Madras. A close associate of legendary choreographer Chandralekha, he is deeply involved with issues concerning contemporary Indian dance.