

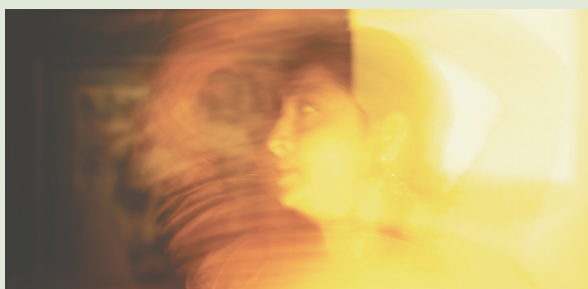
ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24





Mallika Sarabhai & Aditi Ramesh in "Past Forward" | Image: Adrija Samal

**THINK,
MEET,
TALK,
KNOW,
IMAGINE,
DANCE //**



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Sohini Debnath | @Home 1 | Images: Avneesh Narang

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Don Gnu in "Walk Man" | G.D. Birla Sabhagar | Image : Adrija Samal

WHO WE ARE

Pickle Factory Dance Foundation is a hub for the practice, discourse and presentation of dance and movement work in Calcutta, housed in spaces repurposed for the arts. We are a space to think, meet, know, talk, imagine – dance.

We respond to the lack of spaces and infrastructure in India to develop and nurture dance and movement work and artists. We work with, for and through artists, audiences and support systems to imagine our many possible futures.

Our big dream is a permanent venue in a repurposed space in Calcutta that transforms our experience of both physical movement and physical space. This venue will be local, national and international in outlook, participation and reach, and part of a network of such vital and vibrant arts spaces.

We hope you will join us on this adventure.



■ We respond to the lack of spaces and infrastructure in India to develop and nurture dance and movement work and artists

Dakshini Prayash & CieLAROQUE celebrate after "Hear & Now" | Newtown Community Zone | Image: Adrija Samal

STORY SO FAR

It's been a rollercoaster ride since 2017, as we have consistently created and offered fresh modes, spaces and experiences of dance and movement performance to diverse audiences in Calcutta and beyond. In our quest and commitment to support, nurture, challenge and develop our local dance ecologies and engage a range of communities, we have worked with artists and guests from our city, the rest of India and abroad in the craziest of spaces converting them into magical pop-up performance venues and experiences, redefining relationships between physical movement and physical space.

In 7 years over 750+ programmes in Calcutta and elsewhere, we have featured 400+ artists and guests from 20+ countries across 6 continents (we have not yet managed to work with the artists who may live in Antarctica). We have reached 1,00,000+ audiences in person and online in live events, worked in 50+ venues and with 120+ local, national and international collaborators. We have been a focus organisation in 10+ international festivals, and guest curated for festivals in Scotland, South Africa and - of course - India.

Most importantly, we have been humbled, inspired and gratefully overwhelmed by the wealth of goodwill, appreciation, and solidarity that has come to us from our ever-expanding family from all over the world.

In our 7th year, as an arts company working in an uncertain arts future, we re-commit to our values of:

CREATING ACCESS
collaborating with **PLURAL AND DIVERSE VOICES**

caring for our **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**
collating **SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES**

for people, finances & resources
& continuing to bring **ARTS & COMMUNITIES** together.

SNAPSHOTS 2023-24

36

PROGRAMMES

34

INDIAN AND
INTERNATIONAL
PARTNERS

WITH

02

INTERNATIONAL COMPANY INDIA TOUR
TOURING TO SANTINIKETAN, THRISSUR,
BANGALORE, DELHI, PONDICHERRY



Sohini Debnath | Image: Avneesh Narang

2500+

LIVE AUDIENCES

97

ARTISTS AND GUESTS

06

COUNTRIES

114

SCHOOL
STUDENTS

240

WORKSHOP
PARTICIPANTS

17

PERFORMANCES

11

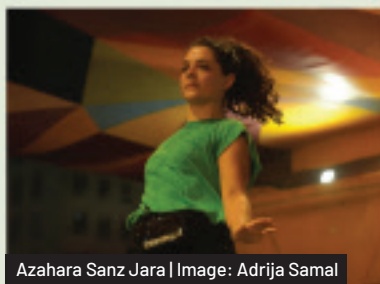
WORKSHOPS

13

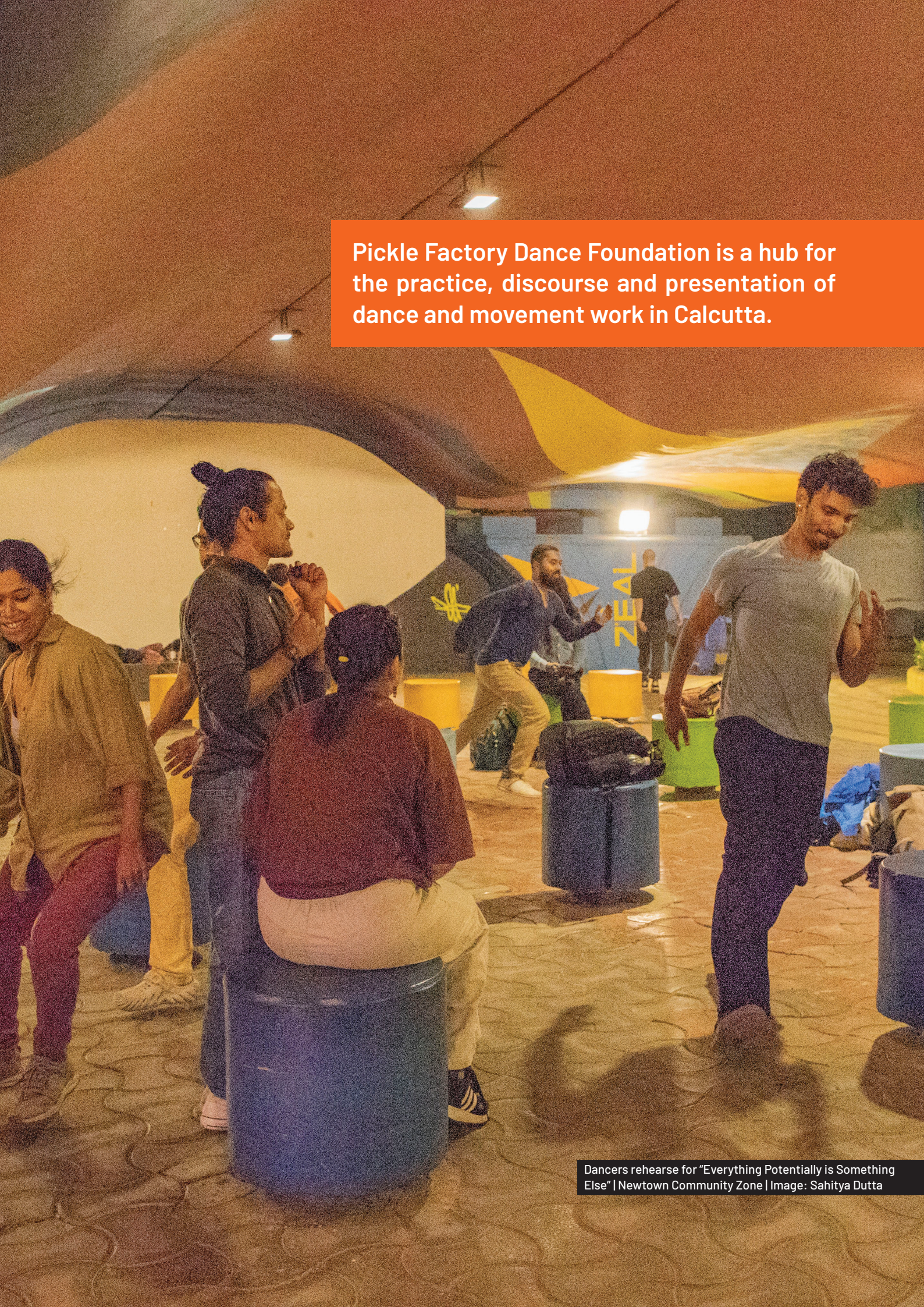
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INTERACTION EVENTS

21

VENUES



Azahara Sanz Jara | Image: Adrija Samal



Pickle Factory Dance Foundation is a hub for the practice, discourse and presentation of dance and movement work in Calcutta.

Dancers rehearse for "Everything Potentially is Something Else" | Newtown Community Zone | Image: Sahitya Dutta

AMERICAN A-LIVERARY

The American A-Liverary in partnership with the American Center Library, was a series in which we encouraged performers to interact with fresh, diverse voices in American literature in order to forge connections between movement and words and to spark conversations about the importance of diversity, inclusion, and access.

Over 15 months (December 2022 to February 2024), we had presentations by eight artists from different parts of the country including Kolkata, Patna, Bangalore, Roing and Aizawl. From Maya Angelou's "Phenomenal Women" to Khalil Ghibran's "On Freedom", the series saw the exploration of seminal works of literature being transformed into movement, dialogue, dance and more. Gender, identity, hope, freedom, silence, and sustainability were some of the themes (among many others) that breathed life into pieces that etched long-lasting memories in our minds. Apart from the American Center Library venue, presentations were also co-hosted at Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Kolkata, the British Council Kolkata, and the US Pavilion at the Kolkata Book Fair.

"Traditional uses of libraries are fading away and as we reinvent ourselves these performances and interactive sessions are a way to contextualise literature with diverse voices" - Adrian Pratt, Former Director American Centre, Kolkata



#TAKE THE CITY KOLKATA
ONE DANCE AT A TIME

Pickle Factory Season 03

Spaces for Dialogue

TITAS DUTTA

Kolkata

When we come to it

6 December 2022

6pm

American Center

Poster Design: Teesta Brahma



PERFORMANCES

6 December 2022

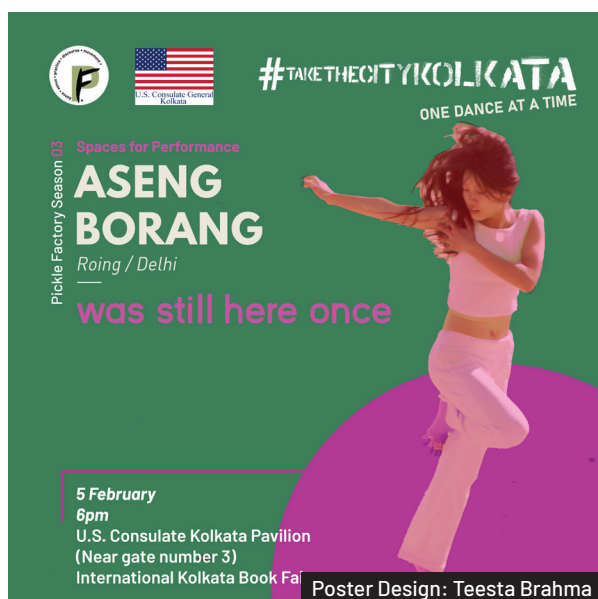
"When We Come to It" - Titas, Nabadeepa, Dwaipayan, Sangram, Srijaini

"When We Come to It" was a journey with a few poems of Maya Angelou. The journey was full of complex questions. What defines a 'woman'? How are the bodies tamed to be or not to be 'women'? This work in progress was followed by a conversation moderated by Paramita Saha, performer and director of Artsforward. Exploring these complexities from both personal and societal perspectives.

5 February 2023

"Was Still Here Once" - Aseng Borang

The performance was an attempt to travel through the landscape of emotions mapped out in Ocean Vuong's novel "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous". The artist used her own embodied experience as an intersectional identity as a starting point of the investigation through a fluid, meditative, movement vortex that she created in her performance. Post her performance, Dr Kaustav Bakshi, Associate Professor of English at Jadavpur University and author of Queer Studies facilitated an illuminating dialogue with the artist on themes of resistance through flow, focus of self and kindness.



"It was breathtaking, the tranquillity and serendipity it contained was inexplicable. I'm highly mesmerised - Wriddhima Biswas (student)

6 April 2023

"In C" - Joshua Sailo and workshop participants (Srijaini, Srestha, Amitabh, Pintu, Dayita, Anisha, Tumulu Preetesh, Rajan Rathore)

The poems "Singing Everything" by Joy Harjo and "No One Knows the Way to Heaven" by Ocean Vuong formed an introductory framework to the performance of "In C" by Joshua Sailo and ten dancers. "In C" is a contemporary music composition by American composer Terry Riley that comprises fifty-three short musical motifs. Sasha Waltz - the acclaimed German choreographer - created a piece of choreography in response to this musical proposition. Both require performers to really listen to one another, be sensitive to each other's proposals as the music and movement continually shift, progress, create tension, find release, alignment, and unison through the score.

Shuktara Lal, theatre maker, director, and drama therapist, moderated the conversation with Joshua Sailo before the performance to get an insight into the interrelatedness between the texts that Joshua chose and their resultant relationship with the performance.



24 July 2023

"Yet there is Hope" - Puja Chatterjee

The poem "Directions to You" by Joy Harjo, which includes the phrases of hope, life, beauty, solitude served as an inspiration for Puja's piece where she made an effort to find the interrelations between the four sections of the poem to four Bharatanatyam compositions - Tillana, Padam, Jathiswaram, and Alarippu.

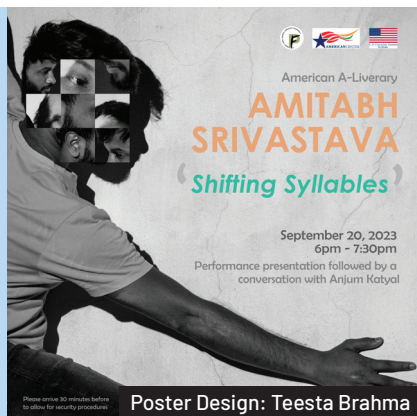
Baisali Chatterjee Dutta, theatre artist, and writer moderated the conversation with Puja post performance to understand her motivations and inspiration for her performance.

20 September

"Shifting Syllables" – Amitabh Srivastava

"Shifting Syllables" was a performance that reflects on the shifting and persistent repercussions of the cultural scrutiny of a name and the identity that a name carries. It used the concept of a name as a medium to understand the reality of a society we live in where one person's privileges transform into another's disadvantages. The three chosen poems represented American poets belonging to Asian diaspora – "On Listening To Your Teacher Take Attendance" by Aimee Nezhukumatathil, "Names" by Teresa Mei Chuc, and "Cardamom Vowels" by Aruni Wijesinghe. Anjum Katyal, a writer, editor and translator and director of Apeejay Kolkata Literary Meet, moderated the conversation with Amitabh post performance. Kathakali Jana, a performance critic reflected on how owning 'outlandish' names in an adopted country becomes a pivot on which social status rests, becoming the grounds of privilege and oppression

Amitabh ended the discussion with his prime inspiration for this piece; his mother's poem – 'मुझे मेरे नाम से पुकारो - 'Mujhe mere naam se pukaro | Call me by my name' by Alka Verma.



21 December 2024

Daminee Benny Basu | "Silence, Please"

Performance maker Daminee Benny Basu referenced Bob Dylan's "Masters of War" and Warsan Shire's "From War" in a powerful silent piece called "Silence, Please". The performance unabashedly foregrounded the societal tendency to look the other way and remain silent in a world full of violence, destruction and oppression. Post-performance, the entire room fell silent to dwell on the impact of the performance with some heavy sighs and deep breaths. Jhuma Basak moderated the conversation between the actor and audience, where riveting contemplations came through about the selective indifference that we indulge in daily, which allows us to remain silent and go about our lives as normal.



23 January 2024

Emingoyak - that which has been given to us | Mukulita Ganguly

The performance was part of the artist's ongoing personal exploration of the reciprocal relationships between the body and the ecological environment evoked by the text - "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer. As the evolution of the spine pulled us up from the ground, we embodied this separation leading to a relentless materialist culture, detaching us from the rest of creation towards a deep "species loneliness". The piece attempted to understand this homelessness and find a path homeward.

Dr. Shantanu Majee, Assistant Professor, writer and researcher, moderated the post-performance conversation. What came through was introspectively looking into the slowness of our bodies and their ways to relate, adapt and protect with the outside world and how indigenous knowledge of land and the environment can bring us closer to sustainability.

23 February 2024

Prashant More | Sky is Where I remain

This performance attempted to explore the concept of freedom through the interpretation of two poems, Khalil Gibran's "On Freedom" and Meera Dasgupta's "Remembrance". In Gibran's poem, freedom is depicted as a state of mind and spirit that transcends physical limitations, whereas Dasgupta's poem portrays freedom as the resilience to endure and rise above oppression. The performer embodied the themes of these poems and delved into the complexities of personal liberation and empowerment.

The post-performance discussion facilitated by dancer and performance scholar Debaroti Chakraborty, revolved around Prashant's journey of personal freedom and liberation.



Audience reaction | American Centre | Image: Adrija Samal







American A-Liverary

Mukulita Ganguly

Emingoyak: that which has been given to us

Performance presentation followed by a conversation with Dr. Shantanu Majee

Tuesday, January 23, 2024
6pm

U.S. Consulate General Pavilion Stall no. 13
Kolkata International Book Fair (Entry Gate No. 3)

Poster Design: Teesta Brahma

"Art supremacy and not just for arts sake" - Aniruddha

"Finding building sharing bridges, frankly openly & in safe spaces even when it's hard, even when we don't agree" - Elizabeth Lee, Director American Centre, Kolkata







American A-Liverary

Prashant More

Sky is where I remain,

Friday, February 23, 2024
6:30 pm

Lincoln room, American Center
38A J.L. Nehru Road,

Please arrive 30 minutes before to allow for security procedure

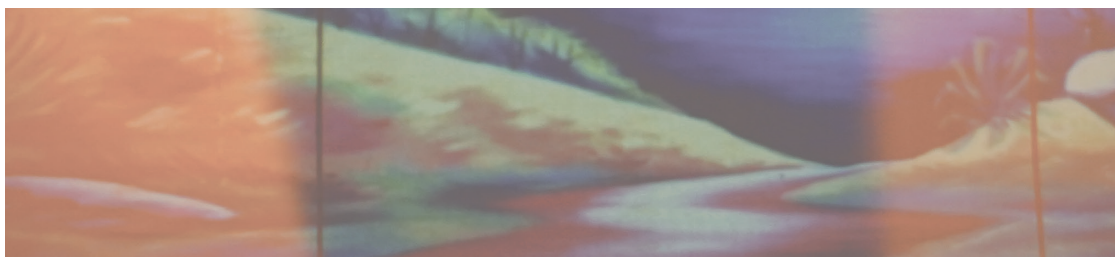
Poster Design: Teesta Brahma

VOICES FROM THE SOUTH WORLD PREMIERS

Since 2022, Pickle Factory Dance Foundation has had the proud privilege of being India partner on Voices from the South – a project initiated by the Edinburgh Festival Fringe with four other international partners apart from us: Magnetic North (Scotland), MITsp, (Brazil), La Teatreria (Mexico), and The Baxter Theatre (South Africa). The project aimed to make the Fringe platform accessible to artists from regions that are usually underrepresented at the festival due to the lack of local support systems.



Between the four countries involved, we produced 18 new performance projects that premiered on the Edinburgh Fringe digital platform in August 2023 – a culmination of 18 months of curating the artists, creative processes, online exchanges between all the participants and the building of deep international and intercultural connections. The new productions were launched at a special event during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe attended by presenters and artists from all over the world, eager to encounter new work from India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico.





"Hallucinations of an Artefact" performance | Image: Venus Maku Thokchom



THE FIVE INDIAN WORKS THAT WERE PRODUCED ARE:

- "Maati Katha" by Choiti Ghosh / Tram Arts Trust
- "Hallucinations of an Artefact" by Mandeep Raikhy
- "How long is february" by Nisha Abdullah
- "Corona Cha Tamasha" by Savitri Medhatul
- "The Ostracised Guardian" by Tenma

We are delighted to report that these productions have now taken on a life of their own touring in India and internationally.



"Corona Cha Tamasha" performance | Image: Kali Billi team



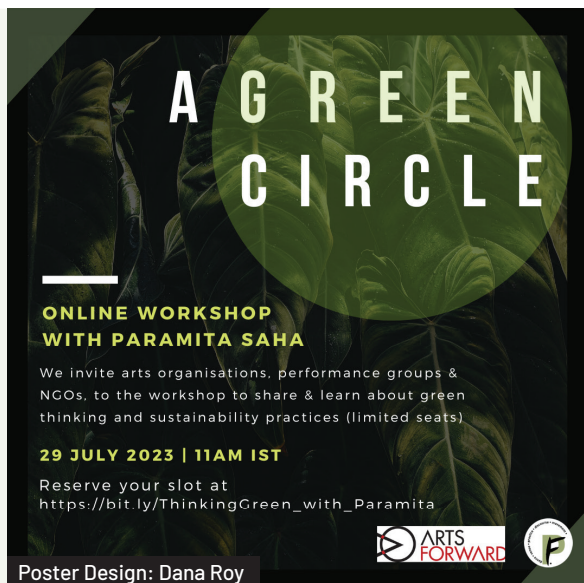
A GREEN CIRCLE

Over the past few years Pickle Factory team members have been discussing the global climate crisis and our environmental impact and how we can be more conscious of our choices - be it creating a venue from repurposed spaces and sustainable materials, to how we plan tours for artists, to making it a bit easier for our artists and audiences to think of their waste responsibly, to small choices in how we run our office or what we choose to print or not at our box office. We have been reaching out in ever widening circles both within the team and with other like minded organisations to share, research, learn about and attempt to implement potential solutions & habits.

On this learning curve one of our outward facing projects was an online workshop, called A Green Circle, conducted by Paramita Saha of ArtsForward.

This workshop invited arts organisations, performance groups, NGOs, developmental organisations to share & learn green policy and sustainability practices.

On 29 July, 2024 Paramita took a group of 15 of us through ways we could reduce our environmental footprint, look at waste management and other environment-friendly practices - to work towards an eco-friendly eco-system.



THESE WERE SOME OF THE POINTS DISCUSSED:

1. What do we throw? How do we throw?
Where do they go?
2. What are the laws around different kinds of waste? Who is accountable?
3. What are the common myths about waste?
4. Everyday best practices.
5. What can artists and the creative community do?
What is our role?
6. What are the challenges?

PICKLE FACTORY GREEN POLICY

We at Pickle Factory are committed to reducing our environmental impact, and contributing towards more sustainability in the arts. The spirit of repurposing has been instilled within our organisational ethos from Pickle Factory's inception. Improving our environmental performance is an important concern of our programming and operations. We continue to encourage our team, suppliers and stakeholders to be sustainable with us.

AT PICKLE FACTORY WE TRY TO:

Reuse, repurpose, recycle, upcycle in our production & design thinking.

Increase our awareness on **sustainable practice in creative industries**.

Design our performance spaces & office using **biodegradable & reusable materials** like bamboo, jute, paper, with banners of blackboard, cloth or canvas.

Encourage sustainable practices in our audiences by having accessible water refilling stations, using digital tickets, communicating public transport options.

Share assets & resources with the larger performance community.

Programme multiple events and full India tours for International artists coming to India to **promote more sustainable touring**.

For our permanent venue we aim to **repurpose a space** rather than build a new one.

EK TARA

The Ek Tara partnership was a series of immersive workshops and performance experiences designed for students and burgeoning community leaders. Its mission to empower through arts education, particularly within marginalised communities, was realised over the course of the year. The collaboration featured a diverse roster of talent, including esteemed local, national, and international artists.

Our local luminary, Shashwati Garai Ghosh, along with her Angasuddhi ensemble, led an evocative 4-day workshop and performance series delving into the foundational principles of Odissi dance, its mudras, taal and decorative expressions through the exploration of Nritya and Abhinaya pieces. The final showcase, deftly moderated by Raju Raman, drew lovely responses from parents and guests about the students' journey.

From the city of Imphal, national artist Surjit Nongmeikapam infused the Yangshak dance with his innovative vision. His workshop brought new challenges for the participants as they found new avenues to share the 'weight' of a steadily moving bamboo scored with mathematical counts, culminating in a specially unusual showcase that foregrounded teamwork, focus, structure. In the post showing discussion thoughtfully moderated by Gulan Kripalani student audiences gave voice to deep social commentary that stirred in them after watching the piece.



Students in workshop with CieLAROQUE | Ek Tara | Images: Adrija Samal



"This was a very different, innovative and experimental type of dance, that seems simple but through the conversations one realises the complexity of counts and co-ordination required by the students to perform it"- Namrata Sureka speaking after Surjit Nongmeikapam's workshop showing.



On an international note, the third workshop with Ek Tara was with international company CieLAROQUE from Salzburg, Austria. Their three-day workshop on contemporary choreography was a masterclass in artistic empowerment, leading to a energizing showcase which was a part of their performance of "Hear & Now" during Weekend 2 at New Town Community Zone, as part of "LEAP!: Pickle Factory Season 4".

The Ek Tara partnership gave students a glimpse of the rich and diverse range of movement expression in the world, delving into artistic and cultural histories and crossing national and international borders. The workshops attempted to give them heightened sense of focus, discipline, inter and intra-personal awareness, connection across borders & joy inspiring a new generation of dance-curious youngsters and community leaders.



@HOME

@Home began as a collaborative endeavour between Ponder Alt, Hamdasti and Pickle Factory to curate a sampling of art, dance, music and food hosted by and for art lovers in Calcutta. The series takes local artists into the cosy comfort and hospitality of peoples' homes, where small audiences can meet an artist's process and work up close. Over the course of 4 editions, we have had 113 guests, 12 artists, 6 hosts and over 131 audience members engaged in 4 homes.

Our first edition saw percussionist and drummer Gaurab Chatterjee explore his process and engage with Kathak dancer Sohini Debnath hosted by celebrated theatre practitioners Jayant and Gulan Kripalani in their living room. The audiences were witness to an impromptu jugalbandi along with delicious Kebabs by Fatima Anwar.

The subsequent second edition saw animator Upamanyu Bhattacharya discuss his process and themes of climate change and dystopia through his short film "Wade". On a similar note the band, Whale in the Pond, walked the audience through the sound design and creation of their post-apocalyptic concept album "Dofon" in the house of Indrani Banerjee, a dedicated arts buff along with an array of gobsmacking snacks by "Served with Love".

Our third edition was hosted by Lata Bajoria in her luscious gardens amidst her rescued emus and organic vegetables on a lovely winter morning. Suhasini Kejriwal, a visual artist, delved into her heavily flora inspired maximalist work through various media while Vandana Alase Hazra with her student, Sanchari Roy, immersed us in the Bharatanatyam giving a strikingly enhanced and insightful perspective in the natural environment. The interaction was preceded with a refreshing breakfast spread from the organic kitchen gardens.

Our latest edition for the year, saw Sangram Mukhopadhyay break expectations and take the audience on his journey of waacking through the lens of bollywood and his queer Indian experience, while Aditi Ramesh, a Bangalore-based musician, talked about her shift from a life in the judiciary to that of a musician. This evening was hosted at the lovely terrace of Shuli & Rewant who also gave us a taste of their home-cooked delicacies



113 GUESTS

12 ARTISTS

6 HOSTS

TOTAL **131 PEOPLE**
REACHED IN 4 HOMES

ANTIGONE, INTERRUPTED

"Antigone, Interrupted", Scottish Dance Theatre's acclaimed collaboration between Artistic Director Joan Clevillé and solo performer Solène Weinachter, started their India tour in Kolkata with deep engagements organised by Pickle Factory. They started with an amazing workshop session that Solène Weinachter and Katye Coe conducted with Sappho for Equality.

Both artists also gave us a deep dive into the work of Scottish Dance Theatre in Artist Diaries 1.1 at Glenburn Penthouse, before the team stunned audiences in Dalhousie Institute with the power house solo performance by Solène which re-imagined and recontextualised the classic Greek Tragedy for a contemporary world. It threw up questions of dissent in contemporary democracy, and how the female body can be the target of oppression but also a powerful tool for resistance.

After their fantastic Kolkata show they continued their India tour in early December & went on to perform in NCPA, Mumbai then Bangalore and opened the Serendipity Arts Festival in Goa. This tour was supported by the British Council.

Scottish Dance Theatre has a long-standing relationship with audiences and organisations in India and several of our Pickle Factory team members had worked with various SDT company members in 2012 & 2014 during their previous visits to Kolkata. It was heartwarming to welcome them back again.



Solène Weinachter in "Antigone Interrupted" | Image: Maria Falconer



'The way Scottish Dance theatre brought the Greek tragedy to reflect on the modern world, bringing up LGBTQ issues, current wars, choices of women today was incredible'
- Sulagna Mukhopadhyay



ARTIST DIARIES

2023-24 saw the birth of a new series with a new partner – Artist Diaries with Glenburn Culture Club. Artist Diaries is an exclusive experience centred around an artist's approach to the creative philosophy that drives their work, and insights into their current projects. Each session features a brief sharing of work by the artist followed by a facilitated conversation and interaction with the audience. The evenings round off with an informal wine and cheese reception, with the drinks specially curated by Fratelli Wines and the snacks provide by Glenburn Penthouse. The sessions take place at the beautiful terrace space of Glenburn Penthouse, with views overlooking the iconic Victoria Memorial and Park Street areas. We presented three sessions of Artist Diaries over the winter months.



2 December 2023: Artist Diaries 1.1 featured Solène Weinachter and Katye Coe in a sharing about the work of Scottish Dance Theatre, Dundee with a particular focus on "Antigone, Interrupted" – the work performed by Solène in Calcutta the following day. Their sharing led into a conversation facilitated by Ruchira Das, Director – Arts, British Council, India.



13 February 2024: Artist Diaries 1.2 presented an excerpt from "Rhythm and Intoxication" by the dancers of CieLARQUE from Salzburg, Austria who were in the city for LEAP! : Pickle Factory Season 4. The excerpt was followed by a conversation with the choreographer Helene Weinzierl facilitated by Vikram Iyengar, delving into her interest in building relationships and participation between performers and audiences in unconventional ways.



CieLARQUE at Artist Diaries 1.2 | Glenburn Penthouse | Images: Adrija Samal



Don Gnu at Artist Diaries 1.3 | Glenburn Penthouse | Image: Adrija Samal

13 March 2024: Artist Diaries 1.3 saw two members of the visiting Danish company Don Gnu perform an excerpt from "Walk-Man" – the full performance formed part of LEAP! : Pickle Factory Season 4 two days later. This then led into a conversation facilitated by Vikram Iyengar, which also saw the founders of the company join us via Zoom from Copenhagen where they were rehearsing and producing another piece!



CielARQQUE at Artist Diaries 1.2 | Glenburn Penthouse | Image: Adrija Samal

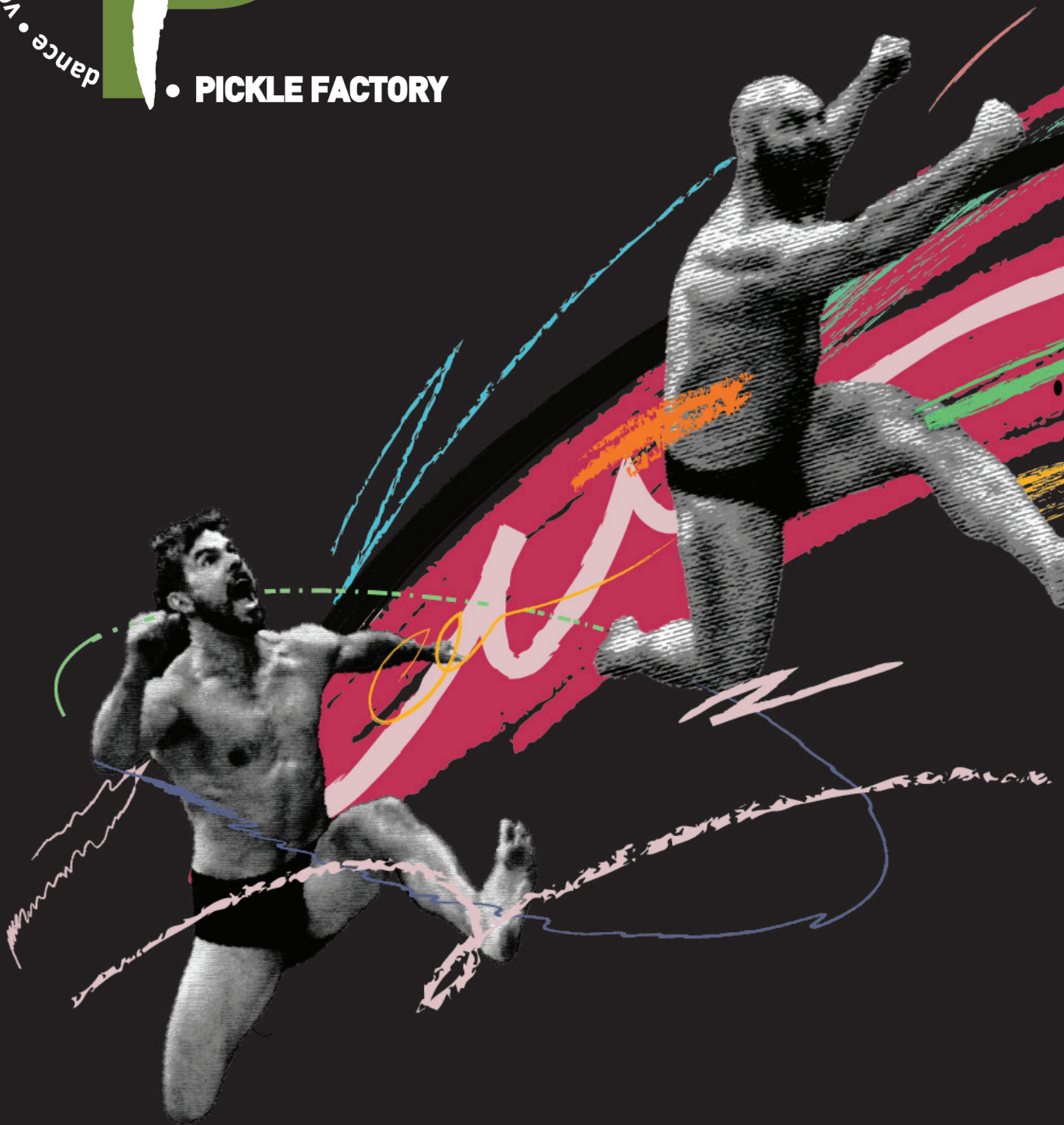
'It (the performance) was so playful, it felt like the energy and feeling we had as children playing games. The games had rules but always came up with something surprising. It was a very engaging evening,' said Siddique Cowper, audience member | published in MyKolkata.



As a series, Artist Diaries has introduced us to a whole new community and a wonderful new partner in Glenburn Penthouse. The intimacy and informality of the set up and the evocative ambience really helped easy conversations and exchanges flow between artists and audiences – exactly the kind of vibe Pickle Factory likes to create. We look forward to curating and presenting the next set of Artist Diaries sessions with Glenburn Penthouse in the winter months of 2024-25.




• **PICKLE FACTORY**





LEAP



Across 6 weeks in February-March 2024, Pickle Factory Dance Foundation, Calcutta presented LEAP! : Pickle Factory Season 4. It was the first time we attempted Seasons in consecutive years – Season 3 closed in February 2023. In an uncertain world and precarious sector, we decided to throw caution to the winds and literally LEAP into the leap year.

Leaping signifies joy, faith, enthusiasm, abandon, imagination, risk, courage – perhaps a little danger – and a lot of fun. It asks us to push down on the solid earth we stand on and take off into the air, trusting that we will find land again – perhaps in the same place we left, perhaps somewhere else. We do not know. To leap is to suspend ourselves in possibility, to de-tether ourselves from the familiar and launch into what we may not have experienced before. It is a moment of freedom.

Leaping involves our entire selves, and propels us into movement, time and space – the basic components that make dance happen. The Season invited us all to take a chance on dance.

The Season was structured over four week/ends.

LEAP INTO invited audiences to engage closely with performances, workshops, talks and interactions in the compressed space of one weekend in one venue.

LEAP THROUGH activated and claimed the public space under a flyover with the joy and energy of movement over three evenings of performances.

LEAP OUT presented a weekend showcase of new work from emerging Indian artists along with deep conversations about taking our dance ecologies forward.

LEAP ACROSS presented two internationally known artists and companies in a series of engagements that cut through cultures, forms and borders.

SEASON SNAPSHOTS

104

ARTISTS AND
GUESTS FROM



06

COUNTRIES (INDIA, THE UK, FINLAND,
GERMANY, AUSTRIA, DENMARK)



18

ACTIVE DAYS
ACROSS 06
WEEKS

1800+

LIVE AUDIENCES



160

WORKSHOP
PARTICIPANTS

14

VENUES

28

PROGRAMMES

10

PERFORMANCES

09

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DISCUSSION &
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INDIAN AND
INTERNATIONAL
PARTNERS

Shadab Kamal in "Gaza Monologues" | KCC | Image: Adrija Samal
"Johnny Got His Gun" | KCC | Image: Adrija Samal



AS A LEAD UP TO LEAP WE ASKED VARIOUS PEOPLE WHAT THE WORD MEANT TO THEM, AND SHARED THE REELS ON INSTAGRAM. HERE'S A SELECTION OF RESPONSES.

Gut feeling, trusting
your moral compass

COURAGE

Dramatic jump with strength
and energy landing with grace

Coming Out of comfort
zone - uncertainty


Out of the norm - living
authentic life as a queer trans
individual - Leap of trust

Leap year, discipline
dedication, joy

Something coiled and
waiting to burst, filled
with potential

Being scared and
accepting the
vulnerability

LEAP OF FAITH



Collective suspension of a
moment that propels you to do
something, Hope, Faith, Love

LEAP

SHIFT - CHANGE

Action spring - dive
Leap of joy
excitement thrill, risk

Different leaps - one's own choice, or
someone else choice, In Manipur the
leap was taken by someone else

UNCERTAINTY
HOPEFUL

Out of the
comfort zone

Adrenaline rush, ball
of strength and
positivity

LEAP INTO



Audience for 'Johnny Got His Gun' at KCC | Image: Sahitya Dutta

10 to 11 February 2024

The Season's opening weekend was co-presented with the Kolkata Centre for Creativity, and turned their multi-arts venue into a hub for dance and movement, where we could watch, learn, participate, question, imagine. Over a packed Saturday-Sunday, LEAP INTO invited us to engage intimately with ONE performance as audiences, ONE workshop as practitioners, ONE exploratory module as arts producers and administrators, and ONE artistic research process as observers. Bringing together artists and guests from India, the UK, Finland and Germany, we wished to demonstrate the richness of engagement that could be possible in the permanent home for dance venue we are working towards in Calcutta.



Somya Kautia's workshop at AAC | Image: Adrija Samal

WORKSHOPS & DISCUSSIONS

Both mornings began with contemporary dance workshops – one in our host venue of KCC and one at the Anuchintan Arts Centre (AAC). "Breaking Points" with Prashant More from Goa delved into physical skills, dance composition and movement research, and helped participants develop them intelligently by actively deconstructing past and current movement vocabulary and patterns. Somya Kautia from Mumbai led a "Movement Research" workshop at AAC for actors and movement artists. Working on the idea of presence, she used guided improvisation, play and influences of capoeira to bring into focus elements like mobility, quality, structure, feeling and weight of different body parts.

International dance producer and presenter, Nelson Fernandez from London facilitated a very different kind of workshop for a small group of participants on Saturday, 10 February afternoon. "Producing Dance" explored issues involved in the presentation of dance as an art form. The participant group of dancers, critics, students and arts managers addressed often fraught questions about developing trust between dancers and presenters, and creating an environment that is supportive of dance for the best work to happen. The range of different backgrounds brought many perspectives into the mix, underlining the overall complexity and many local contexts of the subject. This was the first time Pickle Factory attempted a workshop such as this, where we were – in a sense – actually laying bare all that we have to think about when putting together a Season!

Another first was a panel discussion – "Talking Lament" – with German choreographer Stephanie Thiersch and scholars Trina Nileena Banerjee, Debaroti Chakraborty and Souradeep Roy on Sunday, 11 February. Stephanie was in the city researching local rituals of lament, and the relationship between them and performance. Co-presented by our staunch partners Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Kolkata, this session foregrounded Stephanie's research and work on the topic in various cultures, and located the same in an Indian context through the contributions of the other three panelists. The rich conversation was attended by a small audience, and is intended to feed into Stephanie's future choreographic processes.



Participant for Prashant More's Workshop at KCC | Image: Sahitya Dutta

PERFORMANCE - "JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN"

Both evenings were focused around the performance "Johnny Got His Gun" from Finland. Directed by Essi Rossi, performed by Johannes Holopainen with sound designed by Pauli Riikonen, the performance is a one-man adaptation of Dalton Trumbo's iconic anti-war, pacifist novel of the same name. It tells the story of a teenage World War One soldier who has had his arms, legs and face blown off, and lies helpless in a hospital bed. He spins the audience through his tragedy and a century of growth, violence and loss, questioning the kind of liberty and democracy that he was taught to fight for and dream of.

The performance took place in the KCC amphitheatre, while the foyer hosted pre-show conversations with the director to enable the audience to enter into the world of the performance they were about to watch. On 10 February, Malavika Banerjee – Director of the Kolkata Literary Meet and Pickle Factory advisor – spoke to Essi Rossi about the challenges of Adapting Literature into Performance, particularly with a text like "Johnny Got His Gun". On 11 February, city actors Titas Dutta and Shadab Kamal performed two of "The Gaza Monologues" in Bangla and Hindi, which provided the ground for a conversation between Rustom Bharucha – dramaturg, author and cultural interlocutor – and Rossi on "Peacebuilding and the Arts", and the relevance and necessity of making art in the time of war.

Prepped with the ideas and perspectives that came up during these conversations, the audience entered the performance space to insistent and repetitive beeping sounds, and took their places around a body lying on a bare table that could have been an operating theatre, a hospital room or a morgue. The intimacy of the space contributed to the rawness and power of the performance, with audiences leaving deeply moved by the experience.

AUDIENCE RESPONSES

"Sometimes you need a tight slap on the face to wake up. Thank you!"

"GUT WRENCHING. In awe of the craft."



Malavika Banerjee & Essi Rossi pre-show talk at KCC | Image: Adrija Samal



'Johnny Got His Gun' performance at KCC | Image: Adrija Samal

INDIA TOUR

"Johnny Got His Gun" is possibly the first Finnish contemporary theatre performance to come to India. Apart from their performances in Calcutta, we also worked with partners and local hosts to tour the company to Santiniketan, Thrissur, Bangalore and Delhi. This was only possible with the ready support of the Embassy of Finland in Delhi and the Honorary Finnish Consulate in Calcutta, along with our partners Arthshila Santiniketan, International Theatre Festival of Kerala, Attakalari Bangalore and the Honorary Finnish Consulate in Bangalore. We truly hope that this opens the doors to many other arts exchanges between Finland and India.

"For us this has been like a dream. Two weeks of non stop amazement with new fascinating experiences and encounters with beautiful people. We are beyond words grateful. To perform this piece here has felt meaningful and important."

Johannes Holopainen



'Talking Lament' panel discussion at KCC | Image : Sharmistha Sarker

LEAP THROUGH



16 to 18 February 2024

In Weekend 2 of our LEAP!: PFS4 we Leaped Through spaces that did not know dance. We wondered how to reimagine dance and movement beyond dark theatres and tiny digital screens because we believe dance deserves to be danced and experienced in the open, on the street, among people, in broad daylight, in real time. Our vision was to claim and energise these public spaces with our bodies, with movement, with music and joy. And what better place to do it than the New Town Community Zone supported by HIDCO.

Leap Through: Dance Encounters in Public Spaces featured CieLAROQUE (Salzburg, Austria), Prashant More (Goa), Somya Kautia (Mumbai), and diverse performers from the dance community of Calcutta under the New Town Flyover. We presented a host of workshops not just with practising dancers and movers but also with underprivileged school children from our partner NGO schools that culminated into an energetic showcase. The activities of this week were spread over six days including 3 days of performances.






CieLAROQUE | Newtown Community Zone |
Image: Adrija Samal



PERFORMANCES

Day 1 was a big experiment for us to see how audiences that are just on their way home from work react to largely experimental and contemporary work from Europe and India. "Hear and Now" by CieLAROQUE was a culmination of three different workshops that the company conducted with dancers and middle-school children from the NGOs, Ek Tara and Dakshini Prayash. Along with the company, the school children, there were also six dancers from various backgrounds from Calcutta who had workshopped the choreography with the company and together it became an extremely exciting game that kept the audiences and the participants on their toes. The air was filled with spontaneity that continued into the last section that got everyone up on their feet and following the guided lead of the team to the tunes of fan-favourite Hindi song. The evening ended in an explosion of dance and music with passersby, engaged audiences and even street vendors moving to the groove.

Day 2 began with 'Back to the Streets', our community platform performances. Since we got an overwhelming response to this showcase format that began in Season 3 in "Spaces for Community" and "Spaces for Performance", we wanted to bring it back for our fourth season. We reached out to emerging artists in and around the New Town area and had eight short performances ranging across styles and forms such as Breaking to Contemporary to Odissi. This was succeeded by the second performance of CieLAROQUE for this weekend. Their piece 'Rhythm and Intoxication' explored intimacy and closeness in a performative setting. The performers created an interactive, participatory landscape that developed over the course of the performance into a structured chaos, full of energetic turmoil in a never-ending loop through abstract uninterrupted movement full of physical intensity. As the performers weaved in and out of the 'performance area,' their unpredictability captured the audience in almost a trance-like state.



Day 3 was our final day at the New Town Community Zone and we thought of going back to our playful and childhood roots through interactive games with the audiences that involved lots of leaping and jumping around. It managed to loosen them up and break them out of a typical 'performance' mindset, which was the optimal setting for 'Everything Potentially is Something Else' devised by Prashant More and Somya Kautia. This performance was devised for this space along with 9 artists from Calcutta who over 10-days of intensive workshop explored themes of violence and how bodies interact and interpret violence present around them. Through a mix of game-like elements, improvised moments and choreographed structures, the performance took up a meandering flow, moving all throughout the space while taking the audience with them. They responded to the questions posed to them during the workshop through speech, music and movement.



WORKSHOPS

Hear & Now

To devise the improvised and experimental performance of Hear and Now, Cielaroue worked with six dancers from Kolkata who had various backgrounds in dance at our partner venue Ek Tara. But the participants all had one thing in common. They had some previous performance experience in contemporary forms. Over the span of three days, the six dancers worked with specific choreographic phrases and devised sections to improvise at the venue upon receiving song suggestions from the audience. The workshop included working on an entire one hour performance that included dance, some singing along with interacting with and engaging the audience.

A participant's account of the workshop experience:

CieLAROQUE's extensive workshop for the practitioner's under the supervision of the Director Helene Weinzierl was curated for site specific experimentation. The outcome of the workshop was the site-specific performance 'Here and Now' where a new set of Kolkata-based performers came together along with the CieLAROQUE team to perform at super-bright New Town Community Zone. The performance was packed with impromptu improvisation, establishing audience involvement as they suggest songs, dialogues and engaging with the public to dance as they were warmly welcomed to dance along.



Audience of "Hear & Now" by CieLAROQUE | Newtown Community Zone | Image: Adrija Samal

The highlight of the show was the elaborate performance with the children, by the children. A bunch of 40 children of age group 10-14 years from the NGO Ek Tara and Dakshini Prayas delivered a commendable performance after 3 days of workshop by the CieLAROQUE artists. "As a participant of the practitioner's workshop and coordinator of the children's workshop at Dakshini Prayas, I closely got an overview of CieLAROQUE's inclusive practices of performance designed for people with any capacity. This was absolutely a very enriching experience as I was switching between roles and adapting movement-oriented challenges with whatever knowledge I had of theatrical practices."

Sohini Dalal



NGO schools & Kolkata dancers in "Hear & Now" by CieLAROQUE | Newtown Community Zone | Image: Adrija Samal



Ek Tara

As part of their partnership with us, a three day workshop with the Austrian dance company CieLAROQUE was arranged for 20 students between the ages 13 to 15. Uwe Brauns and Jolyane Langlois of the company conducted the workshop with these students.



Ek Tara students' workshop with CieLAROQUE | Ek Tara | Image: Adrija Samal



Dakshini Prayash students' workshop with CieLAROQUE | Ek Tara | Image: Adrija Samal

DAKSHINI PRAYASH

A new partnership was forged this season with another NGO school Dakshini Prayash. As part of their performance "Hear and Now", CieLAROQUE engaged 20 students between the classes 6 and 8 to explore and practise choreographic phrases in the style of contemporary dance. It was conducted by Azahara Sanz Jara and Nejma Larichi of the Austrian company as they discovered with these 20 children storytelling through movement of the body. The culmination of these 3 days of workshop, choreography and spontaneity was showcased at the New Town Community Centre as a part of LEAP!: Pickle Factory Season 4.



Dakshini Prayash students hug Nejma Larichi of CieLARQUE | Newtown Community Zone | Image: Adrija Samal

LEAP OUT



2 to 3 March 2024

In our third weekend, we took a leap and hit the spotlight! Leap Out was ideated with the motive to build a dance ecology through new, upcoming voices in the community.

The primary focus of this weekend was "Finding Ground Open Call" born out of the collaboration between At the Still Point Act VI and Pickle Factory Season 4. Through this collaboration, we wanted to imagine a safe and evolving space for emerging dancers, dance makers and choreographers to show new work, receive critical feedback, and engage in debate and dialogue about the resources, cultures and ecosystems that can nurture and motivate artists to create, practice, perform and grow.

As an extension to "Finding Ground" and to explore the 'out' in Leap OUT, we included two discussion panels to focus on the dialogue between the old and new and bringing together diverse voices.

While the performances only happened in March, the curation and selection process has been in motion since December. Paramita Saha, Preethi Athreya and Raka Maitra become the esteemed jury who selected the final four artists.

In our pilot year, we managed to receive 32 applications spread across Kerala, Delhi, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, and Goa and from various movement vocabularies like Belly dance, Odissi, Kalaripayattu and more. Although we could only select four artists this year, the applicants left us with some self-reflective conceptions of what 'Finding Ground' is or can be;



'Nerpala' | Goethe-Institut Max Mueller Bhavan, Kolkata | Image: Sushmita Das

Leap out was ideated with the motive to build a dance ecology through new, upcoming voices in the community.

Debapriya Das, belly dancer Kolkata: 'Availability of diverse spaces to present esoteric dances'

Mukulita Ganguly, Dancer and movement practitioner, Kolkata: 'My biggest concern as a practitioner is resource.'

Aabshaar, performer and body-based practitioner, Delhi: 'What are ways beyond the stage (black box) that culture lives on through the body?'

Seher Noor Mehra, dance practitioner, Bangalore: 'seek opportunities to engage in environmentally conscious practices within the dance community'

The weekend was spread over 2 day, 2 March and 3 March 2024 featuring four performances by Pintu Das (Kolkata), Dileep Chilanka (Kasaragod, Kerala), Kankana Singh (Kolkata) and Abhay Mahajan (Mumbai). All the performances took place at Goethe Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan, Kolkata, who were our venue partners.



Pintu Das in "Bhasha - The Language" | Goethe-Institut Max Mueller Bhavan, Kolkata | Image: Adrija Samal

PERFORMANCES | DAY 1

Pintu's "Bhasha" - The Language was a personal movement exploration of the ignominy experienced by the artist when unable to express identity or art in a foreign language. What happens when one language is needed to explain or even justify another? Through a series of incidents on stage, this piece addresses the failure to communicate dance, through dance.

Dileep's experimental performance contemplated the structures of wooden planks found across rural Kerala called "Nerpala". Along with his co-performers, Ananthakrishnan K and Rajith A R, Dileep attempted to embody the motion, geometry and fluidity of silent objects of his hometown. Rooted in the interrelations of personal and cultural memory, the playful piece is inspired by the topography of Dileep's village and the quality of folk dances like theyyam, yakshagana, panjuruli and more.



Abhay Mahajan in "Asymptomatic" | Goethe-Institut Max Mueller Bhavan, Kolkata | Image: Adrija Samal



Parna Chakraborty in "Nāsadiya" | Goethe-Institut Max Mueller Bhavan, Kolkata | Image: Adrija Samal

PERFORMANCES | DAY 2

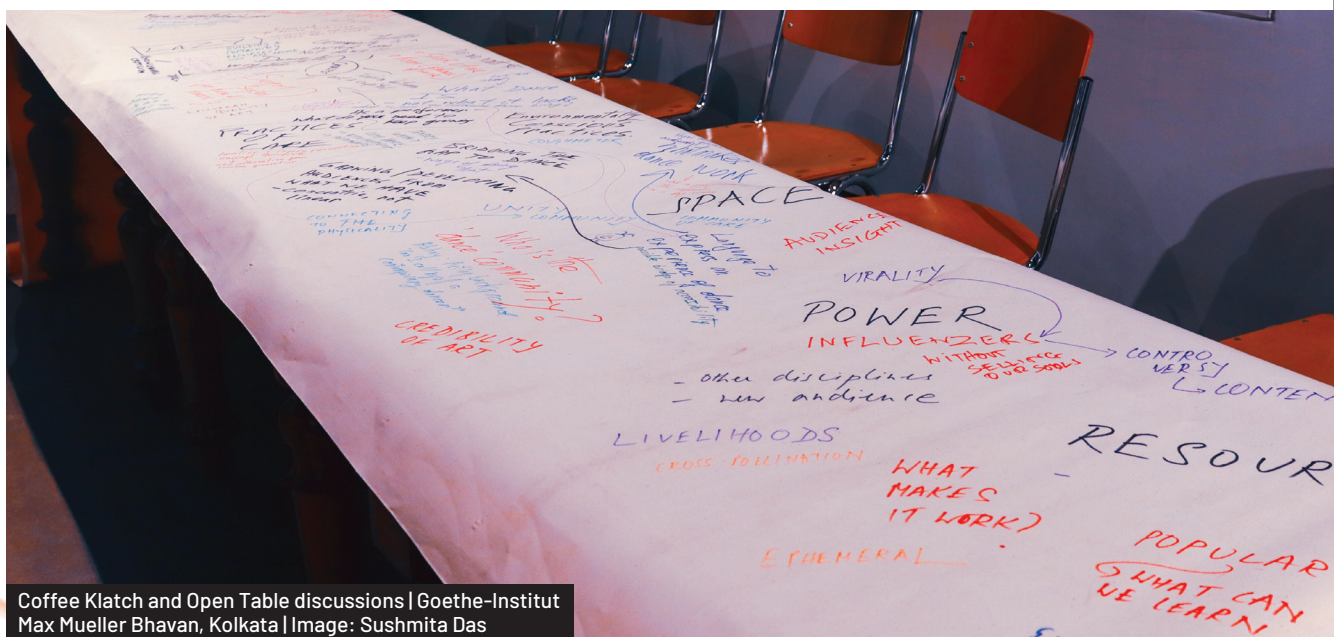
Kankana and Parna's duet - "Nāsadiya - The Meandering Energy" experimented with the concept of Nasadiya Sukta, a hymn of creation in Rig Veda. The piece explored the feminine power of creation - Shakti and its counterpart - Shiva, whose union leads its way towards awakening energy - Kundalini - that travels through our body to reach the highest form of consciousness.

"Asymptomatic" was a theatre piece that wanted to become a dance piece and ended up being a stand-up. A performance shaped in the format of an interview told the story of Abhay Mahajan himself who had but one dream - to make a performance that could change his life. The artist took the audience on a humorous and ironic journey of repeated non-selection for a performance grant, lightly bringing forth serious deliberation and questioning on the systems of performance grants that are often not equitable.

OPEN TABLE AND COFFEE KLATCH

The "Open Table" was envisioned as a free-flowing, dynamic, accessible and open forum for the performing arts fraternity to voice both urgent and systemic concerns that might deter the growth of emerging artists and prevent them from achieving their full potential. How can we reimagine our ecosystems to build equitable frameworks for support for the next generations of artists and performers? The Table kept notes on its cover and had space for anyone to come up and make their points.

The "Coffee Klatch" conversations took the pertinent points from the Open Table Notes into smaller huddles, tables of solution-centric discussions among practitioners and other representatives for the arts. Through the intensive discussions, six topics came up:



Coffee Klatch and Open Table discussions | Goethe-Institut
Max Mueller Bhavan, Kolkata | Image: Sushmita Das

1. *Physical spaces as a much needed-resource. How can we generate and share them as a community, and who can we involve in this process?*
2. *Who are dance audiences? How can we take them along through our curation, marketing, programming without diluting the core values of dance and what we do as artists.*
3. *What are the multiple currencies that dance brings to the table? And how can we highlight the value of these to a larger circle of stakeholders?*
4. *Power: power structures, inequities, measures to address inequities, promotive and not merely preventive measures to ensure safety and security of performers and their rights.*
5. *Responsibility and Sustainability in the sector – ethically, environmentally...*
6. *Support Structure for artists. What resources do we need, and how can we gather and share them equitably for everyone concerned?*



LEAP ACROSS



13 to 16 March 2024

The closing weekend for the Season featured two artists / companies we were unable to bring to Calcutta during Season 3 – so we literally leapt across an entire year in order to host them! Both are internationally acclaimed – Don Gnu from Aarhus in Denmark and Mallika Sarabhai from Ahmedabad. In the former's "Walk-Man", 4 men take us on a surprising journey by simply crossing the road, while in Mallika Sarabhai's Past Forward, 1 woman takes us back through time, leaping across histories, politics and the role of the female voice. The artists were with us for a span of days for a range of engagements co-presented and co-hosted by several wonderful partners.

DON GNU

Don Gnu is the first Danish performance company to come to India. We were delighted to have the support and participation of Bente Wolff of the Danish Cultural Institute in Delhi. We hope to do a lot more together.

School engagements

On 13 March, 53 students from Mahadevi Birla World Academy and guest school Akshar, experienced a one-of-a-kind physical theatre, dance, martial arts and fun based workshop conducted by Jeppe Kaas Vad and Jesper Holm ... with a bit of Bollywood thrown in.

On 15 March, a few days before , International Take a Child to the Theatre Day' 200 students from various schools and NGOs came to G. D. Birla Sabhagar for a special morning show of Walk-Man by Don Gnu. The pre show interaction explored various crazy ways of crossing the street, ultimately asking the real-life question „How should we cross a street responsibly?“. The show Walk-Man was an amalgamation of great artistry, athleticism, high comedy, timing and poetry in motion, emerging from the simple act of being a pedestrian and then taking off into great imaginative heights, brought to life by these 4 exceptionally trained theatre-dance practitioners. Post show the students showered our guests with a volley of questions and positive feedback in their excitement from the show. It was a first time experience for many in the audience.

Theatre for young people is particularly important to us. We know how valuable sharing an electric live performance experience with one's peers can be for young audiences. Often these can be lifelong memories. Live theatre opens up spaces in the brain, and spaces for multiple interpretations and opinions that students have rare access to in today's world of black and white.



Students pre-show interaction 'Walk-Man' | G.D. Birla Sabhagar | Image: Adrija Samal

Let's hear from the students

Each second of that workshop is unforgettable- from the first moment when we dropped all inhibitions and freely moved our bodies, pushing our limits or mimicking each other, till the very end when we learned a bit of choreography from their show 'Walk-Man.' We even got to ask the members of Don Gnu questions about their professional life and experience in India.

On 15.03.24, as we sat on the edge of our seats awaiting the commencement of Don Gnu's performance of 'Walk-Man' at the prestigious GD Birla Sabhagar, we never imagined that the show would be such a treat to the mind and soul. The performers were outstanding and the energy in the room was electric. The idea behind the show originated from the simple yet profound experiences one can have while navigating crossroads in daily life. The dance routine showcased a perfect blend of awe-inspiring displays of athleticism and delicate moments of intimacy. The dancers exhibited exceptional versatility, effortlessly shifting between solos, duets, and ensemble segments. Every step and gesture conveyed a powerful emotion and intention, transporting the spectators to the narrative unfolding on the stage. Additionally, the Bollywood representation in the piece was quite amusing.

Sayona Sarkar

XI H Mahadevi Birla World Academy

I had a wonderful experience participating in this spectacular and fun filled workshop. It was an honour and pleasure working with such talented and friendly instructors from Don Gnu. The inputs and the tips we picked up will go a long way in our future stage performances. My special thanks to Pickle Factory, who made such a memorable and enjoyable workshop possible for us. -

Anandi Haldar class IX, Akshar

The show was spectacular - the artful performers delivered each moment with extreme precision and drew the perfect balance between power and delicacy. The show gave us a fair amount of laughter, simultaneously imparting a strong message. It beautifully illustrates the casual intimacy and vulnerability present in everyday moments that we often ignore, serving as a reminder to romanticise life and break the monotony. Furthermore, the minimalist setup on stage really highlights the degree of raw expression present in each and every movement of the performers.

Tahera Fatima Javed XI F, Mahadevi Birla World Academy



Other Engagements

Also on 13 March actors of theatre group Padatik experienced an intensive practitioners workshop with Don Gnu. Borrowing from contact-improvisation, martial arts and dance, the workshop worked on touch, sharing weight, body manipulation, lifts and how to find freedom in working with another body.

That same evening our partners for the Artist Diaries series – Glenburn Culture Club – hosted an exclusive preview of "Walk-Man" at their beautiful terrace venue. A short duet excerpt from the production was followed up with a conversation with Don Gnu members facilitated by choreographer-curator Vikram Iyengar. The evening rounded off with a curated wine and cheese selection by Fratelli, with a grazing menu from Glenburn Penthouse.

The workshop by Don Gnu was amazing. It helped me explore so many different possibilities and made me so curious about my body again. I think movement is always so therapeutic and this workshop helped to get to know our patterns while having fun!

Shruti Jain



Artist Diaries 1.3 with Don Gnu | Glenburn Penthouse | Image: Adrija Samal



Mallika Sarabhai

We co-hosted Mallika Sarabhai in Calcutta along with Dancers' Guild. On 15 March morning, the senior repertory of the Guild experienced a workshop facilitated by Mallika Sarabhai at their studio space. Working with simple movement exercises and improvisation impulses, the participants were asked to explore how their everyday experiences could provide inspiration to create authentic physical movement and performance.

It was a privilege for Dancers' Guild to have received an exclusive workshop from Mallika Sarabhai at our institute - Mrityika. All thanks to Pickle Factory Dance Foundation for all the arrangements. The three hour workshop of exploring body, sound and mind motivated our dancers to think beyond. The exercises had a great impact on our perception of bodies and thoughts synchronisation. Her words made us contemplate on our skills as a performer and how we can enhance it further. Having said that, hope she had a comfortable stay at our place and wish that she visits us again!

Dancers' Guild

Talks & Interactions

TRI Art and Culture – a brand new arts venue in Calcutta – kicked off their TRI Talks series with Mallika Sarabhai and Sumona Chakravarty (artist, founder of the Hamdasti community arts platform, and Director of the DAG Museums Programme) at their cosy rooftop space on 14 March evening. The conversation was titled "Room to Move" and was moderated by Madeleine St. John, Director of TRI Art and Culture and an expressive arts facilitator herself. The rich conversation and subsequent interaction with the audience focused on what we can learn from the female body and what we consider properties of femininity and how these can feed into choreographing change within space and time to develop a more balanced body politic.

While the TRI Talk opened Mallika Sarabhai's Season programme, an open adda hosted by Dancers' Guild at the Golden Tulip Hotel closed it. The adda participants were drawn from various city groups working on issues of gender and performance, mirroring Mallika Sarabhai's personal interest areas and work with social justice issues. The interaction travelled through many experiences, perspectives and challenges creating an open and supportive space for sharing and solidarity. We look forward to seeing what this connection between Mallika Sarabhai and these many groups and individuals doing stellar work in this part of the country may lead to.





Closing Performances

The Season closing weekend on 15 and 16 March was co-presented with Sanskriti Sagar and hosted at G. D. Birla Sabhagar – our only formal proscenium venue for the Season. Don Gnu's "Walk-Man" had the audience spellbound and laughing with their mix of physical comedy, acrobatics and simple but astonishingly imaginative stagecraft. And Mallika Sarabhai's "Past Forward" featuring multi-genre vocalist Aditi Ramesh received a rapturous standing ovation from a full house providing a fitting curtain to LEAP! : Pickle factory Season 4.

I have been waiting for this show for a long time. It's one of the best shows of my lifetime. Extremely philosophical and at the same time extremely funny. I don't know how they did these two at the same time. Amazing!

Kunal Chakraborty, audience member for "Walk-Man"

I strongly believe that movement is a core part of being human. It brings out emotions inside you, it brings out a lot of things... I think we tend to ignore the importance of movement, but they showed us what it can do. I look forward to more such shows. Pickle Factory – thank you for bringing them here all the way from Denmark!

Pramit Pratim Ghosh, audience member for "Walk-Man"

I'm having goosebumps. The message is so clear and powerful. I just wish that we were all like this. We could voice what we feel, we could say what we think... and the world will change for good.

Sujata Ghosh, audience member for Past Forward



Don Gnu in 'Walk-Man' | Image: Adrija Samal



Don Gnu in 'Walk-Man' | Image: Adrija Samal

বদল কালের নিয়ম, তবু আজও পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজ কাঠামোয় নারীর ভূমিকার কোনো বদল নেই। "আদর্শ নারী"র কী করণীয় সুযোগ পেলেই তা বুঝিয়ে দেওয়া যেন সমাজের কর্তব্য — এই কঠিন সত্যটাই মূর্ত হয়েছে উঠেছে মল্লিকার উপস্থাপনায়।

প্রাচীন সঙ্গম সাহিত্য থেকে সমসাময়িক কালের ভাষ্যে নারী শরীরের উপর ঐকে দেওয়া গতি কিভাবে তাকে আষ্টেপৃষ্ঠে জড়িয়ে রাখে, কিভাবে রাষ্ট্রশক্তি নখাঘাতে রক্তাক্ত হয় তার স্বাধীনতা সেই সবই বাঙময় হয়ে উঠেছে *Past Forward* এ। প্রাচীন থেকে সমকালীন সময়ের এই যাত্রাপথের প্রকাশ ভঙ্গি হিসেবে ভরতনাট্যমের ব্যবহার এখানে বিশেষ বার্তাবাহক, যেখানে সমকালীন শিল্পীরা নৃত্যরত শরীরের নতুন ভাষার খোঁজে নতুন শব্দ গড়তে ব্যস্ত সেখানে মল্লিকা সেই ধ্রুপদী নৃত্যের আঙ্গিকেই সমকালের ভাষা উপস্থাপন করেন। আজকের নৃত্যশিল্পীরা যেখানে তাদের নৃত্য ভাবনা শেষ করেন সম্ভবত মল্লিকা সেখান থেকেই শুরু করেন তার কাজ। তার জয়যাত্রা অব্যাহত থাকুক - এই শুভ কামনা জানাই ডান্সার্স গিল্ড এর পক্ষ থেকে।

Dancers' Guild on *Past Forward*



Mallika Sarabhai in "Past Forward" | Image: Adrija Samal

An Intern's View By Sohini Dalal

If I had not been at Pickle Factory for my internship, I would never have imagined how such a large-scale dance-festival could be carried out in an ethical, organised and strategized manner. Along with working and learning here, the sincerity and organisational approach to work, care, sympathy, joy for art, will be an asset to my own art practice. I was inspired by the team's well-researched plan and attempts to find short-term and long-term ways of making art practice like dance accessible to more people. In addition to it, the workshops and seminars I get to attend were very illuminating to me. Workshops and discussions of such range with some brilliant people, with different perspectives are rare in Kolkata. Many thanks and love to Pickle Factory for making me a part of you.

পিকল ফ্যাক্টরি তে ইন্টার্নশিপ করতে না এলে হয়তো কখনো ধারণা করতে পারতাম না যে এত বড় মাপের কর্মকাণ্ড কীভাবে নৈতিকতা বজায় রেখেও গুছিয়ে সম্পন্ন করা যায়। এখানে কাজ করা ও শেখার পাশাপাশি যে আন্তরিকতা ও সাংগঠনিকভাবে কাজের মানসিকতা, শিল্পের প্রতি যত্ন, সহানুভূতি, আনন্দ পেয়েছি, তা আমার নিজের শিল্প চর্চার কাছে এক অবিস্মরণীয় নিদর্শন হয়ে থাকবে। শুধু নিজস্ব শিল্পচর্চা নয়, কীভাবে সামগ্রিক শিল্পচর্চা, বিশেষ করে নাচের মতন শারীরিক শিল্পচর্চা কীভাবে আরো মানুষের কাছে সুলভ করে তোলা যায়, তার স্বল্পস্থায়ী ও দীর্ঘস্থায়ী উপায় নিয়মিত ভাবে অনুসন্ধান করার অনুপ্রেরণা পেলাম এখানে কাজ করে। কাজ করার পাশাপাশি যে কর্মশালাগুলি ও আলোচনা সভাগুলিতে যোগদানের সুযোগ পেয়েছি আমার কাছে তা খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। দর্শকের সামনে সরাসরি যে পারফরম্যান্সগুলি সাধারণভাবে শিল্পীরা করে থাকেন, তার সম্পূর্ণ প্রক্রিয়ার গভীরের বিভিন্ন সমস্যা ও প্রতিকূলতা সম্পর্কে বিভিন্ন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি থেকে এরকম আলোচনা কলকাতার বুকে খুব কমই হয়। এই আলোচনার অংশীদার হওয়া ও তা থেকে জ্ঞান আহরণের সুযোগ করে দেওয়ার জন্য পিকল ফ্যাক্টরিকে অনেক ধন্যবাদ আর ভালোবাসা।



Somya Kautia 'Movement Workshop'

Somya's workshop raised the question to the participants 'where is the movement coming from?' The participants coming from different learning experiences and phases had to review and renew their individual understanding of body, space, dynamics, shapes and patterns created through the body. Also, Somya's process of facilitation of tools and exchanging experiences really made us open to experiment and take a small step ahead from where each one was.

CieLAROQUE workshop and 'Here and Now'

CieLAROQUE's extensive workshop for the practitioner's under the supervision of the Director Helene Weinzierl was curated for site specific experimentation. The outcome of the workshop was the site-specific performance 'Here and Now' where a new set of Kolkata-based performers came together along with the CieLAROQUE team to perform at super-bright New Town Community Zone. The performance was packed with impromptu improvisation, establishing audience involvement as they suggest songs, dialogues and engaging with the public to dance as they were warmly welcomed to dance along.

The highlight of the show was the elaborate performance with the children, by the children. A bunch of 40 children of age group 10-14 years from the NGO Ek Tara and Dakshini Prayas delivered a commendable performance after 3 days of workshop by the CieLAROQUE artists.

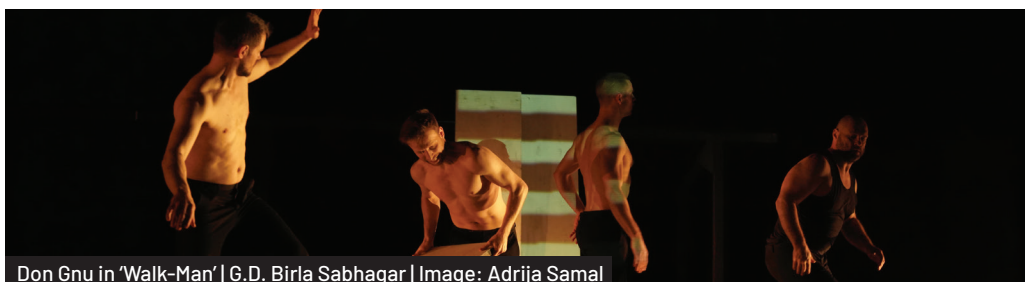
As a participant of the practitioner's workshop and coordinator of the children's workshop at Dakshini Prayas, I closely got an overview of CieLAROQUE's inclusive practices of performance designed for people with any capacity. This was absolutely a very enriching experience as I was switching between roles and adapting movement-oriented challenges with whatever knowledge I had of theatrical practices.

Coffee Klatch Conversation

Though I was not a participant of 'Open Table Conversation' that gave space to voice the concerns of the performing artists, it was very captivating to get into the process of questioning those concerns and finding sustainable solutions. While the participants were grouped in 6 teams with a few major concerns, each team having a particular concern to focus on, all of the enthusiastic participants tried to dive deeper into the problem and find out doors to get out of it. It became really a mind-boggling discourse-based discussion.

Don Gnu children's and practitioner's workshop

The energy of the Don Gnu team was something very profound and contagious during the workshop that the participant practitioners started playing under given conditions with their own body and the others. For the children, specifically the module was very inclusive, flexible and game-based that the children could participate gleefully. Whereas for the adult participants, contact improvisation and body manipulation was something that both the theatre and dance practitioners could borrow for their individual field.



LEAP! TEAM

Curators

Vikram Iyengar
Paramita Saha

LEAP Out Jury

Paramita Saha
Preethi Athreya
Raka Maitra

Creative Producer

Dana Roy

Weekend Coordinators

Vikram Iyengar
Adrijaa Mridul Majumder
Paramita Saha
Srijaini Ghosh
Dana Roy

Production

Amlan Chaudhuri
Srijaini Ghosh

Design

Teesta Brahma

Signature Films

Kunal Chakraborty

Photography

Sahitya Dutta
Adrija Samal

Marketing

Priyadarshini Chitrangada
Dana Roy
Utansa Mansata
Arya Bhattacharya
Adrija Samal
Paramita Saha

Special Reels

Adrija Samal

Administration and

Finances

Jayati Chakraborty
Adrijaa M. Majumder
Sohini Dalal

Volunteers

Anushka, Manjima,
Sharanna, Srestha

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Finland in Bangalore



Singh & Parna Chakraborty in "Nāsadiya" | Goethe-Institut
er Bhavan, Kolkata | Image: Adrija Samal

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Raka Maitra

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Shashwat Goenka

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Shaun Kenworthy

Shubhangi Sanyal

Shyamal Dasgupta

Smita Bajoria

Sunil Bhandari

Supriya Chatterjee

Surendranath Sinha

Swapan Mitra

Tanya Wadhwa

Tausif Rahman

Ushmita Sahu

Varun Thapar

Vinita Saraf



PICKLE PALS

A big thank you to our 2023-24 Pickle Pals from all over India. Your contributions enabled us to deliver 39 programmes featuring 80 artists and guests from India and abroad across 5 projects including a full-length Season spanning 6 weeks (see adjacent video). The programmes brought together diverse audiences and participants in spaces as varied as arts venues, under flyovers, people's homes and gardens, schoolrooms, terraces, and book fairs. Thank you for joining the Pickle Factory movement, and being such a supportive part of our expanding dance-curious community!

As we approach our 7th birthday on 12 July 2024 we renew our commitment to imagine and implement more and more ways to bring the arts and communities together, and support our dance ecologies into the future. We also approach you to renew – or make for the first time – a contribution to help us do so.

Introducing our revamped Pickle Pal Programme for 2024-25!

BE A PICKLE PAL

Donate anything between Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 5,000

(the cost of a dinner with friends)

Help cover our administrative overheads for a year

BE A PICKLE PATRON

Donate anything between Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 50,000

(the cost of a quick weekend getaway)

Support one of our programmes for the year

THINK BIG AND INTO THE FUTURE - BE A PICKLE PIONEER


Would you like to invest in our big dream of creating a permanent dance and community venue in a repurposed space in Calcutta?

[Click here](#) to know more about this exciting vision, and join us on the journey.

And if you would like to contribute with anything else – time, resources, space, expertise...

– please do drop us a line.

picklefactorycalcutta@gmail.com / @PickleFactoryIndia on Facebook and Instagram.



WHAT WILL YOU BE SUPPORTING IN 2024-25?

1. Our series of workshops for educational NGOs such as Dakshini Prayash

Facilitated by Indian and international artists and educators, these 4-5 day workshops open up the world of the arts to young students as well as build bridges between practicing artists and teachers working on art integration practices.

2. @Home – a sampling of art, dance, music and food hosted by and for Kolkata's art lovers

Co-curated with our partners Hamdasti and Ponder Alt, this bimonthly series takes artists into the cosy comfort and hospitality of peoples' homes, where small audiences can meet artists up close and delve into their processes and work.

3. Spaces for Practice – opportunities for dancers to keep growing

These intensive and self-reflective residencies mentored by established artists from India and abroad introduce and encourage new ways of doing, making and thinking about movement. These unique experiences are aimed at building capacity for practising dancers and dance teachers to help them think through questions and develop their own critical and choreographic voices.

4. Dance Appreciation Workshops

Designed and facilitated by dance critic Kathakali Jana, these workshops open up the world of dance to diverse dance-curious demographics in enjoyable and accessible ways.

5. Pickle Factory Season 5

Our annual flagship Season in early 2025 offering a host of exciting performances, workshops, and engagements. This time we are working to host artists and guests from India (of course), USA, Scotland, Luxembourg, and Germany.

Our full plans and programmes for 2024-25 will be announced in July 2024.

PICKLE PALS

What do we offer you?

- Acknowledgments on our website and Pickle Pal related communication during projects like the Season, and during particular programmes you choose to support.
- A brief quarterly email report with specifics on what your support has allowed us to do.
- Priority booking for all our public programmes (and the option of nominating someone if you are unable to make it).
- An annual report and little gift at the end of the year.
- Our heartfelt thanks for being a stakeholder in this journey of sharing the joy, energy and sensorial experience of dance with everyone.



Audience for "Antigone, Interrupted" | Dalhousie Institute | Image: Sahitya Dutta

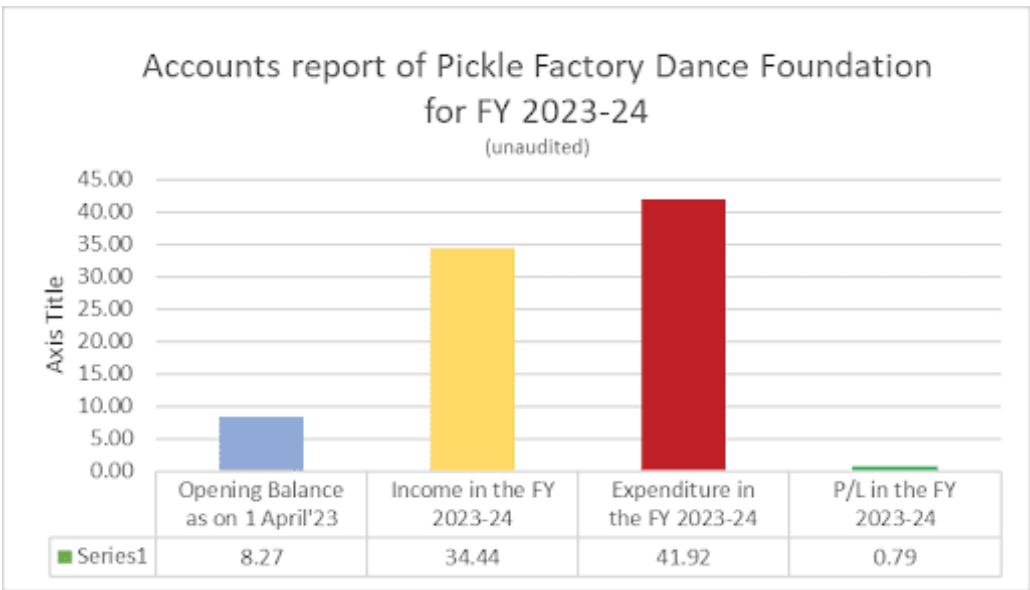
A shout out to our 2023-24 Pickle Pals from Calcutta, Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi, Santiniketan and Chennai!

Shayori Mitra, Sujoy Prosad Chatterjee, Madhushree Basu, Sanjay Roy, Toral Shah, Nayana Gangooly, Urmimala Sarkar Munshi, Preethi Athreya, Lata Devi Bajoria, Anushka Kurien, Gautam Chakraborti, Mukul Agarwal, Menaka Rodriguez, Pratiti Basu Sarkar, Amit Roy, Piyal Bhattacharya, Diya Naidu, Aishika Chakraborty, T. V. Srinivasan, Sharmila Biswas, Sandhya Apte, Paula Sengupta, Suleena Sapra, Narthaki Official, Katie Dalal, Minoo Daryanani, Mandeep Singh Raikhy, Damayanti Lahiri, Mukulita Ganguly, Rashmi Dhanwani, Priyadarshini Chitrangada, Sarika Misra, Katy and Sumit Lai Roy

LEGAL & FINANCIAL

COMPANY DETAILS

1. Pickle Factory Dance Foundation, Calcutta is a not-for-profit company registered under Section 8 of The Companies Act, 2013 (CIN: U74999WB2017NPL221868). The company was incorporated on 12 July 2017. The company directors are Vikram Iyengar and Jayati Chakraborty.
2. We are registered as an NGO eligible for donations with the Indian government with Unique NGO ID WB/2021/0292010.
3. We are registered with the Ministry for Corporate Affairs for undertaking CSR activities with registration number CSR00062236.
4. Donations to Pickle Factory Dance Foundation are tax exempt under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961.



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www.picklefactory.in



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Ashis Sinha | Newtown Community Zone | Image: Adrija Samal

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