



PICKLE FACTORY



ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 25





INDEX

1. Pickle Factory Dance Foundation
– company snapshot
2. The Story So Far – and a note of caution
3. Snapshot 2024-25
4. @ Home
5. Arts4All – arts outreach with NGO schools
6. Dance Appreciation Workshop
7. Spaces for Practice
8. Artist Diaries Edition 2
9. Finding Ground 2025
10. Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5
 - a. Curatorial Note
 - b. Snapshot
 - c. Week 1: Power
 - d. Week 2: People
 - e. Week 3: Magic
 - f. A New Season Venue
 - g. Pre-performance Events
 - h. India Tour
 - i. Season Team
 - j. Season Partners and Acknowledgements
11. Advisors and Pickle Pals
12. Legal and Financial

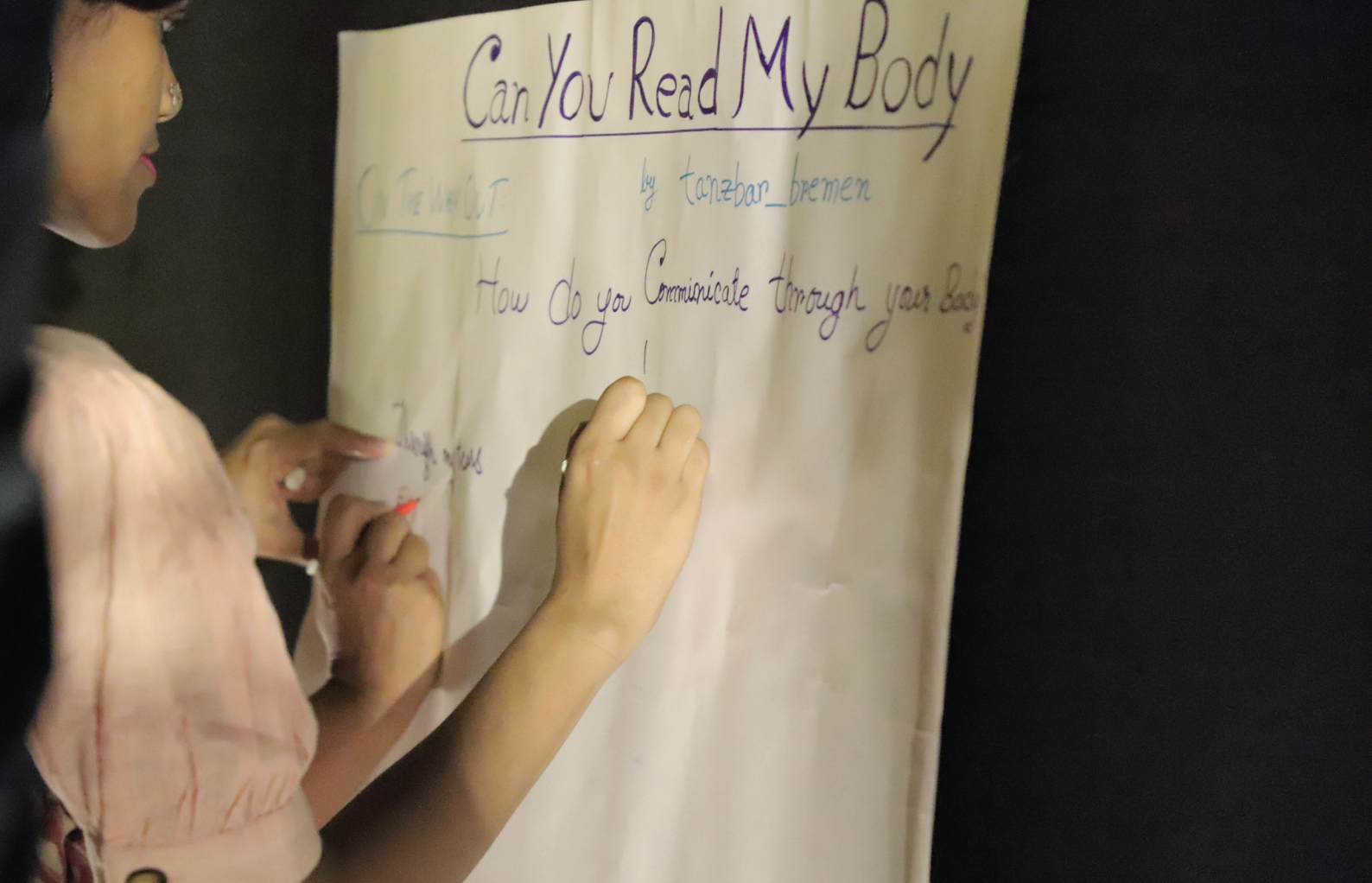
Front Cover

Seher Noor Mehra, *'Bujjo!' Belongs* | Finding Ground 2025 | Image: Adrija Samal

Inside Front Cover

Padmini Chettur, *Philosophical Enactment 1*, post-show talk with Priyanka Raja |

Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Ahon Gooptu



Above
Audience member at tanzbar_bremen's *Can You Read My Body?* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Sahitya Dutta
Below
Venue set-up at Alipore Museum | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Godhuli Roy



PICKLE FACTORY DANCE FOUNDATION – COMPANY SNAPSHOT

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.

What we do:

We respond to the lack of spaces and infrastructure in India to develop and nurture dance and movement work and artists. We are an artist led unit working with artists, audiences and support systems to build a diverse dance-curious community connecting to larger conversations of arts and society.

What we want to be:

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 global network of such vital and vibrant arts spaces.



THE STORY SO FAR – AND A NOTE OF CAUTION

Pickle Factory turned 8 in July 2025. Since 2018, we have presented over 750 programmes in Calcutta and elsewhere featuring Indian and international artists from all six continents, activated the most unusual city spaces to present performances in, developed and engaged with new audiences for dance, created opportunities for young practitioners to build their practice, and much more. All this is towards nurturing a local ecosystem that thrives on Indian and international connections and exchanges, and creates and sustains a dynamic dance-curious community in Calcutta and beyond. And over the last 8 years, it has been my privilege and pleasure to lead a dream team of passionate, committed, diverse individuals who have pulled off miracles to make the magic happen again and again against all odds.

This is an overview of the magic for the year 2024-25 told in the words of the team: Adrijaa (AM), Ahon (AG), Dana (DR), Jayati (JC), Sohini (SD), Srijaini (SG) and myself (VI).

But the magic is at peril. Over the years the odds have consistently multiplied, and the scarce resources available for the arts in the context we work in have dwindled even further. We now find ourselves at a crossroads where we must focus on investing in our own sustainability if we wish to continue doing what we do. We have taken the difficult decision to call off our 2026 Season, and are pulling back on all activity to enable us to secure our future and the future of all we wish to accomplish.

We are down – but we are not out! With the support of our advisors, partners, our extended community, and our redoubtable Pickle Pals, we are certain we will bounce back. For now, we look back at a very active and exhausting 2024-25, and look forward to a quieter, more reflective 2025-26 gathering strength, resources and sustenance to move ahead.

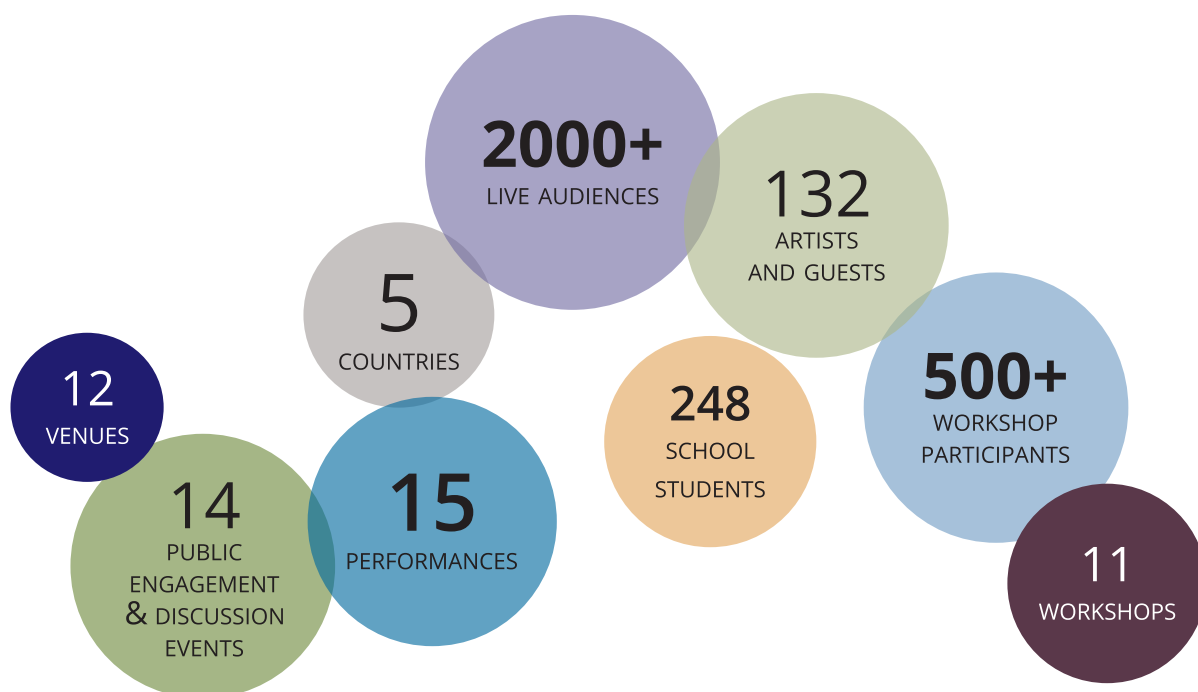
Vikram Iyengar

DIRECTOR

SNAPSHOT 2024-25



In Calcutta . . .







@HOME

The @Home series offers a sampling of art, dance, music and food hosted by and for art lovers in Calcutta. We take local artists into the cosy comfort and hospitality of peoples' homes, where small audiences can meet an artist's process and work up close. @Home is co-curated and presented by three arts organisations – **Hamdasti**, **Ponder Alt** and **Pickle Factory Dance Foundation**.

SHRUTI, SOUMAVA AND MICHELLE

7 September 2024

We had dancer Shruti Ghosh and visual artist Soumava Das present their work and share an evening of discovery, discussion and deliciousness coupled with Michelle's Food at the warm and inviting home of Sanjay & Mukul. With conversations ranging from gender-based violence and mapping site memories of flower markets to stories of families in and around Metiabruz, the evening was abuzz with curiosity, wonder and reflections.

AM

ARTS4ALL – ARTS OUTREACH WITH NGO SCHOOLS

VANDANA ALASE HAZRA AT DAKSHINI PRAYASH

23 to 28 September 2024

From 23 to 28 September, 2024 Vandana Alase Hazra and her student Srijita Maity conducted a unique workshop at Dakshini Prayash. Vandana-di is a Bharatnatyam Dancer & dance scholar who deftly enabled the students to have maths, science, history and



Vandana Alase Hazra with Srijita Maity | Arts4all @ Dakshini Prayash | Images: Dana Roy

geography related discoveries through exploring concepts natural to Bharatnatyam.

ADISHAKTI AT DAKSHINI PRAYASH

5 to 7 February 2025

Vinay Kumar and Nimmy Raphael of Adishakti Laboratory for the Performing Arts, Auroville conducted a 3-day workshop for 50 students of classes 6, 7 & 8, delving into rhythm & mathematics with high energy games that built focus, challenged and sharpened cognitive thinking skills. This is part of our ongoing Arts4All programme geared towards NGO schools and marginalised communities, and was the 3rd



Solène Weinachter | Arts4all @ PACE /
Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 |
Image: Godhuli Roy

Workshop with Dakshini Prayash¹.

SOLÈNE WEINACHTER AT PACE

18 & 19 February 2025

Solène Weinachter conducted a workshop with 29 students from Classes 6 to 11 of PACE Learning Centre in Piyali. Solène had designed a series of energetic and care-driven workshop games, based on contemporary dance methodologies that facilitated students to exercise and discover the following:

- 1) Self thinking about movement, and moving away from simply copying choreography
- 2) Awareness and use of space
- 3) Awareness of one's own body with special emphasis on listening to one's own body
- 4) Building a vocabulary of body movement
- 5) Awareness of other people's body and choices in space
- 6) Making quick decisions based on the awareness & vocabulary built

Thus, in a non-threatening, fun & body-led way, the students expanded their non-verbal understanding of themselves, others and were encouraged to make autonomous choices².

DR

1. Adishakti was a featured company in Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5. Read more about their Season programmes in the Holding Space section later in this report

2. Solène Weinachter was a featured artist in Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5. Read more about her Season programmes in the Holding Space section later in this report



ONLINE

3 to 6 Nov 2024

7:30 pm - 9 pm

DANCE APPRECIATION WORKSHOP WITH DANCE CRITIC KATHAKALI JANA

3 to 6 November 2024

Online

From 3 to 6 November, 2024 Kathakali Jana conducted the fourth Dance Appreciation Workshop along with guest speakers Urmimala Sarkar Munsu and Preethi Athreya. Kathakali helped the participants navigate through different types of performances from different histories, backgrounds, forms, and understand the diverse nuances of the presentation, expressions, aesthetics, designs, politics, philosophy, disciplines, etc. Urmimala talked about Gender in Indian Classical Dance and Preethi traced and demonstrated the evolution of contemporary dance. The workshop concluded with the discussions and analysis of written assignments by the participants.

"I think all the interplay is more noticeable now and I will always now look at the context which the choreographer comes from to try and understand a bit more. That was a big take away from these few days."

AYESHA HASSANWALIA, WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

"For me, being a beginner here, it has absolutely opened my eyes, it has opened a real whole world for me right now."

SOHINI MITRA, WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

SD



Dr. Yashoda Thakore | Spaces for Practice | Images: Ahon Gooptu

SPACES FOR PRACTICE WITH DANCER AND DANCE SCHOLAR DR. YASHODA THAKORE

15 to 22 November 2024
Anuchintan Art Centre

Spaces for Practice offers intensive and self-reflective residencies mentored by established artists from India and abroad to 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.

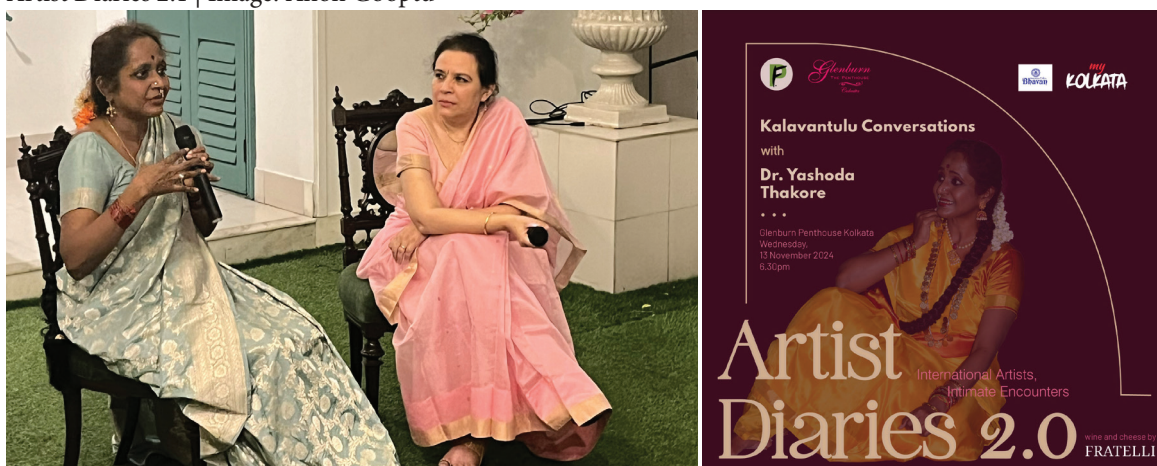
Between 15 and 22 November 2024, we witnessed embodied history unfold as 12 participants from theatre and dance came together to experience Yashoda Thakore's teachings in the centred space of Anuchintan Art Centre. Dance teacher and dance scholar Dr. Yashoda Thakore from Hyderabad invited us to step into the rhythmic pulse of South India's chequered dance history, tracing the journey of the devadasi in Andhra Pradesh (the kalavantulu). A simple anecdote about the oppressive practice of roti-making heralded the unravelling of the tapestry of social transformations where dance was the vessel. A journey through a padam, *endu dachukondu*, and another journey through a javali, *era rara*, where subtle shifts of human psyche surfaced through the expression of the nayika in interaction with her lover, mindfully unearthed erasures and subversions, and - not going to lie - a bit of tears. Like the artful movement on the rosary, what left the workshop was a ceaseless echo that dance is community and dance is everyday. And more than anything, dance is political. Stories and people both live on intertwined. Yashoda uncovered the realisation that as people, we are stories, and carry the histories of the ones forgotten.

SG

ARTIST DIARIES EDITION 2

Co-hosted and co-presented by Glenburn Culture Club and Pickle Factory Dance Foundation at the Glenburn Penthouse, Artist Diaries is an exclusive series centred around an artist's approach to the creative philosophy that drives their work, and insights into their current projects. Each session features a sharing 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 food from Glenburn Penthouse and wine by Fratelli. This year saw our second edition of this winter series featuring four artists from India and abroad.

Dr. Yashoda Thakore, *Kalavantulu Conversations*, in conversation with Prof. Paramita Chakravarti | Artist Diaries 2.1 | Image: Ahon Gooptu



ARTIST DIARIES 2.1 WITH DR. YASHODA THAKORE (HYDERABAD, INDIA)

13 November 2024

On the evening of 13 November, 2024 Dr. Yashoda Thakore brought us the world of kalavantulu of the Andhra region to give us a glimpse of the world of the forgotten singer-dancer devadasi and trace their journey through ages. The event became more engaging through Prof. Paramita Chakravarti's facilitation of the conversation session. While presenting the javali, a short piece of dance, from the kalavantulu repertoire, Yashoda directed her gaze towards the changing tradition of dance and how she adds colours to this particular form holding onto the tradition.



Dr. Yashoda Thakore, *Kalavantulu Conversations*,
in conversation with Prof. Paramita Chakravarti |
Artist Diaries 2.1 | Image: Ahon Gooptu

Dr. Yashoda Thakore with members of Pickle Factory and Anuchintan Art Centre |
Artist Diaries 2.1 | Image: Ahon Gooptu



Aseng Borang, *How The Body Celebrates*, in conversation with Vikram Iyengar |
Artist Diaries 2.2 | Images: Adrija Samal



ARTIST DIARIES 2.2 WITH ASENG BORANG (ROING, INDIA)

15 January 2025

Aseng Borang shared her work and politics of her work through presentations on 15 January 2025 - how it is rooted in her motherland and tribe. Talking about her latest research work, she began her presentation with circular movement referring to Sama of Sufi Dervish culture and ended with a collective movement with the audience with music from her tribe as accompaniment.

"Normally we go to watch a performance and come back with our own thoughts and views. But when we get to sit and listen to what goes on in an artist's mind, that is a very beautiful thing. It is these conversations that Pickle Factory is bringing to all of us that makes us enjoy any kind of arts practice that much more."

BAISALI CHATTERJEE DUTT, AUDIENCE MEMBER

ARTIST DIARIES 2.3 WITH AWA | AS WE ARE (LUXEMBOURG)

5 February 2025

On 5 February, As We Are from Luxembourg presented *Dancing Digital Behaviour* for Artist Diaries 2.3. They showcased a small glimpse of their performance of *Shoot the Cameraman* followed by a discussion with veteran filmmaker and film studies teacher Subha Das Mollick. Very interestingly, the discussion threw light on how the live performance mingled with the twisted reality of the digital presentation of the same on the screen. As Mollick rightly remarked, the interplay of time and space became another character of the performance and Baptiste being the co-creative director could not agree more³.

“It was a very interesting performance, I have never seen a performance where it’s cinematic as well as live theatre, and that was the duality of what they were trying to do. It was really interesting to see the different angles of the live performance as well as what was happening on the screen which was a completely different angle through what I was able to see. And incredible emotions of the actors in their dance forms.”

HUSNA-TARA PRAKASH, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF GLENBURN PENTHOUSE



3. As We Are was a featured company in Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5. Read more about their Season programmes in the Holding Space section later in this report

ARTIST DIARIES 2.4 WITH TANZBAR_BREMEN (BREMEN, GERMANY)

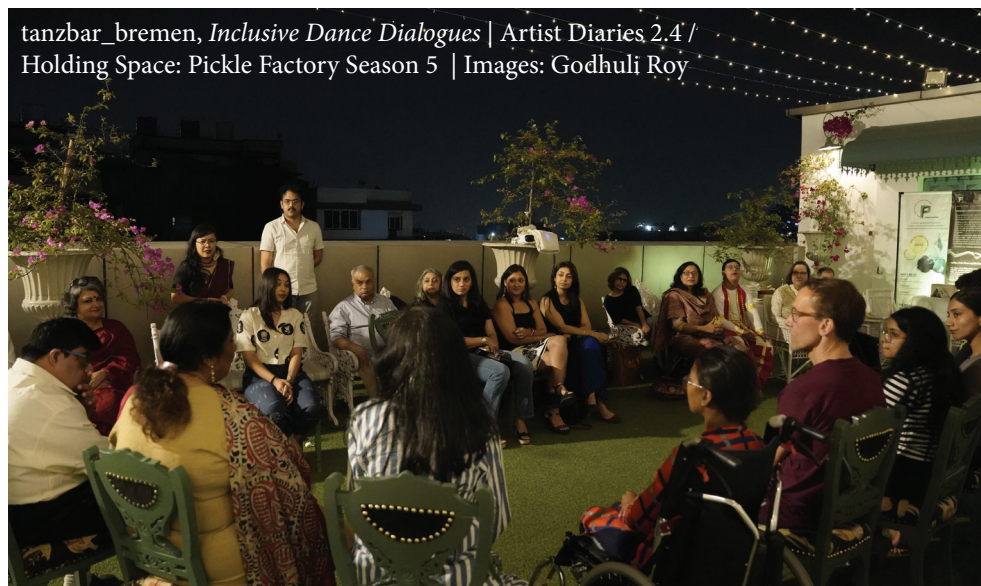
5 March 2025

On 5 March 2025, Artist Diaries 2.4 presented an exceptional evening of exploration into movement - *Inclusive Dance Dialogues* - guided by bodies with mixed abilities. The brilliant opening act was by Shreyan Banerjee, a student and performer with Down's Syndrome from Akshar School. Akshar School itself believes in inclusion and practises diversity by advocating additional needs for special children as they learn along with mainstream children. Noni Khullar, the principal of Akshar School moderated a talk with the choreographer Tomas Bünger and the performers focusing on questions of shared space, embracing diversity and fostering inclusivity⁴.

SD



⁴ tanzbar_bremen was a featured company in Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5. Read more about their Season programmes in the Holding Space section later in this report





Aseng Borang, *The Chinky Express Comes To Town* | Finding Ground 2025 | Image: Adrija Samal

FINDING GROUND 2025

17 & 18 January 2025

Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Kolkata

Co-presented by Pickle Factory Dance Foundation and Artsforward, Finding Ground offers a place of belonging for young artists seeking to embody their unique voices through movement by presenting original works. Through community conversations, it discusses community concerns, provides feedback, and explores resources and support systems that inspire artistic development.

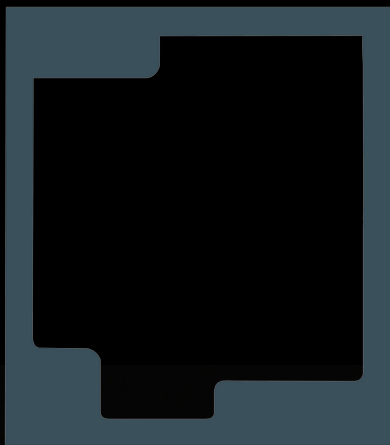
For the 2025 edition, our jury - Geeta Chandran, Diya Naidu, and Turna Das selected Senjam Hemjit from Imphal and Seher Noor Mehra from Bangalore to perform on Day 1. Seher's piece was a personal homage and journey homeward, to her ancestral home, Ujhani. The ever-lasting nostalgia from living on different lands and yet navigating a way home - where possibly, *'Bujjo!' Belongs*. Coming from land and moving towards the space untouched, the cosmos and the co-existent connection

between the material world and the universe beyond was the theme of Hemjit's piece - *Anoirol*. Three bodies moving toward and away in overlaps and pauses promised the exploration of the unknown.

On Day 2, we partnered with Prakriti Foundation, Chennai to present the works of the winners of the last two editions of PECDA (Prakriti Excellence in Contemporary Dance Awards): Pradeep Gupta from Bhillai and Aseng Borang from Roing. Pradeep created *Bindadevi* - an extension of his bodily experience through the precise movements of sticks, capturing the intense labour of every muscle, joint and connection that sustain a body. Aseng's *The Chinky Express Comes to Town*, was a demand for an undeviating gaze - a gaze not controlled by the audience but by the moving body refusing to look into your eyes, carrying the weight of labels, histories, and politics of performativity in between. A wait for a station that might never arrive.

SG





HOLDING SPACE: **PICKLE FACTORY SEASON 5**



Above

Adishakti, *Urmila* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Godhuli Roy

Below

Solène Weinachter, *After All* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Godhuli Roy





PICKLE FACTORY SEASON 5

February-March 2025

Before we knew it, we had arrived at our fifth Season. As we looked back, we asked ourselves: what have we held on to since the beginning, what have we learned to hold on to, what must we hold on to into the future – and equally – what should we let go of? And as we looked at the world around us, we felt the need to ask the same questions.

In these precarious times, when nothing feels safe or constant around us, what kind of spaces do we need to gently and persistently re/create, nurture and hold? As artists, as arts organisations, as arts audiences, as citizens of a world in dangerous flux, how do we hold on to, offer and share values of care, empathy, solidarity and friendship? How do we still hold our ground resisting all the forces that are against us? How do we hold our course not knowing what the future holds?

Holding Space: *Pickle Factory Season 5* was a call to action and an invitation to revisit what we stand for through the spaces we imagine, birth and experience together:

- physical and philosophical spaces
- spaces of hope and faith
- plural and inclusive spaces
- personal spaces for our bodies, souls and entire selves
- spaces that foreground the politics of kindness
- fleeting yet deep and diverse aesthetic spaces
- spaces of collective nurture, healing, possibility and growth

Such spaces are fragile and vulnerable, in constant need of protection – but they are also spaces that must vigorously reclaim their validity and visibility. Holding space often requires extraordinary acts of courage, bravery & love. What holds us back from foregrounding them with more determination and belief?

In a scenario where we are constantly being asked to be faster, higher, stronger, better – often to the detriment of ourselves, our societies, our ecologies and our planet – *Pickle Factory Season 5* suggested we just pause and hold space with and for each other, and the world we can actually grow into. With gentleness, with grace, with generosity, with gusto.



SEASON SNAPSHOT

114 artists and guests from

5 countries

India, Luxembourg, Scotland, Switzerland, Germany

35 programmes

16 performances + **10** workshops + **9** public engagements

International companies touring to

5 Indian cities

Calcutta + Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai

In Calcutta:

1700+ LIVE AUDIENCES

200+ STUDENT ATTENDEES

300+ WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

12 VENUES

39 INDIAN AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

PICKLE FACTORY

SEASON 05

HOLDING SPACE

with and for each other

FEB - MARCH 2025





AWA As We Are, *Shoot The Cameraman* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Godhuli Roy

WEEK 1: POWER

4 to 8 February 2025

As We Are from Luxembourg explored the relationships between media, power-play and perceptions through the hard-hitting performance *Shoot the Cameraman*, along with a range of workshops and engagements.

Adishakti from Auroville foregrounded questions of consent, agency and approval with *Urmila*, and conducted intensive workshops for practitioners and students.

AWA / AS WE ARE (LUXEMBOURG)

@ HOLDING SPACE: PFS5

5 Feb:

Artist Diaries 2.3: *Dancing Digital Behaviour*

6 Feb:

Filming Movement: workshop for dancers and filmmakers

7 Feb am:

Misinformation Matters: special event for educators and students

7 Feb pm:

Season inaugural performance - *Shoot the Cameraman*

Set up by Baptiste Hilbert & Catarina Barbosa in Luxembourg, AWA / As We Are is a dance company whose inspiration comes from contemporary social matters mainly related to the new behaviours created by the digital age. They aim to create new places of movement by combining choreographic art and latest technological innovation to reveal ourselves as we are.

Co-presented with Sanskriti Sagar, our Season opened with their performance of *Shoot the Cameraman* along with various engagements centred around their production. Their participation in the Season and their India tour was made possible by Kultur LX – Arts Council of Luxembourg, the Embassy of Luxembourg in India and the Honorary Consulate of Luxembourg in Kolkata, along with local touring partners.

On 5 February, AWA presented *Dancing Digital Behaviour* as part of Artist Diaries 2.0 – the series we co-present with Glenburn Culture Club at Glenburn Penthouse. An intriguing excerpt from *Shoot the Cameraman* was followed by a discussion with the artists facilitated by filmmaker and film studies teacher Subha Das Mollick⁵.

The following day (6 February) the company conducted a workshop on *Filming Movement* for dancers and camerapersons. The participants explored relationships between the camera and the moving body, treating both as living elements. The improvisations simultaneously projected onto the cyclorama created a conversation between the live and live-action-projection.

“The workshop was an enriching experience that threw light on what it means to watch and be watched as the movement of the lens and that of the dancer finds itself in each other. As someone who is largely unacquainted with dance forms, the welcoming environment created by the artists was very helpful.”

KIRAN PALATHINGAN, SEASON VOLUNTEER AND WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

7 February saw two performances of *Shoot the Cameraman*. The first was part of *Misinformation Matters* – a morning session in collaboration with Alt Ed, which invited government and private school educators, civil society organisations and some students to address issues of media representation, power and perception. *Shoot the Cameraman* – with its constant play between the live / real and the camera lens / projections – was an appropriate provocation for a panel discussion between AWA director Baptiste Hilbert, author, journalist, and mediaperson Paranjy Guha Thakurta, and representatives from Alt Ed and Pickle Factory Dance Foundation. The event also included a performance and exhibition on these questions, developed by a government school from Naihati that Alt Ed works with.

5. More information on this session is available in the Artist Diaries section earlier in this report



AWA As We Are, *Shoot The Cameraman* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Sahitya Dutta

7 February evening was the Season's public opening, with another performance of *Shoot the Cameraman*. The performance amazed with its tightly choreographed and intricately structured use of dance, live camera feed, online editing, and an astonishing soundscore to constantly project a simultaneous second narrative on the cyclorama. As audiences, we are forced to ask ourselves who and what crafts the realities we believe in and experience every day. It was no wonder that *Shoot the Cameraman* received a standing ovation from the 300+ audience.

VI

Meet the Company

Baptiste Hilbert - director and choreographer

Ben Moon - technical designer

Georges Maikel Pires Monteiro - performer

Piera Jovic - performer

Pedro Barbosa - performer

Tanisha Addicott - performer



Adishakti, *Urmila* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Godhuli Roy

ADISHAKTI (AUROVILLE, INDIA) @ HOLDING SPACE: PFS5

5 to 7 Feb:

Source of Performance Energy workshop

5 to 7 Feb:

Arts4All Movement Workshop for students of Dakshini Prayash

8 Feb:

Public performance of *Urmila*

Adishakti from Auroville visited Calcutta after 15 long years for our Season. Hosted with great warmth and hospitality by our partner Ninad Samaddar of The Urban Theatre Project, this was also the venue for a 3-day version of their famed *Source of Performance Energy* workshop. 16 local practitioners signed up for this intensive experience, and ended up saying that three days was not at all enough! Simultaneously Adishakti was also running a 3-day workshop with 50 students at the NGO school Dakshini Prayash - our wonderful partners who do such great work in holistic education - as part of our Arts4All outreach programme.⁶

⁶. You can read more about this workshop in the Arts4All section earlier in this report.

“Vinay Kumar and Nimmy Raphael from the Adishakti team conducted their famed Source of Performance Energy workshop that dived deep into the concept and application of breathing techniques, rhythm and sound to generate emotion and develop awareness. In the journey of this 3-day workshop, the participants visibly unveiled deep lying emotions in their body for performative use through focusing and activating different energy points in their bodies”

ADRIJAA M. MAJUMDER

Adishakti believes in moving traditional disciplines out of their original contexts to reveal new, previously unrecognized elements, and views the contemporary performer as a critical interpreter who re-examines and expands upon traditional forms and stories. Co-presented once again with Sanskriti Sagar, their production *Urmila* lived up to this reputation with an alternative take on the story of this minor character from the Ramayana, where Urmila claims agency and refuses to passively obey the path laid out for her. Vividly bringing together movement, text, dance, mime, comedy, stage design and extraordinary emotional craft, *Urmila* integrated all this into one evocative performance language in trademark Adishakti fashion. After another standing ovation from Calcutta audiences, we hope it will not be another 15 years before we have the pleasure of seeing their work in this city again.

VI

Meet the Company

Nimmy Raphael - writer, director and performer

Vinay Kumar – performer

Subbu – musician

Sooraj S. – performer

Subodha Subrahmanya – lighting designer

Adishakti, *Source of Performance Energy* workshop | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 |
Image: Godhuli Roy





WEEK 2: PEOPLE

18 to 23 February 2025

Solène Weinachter from Scotland addressed how we deal with death and loss through the performance *After All*, alongside several workshops and engagements exploring embodied practice.

Ef_femininity – an Indo-Swiss collaboration – created through a documentary process, asked questions about how we look at femininity and effeminacy.

After opening Pickle Factory Season 1 in 2018 with a solo, Padmini Chettur returned with a full buffet of engagements including *Stilling* – an ensemble piece, which zooms in on the points where connection and disjointedness meet in our bodies.



Solène Weinachter, *After All* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Godhuli Roy

SOLÈNE WEINACHTER (EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND)

@ HOLDING SPACE: PFS5

18 to 19 Feb:

Arts4All Movement Workshop for students of PACE Learning Centre

20 Feb:

Embodied Conversations workshop for dancers and practitioners

21 Feb:

Public performance of *After All*

22 Feb:

The Body as Home

Solène Weinachter is a freelance dancer and choreographer. Her artistic practice is rooted in the intersection between dance, theatre, storytelling, humour and what could appear as uncomfortable conversations.

Solène returned to Pickle Factory after we hosted her in December 2023 on the Calcutta leg of her India tour with her Scottish Dance Theatre produced solo *Antigone, Interrupted* choreographed and directed by Joan Cleville. Her Season week in Calcutta began with a 2-day workshop with students at PACE Learning Centre in Piyali as part of our Arts4All outreach programme.⁷

7. You can read more about this workshop in the Arts4All section earlier in this report

Embodied Conversations workshop at Anuchintan Arts Centre through the voices of two workshop participants

“দুঃখ নিয়ে, মৃত্যু নিয়ে আমাদের কথা বলা হয়ে ওঠে না তেমন। আমরা লুকিয়ে কাঁদতে শিখি। মৃত্যুর পরে আচারের আতিশয্যের মাঝে চাপা পড়ে যায় প্রিয়জনের জন্য শোক। হারানোর যন্ত্রণাকে আমরা সময় নামের এক অমোঘ অদৃশ্যের উপর ছেড়ে দিয়ে গুমরে মরি। সোলেন উইনেকটারের কর্মশালায় জড়ো হওয়া অংশগ্রহণকারীরা সকলে সেই শোক নিয়েই কথা বললেন।

আমরা শরীর-মন দিয়ে কেমন করে শোককে ধারণ করতে পারি, সেই কথা বলছিলেন স্কটল্যান্ড নিবাসী সোলেন। পৃথিবীর বিভিন্ন প্রান্তের সংস্কৃতিতে শোকের চরিত্র কেমন, তা নিয়ে গবেষণা চালিয়েছেন সোলেন। বুঝতে চাইছিলেন দক্ষিণ এশিয়ার মানুষদের শোকের সঙ্গে বোঝাপড়ার চরিত্র কেমন। কীভাবে ব্যক্তিগত শোক সামাজিক শোকের রূপ নিয়ে ক্ষতে প্রলেপ লাগায়, সেই সমাজ-সাংস্কৃতিক বিশিষ্টতা নিয়ে কথা হচ্ছিল কর্মশালায়। আলোচনায় উঠে আসে আমাদের দেশের রূদালি সম্প্রদায়ের মানুষের কথা। রাজস্থানের এই সম্প্রদায়ের কাজ মানুষের শোকে বুক চাপড়ে কাঁদা। কান্নাও যে কখন ব্যক্তিগত থেকে সামাজিক হয়ে যায়, সেই কথাই হচ্ছিল কর্মশালায়।

কর্মশালার লক্ষ্য ছিল শোকের চারিত্রিক গঠন বোঝার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে অংশগ্রহণকারীদের জন্য একটি সুরক্ষিত ক্ষেত্র প্রস্তুত করা যেখানে সকলে তাঁদের ব্যক্তিগত শোকের কথা নির্দিধায় বলতে পারবেন। ওই কুড়ি-পঁচিশ জন, যারা প্রথমবারের জন্য সেদিন একে অপরকে চিনলেন, তাঁরা যেন কেমন করে ওই অল্প

সময়ের মধ্যেই একে অপরের দুঃখের ভাগীদার হয়ে উঠলেন। বোঝা গেল, আর্থ-সামাজিক-সাংস্কৃতিক বিভিন্নতা সত্ত্বেও শোকের ভাষা কোথাও হয়তো এক ধরনের। হয়তো বা, শোক মোচনের ভাষাও একই।”

শ্রাবস্তী ঘোষ

“Solène’s workshop was a much needed experience for me at a difficult moment in time. Her empathy shines through her practice, and the way she brought everyone in and made everyone feel safe is a testament to her good work.”

SOURJYO SINHA

After All – the performance - starts with Solène recounting the funeral of her uncle Bob in a manner that is all too familiar in its absurdities of the familial kind. You are welcomed and put at ease in the first half by the French humour that quickly takes a sharp turn towards its darker side. To me, humour and grief have been the flip sides of each other, and Solène does an incredible job of keeping the coin spinning on its edge, teetering between the two sides seamlessly. I did spend the better half of the show with tears freely flowing from my eyes as I watched Solène embody the grief of loss and death with her entire being. I probably won't be able to explain in words what we witnessed, but it helped me feel and let out all that I held within me as I watched her externalise it, a catharsis of sorts. Laughing and crying through it all, *After All* ultimately left me feeling seen, understood and lighter than I entered it, all in the span of an hour.

After a successful collaboration last Season with TRI Art and Culture, we co-presented a session with Solène that tied in with TRI's ongoing exhibition "HOME?! बाढ़ि घर " curated by Lekha Poddar. A follow up to Solène's performance, *The Body as Home: Beyond After All* morphed into a session that invited participants to engage in an embodied conversation about mortality and grief that surrounds death and questions about belonging in a body and how feeling at home in that grief emerges in moments.

AM

Meet the Company

Solène Weinachter – choreographer and performer

Helen McIntosh – creative producer

Emma Jones – lighting designer

Gabriel Kemp – sound technician

Solène Weinachter | Arts4all @ PACE / Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Godhuli Roy





Schwald and Leuenberger, *Ef_femininity* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Sahitya Dutta

SCHWALD & LEUENBERGER (BERN, SWITZERLAND) @ HOLDING SPACE: PFS5

22 Feb:
public performance of *Ef_femininity*

23 Feb:
Performing Biographies workshop

We collaborated with good friends and partners Sandbox Collective, Bangalore to host the *Ef_femininity* company in Calcutta. Their India tour and participation in the Season was made possible with support from Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council and the Embassy of Switzerland in India and Bhutan.

Both Chris Leuenberger and Marcel Schwald from Switzerland have always been fascinated by the traits attributed to the female gender – especially when those are practiced for self-empowerment and as a political statement. Using their artistic practice of documentary dance performance, they have collaborated with the radio journalist Shilok

Mukkati, the actress Living Smile Vidya and the choreographer Diya Naidu – to tell their stories rooted in different assumptions about gender in India.

Ef_femininity is a fearless joint venture by this Indo-Swiss ensemble of theatre makers and choreographers. The gender diverse cast explores and questions femininity, hyper-femininity and effeminacy by interweaving elements of journalism, dance, personal stories and text. The production was already touring in India and PFS5 in Calcutta was their last stop.

The piece, performed inside the huge wards of Alipore Museum already creating a sense of uneasy rumination, gave a shockwave to the audience. With their individual exploration of the notions of femininity, the piece gradually climbed towards a politically intense self-empowerment, not only for the performers, but also for the audience. The audience, a large part of whom consisted of the city based queer community, many of them artists, were left in appalled silence for some time before delivering a standing ovation for the performing team.

The very next day, Marcel Schwald, Chris Leuenberger and Shilok Mukkati conducted the workshop *Performing Biographies* at our long-time partner venue Anuchintan Art Centre. They worked on conscious breathing techniques and shared methods of creating performance using biographical materials. With 13 participants from all over India, the team developed a deeply emotional but strongly supportive and inclusive ambience amongst the participants as the bedrock of creative performances based on memory.

SD

Meet the Company

Chris Leuenberger – collaborator and performer

Marcel Schwald – director

Shilok Mukkati – collaborator and performer

Thomas Kohler – lighting technician

Diya Naidu – collaborator and performer

Living Smile Vidya – collaborator and performer



Padmini Chettur, *Stilling* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Dana Roy

PADMINI CHETTUR (CHENNAI, INDIA)

@ HOLDING SPACE: PFS5

18 to 23 Feb:

Stilling installation

19 & 20 Feb:

Philosophical Enactment 1: solo

21 & 22 Feb:

Translating Choreographic Thought: Experimenter Learning Program

23 Feb:

public performance of *Stilling*

Through an installation, a solo performance, a learning program and her ensemble piece, we explored how Padmini Chettur has defined her own choreographic idiom—minimalist, abstract and formal—stripping movement down to an essential, anatomical investigation, prioritising a sense of tension over emotion.

Padmini Chettur returned to the city with the Indian premiere of a very special solo project with strong ties to Calcutta. The piece was born as a result of a collaboration between Chettur and Calcutta's very own scholar and writer, the late Aweek Sen, whose voice lives on in the live performance narrating a text written by him. With Chettur performing live in dialogue with Sen, *Philosophical Enactment 1* traces a dancer and a writer in search of form, an articulation of the inarticulable,

integrating textual images—both literal and propositional. Maarten Visser's sound offered different entryways for the audience to immerse themselves in, while Priyanka Raja and Joshua Muiyiwa guided a discussion with Chettur that gave us glimpses into the conversations between the artists prior to the birth of this project.

This solo was set within the space and context of two carefully calculated filmed choreographic projects, meticulously planned down to every angular shift—without any chance of rounding off. While *Chalking* was created with an ensemble and displayed across four screens, offering the potential for finding community despite the fragmentation, *Stilling* took a singular body and broke it up into 16 fragments without a face, desensitizing and refocusing our gaze by taking away the primary point of human connection.

We started from language and gradually moved to image over two days of the Experimenter Learning Program module. Padmini traced her history of claiming the contemporaneity within her own practice by rethinking the objectified female body through fragmentation. This foundational thinking allowed us to think through contradictions while working and traveling through time and space, for it is only in the process that the translation of choreographic thought can occur. This sort of transcendental thinking, we soon realised, allows one to create an aesthetic vocabulary from nothing, by playing with sense and feel.

Stilling – the ensemble performance – was a hypnotic journey of stillness, confinement, and disquiet to infinity, community, and the contradictory. To watch these eight dancers starting in different corners of the former prison wards find their way gradually out into the open and toward each other, despite their disparate beginnings and connections to one another, was a healing experience. The traveling nature of the performance from the proximity of the jail wards out into the expanse of the open lawns - a version of the piece developed specifically for the Alipore Museum venue - underlined how we viscerally experience space and movement.

AG

Meet the Company

Padmini Chettur – choreographer and performer

Maarten Visser – sound designer

Anoushka Kurien – performer

Priyakshi Agarwal – performer

Tushti Aravind – performer

Sravanthi V – performer

Aarabi Veeraraghavan – performer

Madhushree Basu – performer

Ramya Shanmugam – performer

Pradeep Gupta - performer

WEEK 3: MAGIC

4 to 9 March 2025

tanzbar_bremen facilitated a rigorous, collaborative workshop process with a mixed abilities cast of Indian and German performers to create *Can You Read My Body?* which asked questions about our attitudes and assumptions about inclusion and inclusive practices.

A throwback to the closing of Season 1, Season 5 closed with acclaimed Kutiyattam exponent **Kapila Venu**, who offered an intensive workshop and her new work, *Saiva Koothu*.



Kapila Venu, *Saiva Koothu* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Sahitya Dutta



tanzbar_bremen, *Can You Read My Body?* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Sahitya Dutta

TANZBAR_BREMEN (BREMEN, GERMANY)

@ HOLDING SPACE: PFS5

4 March:

Performance and Sharing @ IICP

5 March:

Artist Diaries 2.4: *Inclusive Dance Dialogues*

8 March:

Public performance of *Can You Read My Body?*

tanzbar_bremen aims to make art and culture widely accessible. Founded in 2003 and operating as a non-profit since 2009, tanzbar_bremen is Germany's first dance company to provide permanent employment for an inclusive team, and has fostered inclusive collaborations among diverse professionals, creating dance performances, workshops, and educational programmes. Their participation in our Season was a collaboration between the Goethe-Institut in Delhi and Calcutta, the Pickle Factory Dance Foundation and the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy.

Can You Read Read My Body? emerged out of an 11-day residency at Goethe-Institut, New Delhi with 9 artists with multiple abilities (abilities that range across physical as well as skill-based) from Calcutta, Delhi and Germany coming together for its premiere in Calcutta. Under the calm and patient guidance of the choreographer, Tomas Bünger, the process became a continuing memory for the performers. Imagining a walk of life on a celebratory ramp such as in a fashion show, the piece materialised as an exploration of personal grief, care, love and grace.

The 45-minute piece was then performed for an audience of around 60 as a rehearsal sharing at the Goethe-Institut, New Delhi which left people to rethink about who gets to perform and who is a performer? What do you see? What do you want to see?

Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy has been working with people with cerebral palsy for over 50 years. Punam Bind, one of the students of the institute, was one of the performers for *Can You Read My Body?* Excerpts from the piece were performed for the students and staff at IICP on 4 March 2025 following a short warm up session with the students conducted by one of the artists, Denis Barwa. The short afternoon was met with applause, laughter and an intriguing discussion on the possibilities of arts becoming a steadier vessel for people with and without disabilities, without patronisation.

The next day the company presented the last session for Artist Diaries 2.0 at Glenburn Penthouse titled *Inclusive Dance Dialogues*, featuring an excerpt of the performance followed by a conversation with Noni Khullar.⁸

Effectively more personal than performative, *Can You Read My Body?* was a celebration, a call to action and potentially a push to change the current practices within arts, within and between bodies and of course, communities. The piece was not designed to stand out, become a spectacle or be intense. It was to be shared. Shared with the intention of care and hope that bodies do not become a representative of collective hustle, but of collective love. Love that questions schedules, that questions trends meant to disengage from choices and disrupt personal space. While talking of inclusivity, we sometimes fail to actively engage with practices that are not only inclusive but also honour multiple perspectives. The piece was an invitation to welcome such thoughts, such practices and grace. Emotions expressed, gratitude felt and love spread, the premiere of *Can you Read My Body?* came to a close.

SG

Meet the Company

Corinna Mindt – company manager, collaborator and performer

Till Krumwiede – collaborator and performer

Tomas Bünger – choreographer

Hiral Singhal – collaborator and performer

Parinay Mehra – collaborator and performer

Denis Barwa – stage manager, collaborator and performer

Srijaini Ghosh – collaborator and performer

Poonam Bind – collaborator and performer

8. More information on this session is available in the Artist Diaries section earlier in this report



Kapila Venu, *Saiva Koothu* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Sahitya Dutta

KAPILA VENU (IRINJALAKUDA, INDIA) @ HOLDING SPACE: PFS5

5 to 7 March:

Intensive Kutiyattam workshop

9 March:

Public performance of *Saiva Koothu*

Kapila Venu is a practitioner of Kutiyattam, one of the oldest living theatre traditions in the world. For more than two decades, she has travelled the world performing, teaching, and giving workshops on Kutiyattam. She is a guest lecturer at the National School of Drama in New Delhi and a Master Teacher at the Intercultural Theatre Institute in Singapore. We were delighted to close Season 5 with her performance, just as we did Season 1 in 2018.

Kapila's composed posture with eyes closed and slow deep breaths was the inaugural visual as the participants walked in for the three-day Kutiyattam workshop, which succinctly set the atmosphere of the intensive. Over the three days, Kapila unboxed the fundamentals of Kutiyattam - from eye movements and shlokas to talams and rasas. An experience so well curated that it left participants with an extensive understanding of the form, moulded within their bodies and movement practice, not without. A fierce exploration of Karuna Rasa (in context of grief) was followed by an effervescent investigation of Hasya Rasa, that remarkably showed how crucial it is to de-escalate the emotional upheaval of an actor in process - a moment resonating with our theme, Holding Space.

It is necessary to constantly engage our bodies to practices that intentionally slow us down. It is a call to be closer to our natural rhythms. Kapila invited us to experience our bodies' natural rhythms. She somehow made it tangible.

SG

9 March 2025, closing evening of the Season: Darkness and silence broken by the flicker of a lamp and the sound generated from the mizhavu, and the performance of *Saiva Koothu* began. Even the banyan tree behind seemed to bless the stage by dropping one dry leaf on the stage. From the shadows arrives the storyteller of the evening, Kapila Venu. With her grace, power and precision, she tells us the myths and stories surrounding Lord Shiva in the closing performance of the Season.

JC

Meet the Company

Kapila Venu – choreographer and performer

Kalamandalam Hariharan – musician

Kalamandalam Rajeev – musician

Kalanilayam Unnikrishnan - musician



Kapila Venu, tea break during the *Kuiyattam* workshop |
Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Godhuli Roy

A NEW SEASON VENUE

Pickle Factory is always looking for unusual and atmospheric spaces to convert into performance venues – and there is no dearth of them in an architecturally textured city like Calcutta. For Season 5, we found a wonderful new partner in Alipore Museum. This museum is set up in the erstwhile Alipore Jail – a British era prison complex built in 1906 and functional till as recently as early 2019. The red-brick colonial era buildings originally comprising jail wards, individual cells, administrative blocks, storehouses and more are spread across 16 acres of land. Many of these buildings have now been incorporated into the museum.

But we were offered a closed off area that had never been opened to the public before: two long buildings that used to be common jail wards standing in between three wide, green lawns graced with beautiful old trees. It was oddly disconcerting - encountering such beauty and quietude given the history of the space, but it also gave us the opportunity to redefine what a 'holding space' could be and mean. Given the name of our Season, this was perfect!

Pop-up venue at Alipore Museum | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Dana Roy



SEASON PRE-PERFORMANCE EVENTS

A venue like the Alipore Museum jail wards offering different kinds of spaces within one complex gave us ample opportunity to offer pre-performance events and experiences for our audiences every day, without disturbing the preparations in the main performance venue for the evening. These experiences ranged from readings of poetry to a walk around the erstwhile prison with a former inmate, to discussions on inclusive performance in Calcutta.

POEMS AND PROSE FROM PRISON

pre-event to Solène Weinachter's *After All*

21 February 2025

It was impossible to enter a space formerly intended for confinement without acknowledging the stories left behind by those forced to live in some of those very prison cells. We met under the moonlit sky before the banyan tree. Sujoy Prosad Chatterjee and Aopala Banerjee's careful selection of poetry, verse, and diary entries in Bangla, Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu recounted personal narratives, experiences, and observations of formerly incarcerated Indians across jails in the country. Listening to writings by inmates from the jail on whose premises we were seated was a chilling experience, as we sought to reimagine that very space anew, holding space for those who were there before.

AG

Sujoy Prosad Chatterjee and Aopala Banerjee, *Poems and Prose from Prison* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Godhuli Roy





Community Adda | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Dana Roy

COMMUNITY ADDA

pre-event to *Ef_femininity*

22 February 2025

*As part of the Pickle Factory Dance Foundation's 5th season, we participated in a flash discussion that preceded the documentary dance performance *Ef_femininity*. While the discussion opened with a deceptively simple prompt: 'Where do you locate femininity in your body or self?' - what followed was a conversation rich with nuance. Held among audience members comprising artists, writers, performers, activists, the conversation unpacked experiences of what is traditionally labelled as 'feminine' vis-a-vis what emerges as lived experiences of femininity. While the participants were mostly cis folks, with a few exceptions of trans/non-binary individuals, the ensuing conversation traversed lived experiences of intersectionality, and reflected on how gendered experiences are often understood through inherited binaries that don't hold space for our complexities. The conversation leaned into the fluid, intersectional realities of our lives and moved through notions of pronouns, feminist pedagogies and the shifting nature of identity itself. What emerged was not a singular idea of femininity, but a constellation—formed by culture, queerness, movement, memory, and feeling.*

OYSH, AUDIENCE MEMBER

Looking back, all I really did as moderator/facilitator/conversation steerer for your community adda on gender was quite literally 'hold space'. I sought to not give rein to my own views. My objective was to make space for all thoughts and questions without judgement. Younger folk expressed irritation at being reduced to pronouns as a kind of 'woke' kneejerk social currency flexing, other young folk offered the counterpoint to not assume everyone who clarified preferred pronouns did so insincerely — it could also come

from the authentic space of according the other with respect. Older folk spoke about how they struggled with comprehending gender diversity and that they'd come to the adda genuinely wanting to understand vocabulary and the expansion of identity that had simply not existed when they were younger.

I found myself situated somewhat uncomfortably in the mean - smack in the middle of the people who had gathered in terms of the age groups present. And perhaps because I'm also at that age midpoint in my life itself, I couldn't help observing that for these conversations to truly be safe, fulfilling spaces, everyone participating must approach them without arrogance but with humility. Without a preconceived belief that their thoughts are sacrosanct and if someone offers another kind of experience, that person is uncool and must be cancelled. I thought about how we must actually as 'conversation holders', start using the adda space to cultivate/inculcate the art of listening without jumping to conclusions. This is unfortunately becoming a bit of an endangered practice. If I'm ever asked to host a free-flowing sharing of opinions and questions again, at the outset I will list these guidelines - to listen actively and nonjudgmentally (being mindful of what embodied listening entails), to be patient, to not use the space to pitch a project, to be unselfish and generous towards others in the space, to recognise that beyond the must-have bedrock of respect, inclusivity, equitability and the very serious responsibility majority groups have towards minority groups, allyship can and should allow for different views and perspectives. The adda went off breezily without my spelling these out but I think one needs to go deeper moving forward to push the envelope further, urging for a kind of individual and collective self-reflection.

SHUKTARA LAL, CONVERSATION FACILITATOR



SEARCHING FOR MY PRISON CELL

pre-event to Padmini Chettur's *Stilling*
23 February 2025

"There are amazing experiences 'round every corner. Apart from the dance performances and poetry readings at the Alipore Museum, today was special. A gentleman (Suvendu Chatterjee) who was actually jailed here during the Naxalite movement, led the walking tour along with Sayantan Maitra Boka around the grounds, recounting his experiences. It's like time travel for me into a historic time in Kolkata, which I also lived through and left behind. We plied him with questions on the life he led here: the food, the shackles... Thank you again, Pickle Factory Dance Foundation. This was really memorable."

KATY LAI ROY, AUDIENCE MEMBER

Sayantan Maitra Boka and Suvendu Chatterjee, *Searching for My Prison Cell* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 |
Image: Katy Lai Roy

ARTS AND ACCESS IN ACTION

pre-event to tanzbar-bremen's *Can You Hear My Body?*
8 March 2025

Arts and Access in Action brought together members of The Action Players (TAP), India's first mime group for the deaf, and Anyadesh, Kolkata's leading blind theatre group, in conversation with Prof. Ananda Lal.

From Anyadesh we had:

- Rajdeep Konar: Associated with Anyadesh since 2017, Theatre researcher & Historian, Assistant Professor in Cultural Studies School of Liberal Arts IIT Jodhpur
- Shibsankar Verma: Actor, singer, founder member of Blind Opera and Anyadesh
- Janardan Choudhury: Actor, Singer, founder member of Blind opera and Anyadesh
- Sobuj Choudhury: Sighted facilitator, singer, actor, member of Anyadesh

From The Action Players (TAP) we had:

- Sundeeep Kedia: Deaf mime performer & director, trained under Zarin Chaudhuri & Astad Deboo, travelled extensively with TAP across India and toured the U.S. with Astad
- Roop Sen: Musician & music designer for the production of TAP's *Banyan Tree*. In his other life he is a researcher, coach, facilitator working extensively in human rights organisations. He is Founder member of the NGO Sanjog

Well before all the guidelines of inclusion & access were a hot topic both Anyadesh and TAP created and held space for performers of mixed abilities to create some stunning work in Kolkata.

But what TAP has been organically doing since the 1970s and Blind Opera / Anyadesh has been creating so prolifically seems to me to come from the need of all people of all abilities to create the work, tell the story, and sing the songs. It comes from the need to create and share theatre and art, and therefore speak to ideas in our shared human experience.

DR



Sameera Iyengar, Malavika Banerjee, Nishit Arora, Priyanka Raja, Kathakali Jana, *Forces of Nurture* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Sahitya Dutta

FORCES OF NURTURE

pre-event to Kapila Venu's *Saiva Koothu*
9 March 2025

Forces of Nurture: holding spaces for the arts in Calcutta was the last of our pre-performance events, and brought together four individuals who personally and / or through their organisations have consistently and uncompromisingly created and evolved very particular spaces for the arts in Calcutta:

1. Malavika Banerjee, the force behind Kolkata Literary Meet and the new Bengal Biennale that had its first edition across various venues in Shantinikentan and Calcutta in December 2024
2. Priyanka Raja who co-founded the city-based Experimenter Gallery that represents and fosters the careers of some of the most celebrated artists from South Asia and the world
3. Nishit Arora, musician, DJ, curator and creator of platforms such as Jamsteady to support the independent music scene in Calcutta
4. Kathakali Jana, dance critic but otherwise administrator of Sangeet Research Academy that was established by ITC in 1977 to facilitate training in Hindustani classical music through a unique modern-day gurukul approach

The session was moderated by Sameera Iyengar, creative producer and theatre person based in Mumbai with a long history of mobilising the performing arts as anchors for public discourse and creating conditions for the arts to thrive in India.

Through the conversation attended by a sizeable attentive audience, the speakers touched on their individual journeys and reasons for doing what they do, their experiences with building audiences, and challenges, successes and failures that have been turning points in their stories. For us, this conversation added several perspectives and ideas to our own desire for a permanent home for dance in this city.

In a country like India where there is really very little infrastructure for the arts, there's nothing you can actually rely on. We often don't see how creative this work is. It is incredibly creative, it's resilient, it's taking up exhausting daily challenges simply because there is a belief that drives the work. And the belief is both an individual passion and a much larger social belief of what the arts means in the world.

SAMEERA IYENGAR

I want Calcutta to be that city where people come for culture, come to see what is wonderful and not just what is nostalgic. I want it to be contemporary, cutting-edge, and hence attractive to the rest of India and internationally.

MALAVIKA BANERJEE

We have to really invent our own lexicon. But what is fantastic and what is possible – because also we are such a young independent nation in comparison to a lot of Western contexts – is that we can write our own rules. No one is interested in the cookie-cutter model anymore.

PRIYANKA RAJA

Audience at G. D. Birla Sabhagar | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 |
Image: Godhuli Roy





INDIA TOUR

We put together an India tour for two of the international companies who came to Calcutta for the Season: As We Are from Luxembourg and Solène Weinachter from Scotland. We worked with five presenting partners to take their work across the country

- Darpana Academy of Performing Arts, Ahmedabad
- Prestige Centre for the Performing Arts, Bangalore
- Embassy of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Delhi
- British Council, Delhi
- National Centre for the Performing Arts, Mumbai

Both companies serendipitously came together in Delhi in the same venue – the British Council Theatre - on two consecutive days (14 and 15 February 2025). The British Council in India and in the UK has long been our ally, and we were delighted to present a mini-PF-Season in Delhi with them. Both performances were attended by a diverse audience of artists, diplomats, students, and more.

The performance of *Shoot the Cameraman* on 14 February was presented by the Embassy of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in New Delhi with an introduction by the ambassador Mrs. Peggy Frantzen. *After All* was introduced by Ruchira Das, Director Arts, British Council India.

SEASON TEAM

CURATED BY

Vikram Iyengar with the Pickle Factory team

PRODUCED BY

Vikram Iyengar, Jayati Chakraborty

ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

Dana Roy, Sohini Dalal, Jayati Chakraborty

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Jayati Chakraborty

WEEK COORDINATORS

Vikram Iyengar, Jayati Chakraborty, Adrijaa Mridul Majumder, Dana Roy, Sohini Dalal, Srijaini Ghosh

PRODUCTION TEAM

Amlan Chaudhuri, Adrijaa Mridul Majumder, Jayati Chakraborty

SEASON HUB DESIGN & EXECUTION TEAM

Dana Roy, Pritha Kar, Seher Akram

INTERNS

Jayeta Nath (Production), Arya Bhattacharya (Marketing)

MARKETING TEAM

Ahon Gooptu, Dana Roy, Adrija Samal, Arya Bhattacharya, Godhuli Roy

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Vikram Iyengar, Ahon Gooptu, Sohini Dalal

PRESS AND MEDIA LIAISON

Ahon Gooptu, Paramita Saha, Dana Roy

DESIGN

Teesta Brahma, Ahon Gooptu, Arya Bhattacharya, Dana Roy

DOCUMENTATION

Sahitya Dutta, Godhuli Roy, Adrija Samal

VOLUNTEERS

Pritha Kar, Kiran Palathingan, Kaisiki Sen Sharma, Seher Akram, Sharanna Deep Roy

INDIA TOUR LIAISON

Adrijaa Mridul Majumder, Vikram Iyengar

SEASON PARTNERS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Season Co-presenters

Sanskriti Sagar
Gameplan
Swiss Arts Council – Pro Helvetia
Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Kolkata

Programme Partners

AWA | As We Are, Luxembourg
Alt Ed
Adishakti Laboratory for the Performing Arts, Auroville
The Urban Theatre Project
Dakshini Prayash
Kolkata Sanved
TRI Art and Culture
PACE Learning Centre
Experimenter
Glenburn Culture Club
Glenburn Penthouse
tanzbar_bremen
Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy
ICanFly
Accord Charitable Trust

Hospitality Partners

Consulate of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Kolkata
The Urban Theatre Project
Hotel Polo Flotel Calcutta
Embassy of Switzerland in India and Bhutan
Experimenter
Madhushree Basu
Offbeat CCU



Entrance to Season venue at Alipore Museum | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 |
Image: Sahitya Dutta

Venue and Hub Partners

G. D. Birla Sabhagar
Alipore Museum
Greenply
Make Calcutta Relevant Again
Anuchintan Art Centre
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

India tour partners

Darpana Academy for the Performing Arts, Ahmedabad
Prestige Centre for the Performing Arts, Bangalore
Embassy of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Delhi
British Council, Delhi
National Centre for the Performing Arts, Mumbai
Sandbox Collective, Bangalore

International Touring Partners

Kultur LX - Arts Council Luxembourg
Made in Scotland Onward Touring Fund
Creative Scotland
Kultur Stadt Bern
Fa Tanz und Theater
Swisslos Kultur Kanton Bern

Season Co-Presenters



International Partners



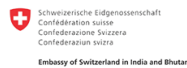
Associate Partners



Programme Partners



Hospitality Partners



Touring Partners



Acknowledgements

Abhimanyu Prakash	Muskan Sukarchakia
Ahon Gooptu	Namrata Kanuga
Aiyappa KP	Prateek Raja
Aliza	Ninad Samaddar
Aman Kaur	Noni Khullar
Anish Mukherjee	Prabal Dutta
Anjishnu Banerjee	Pratik Sinha
Anjum Katyal	Priyanka Raja
Ankit Jain	Purba Rudra
Anubhuti Prakash	Rajat Dalmia
Arpita Mukherjee	Rajitha Rajesh
Ashutosh Biswas	Rakhi Chatterjee
Astrid Wege	Rohan Sen
C. S. Nopani	Roshni Rao
Chandrika Grover	Ruchira Das
Deepa Shinde	Rukshana Khan
Deval Tibrewal	Ruma Maity
Dipti Rao	Sadaf Raza
Dr. Jayanta Sengupta	Sambudhha Dhar
Dr. Reena Sen	Sanidhya Mittal
Elia Jameel	Sanjay Budhia
Farah Batool	Sapphira Biswas
G. V. Subramaniam	Sanjna Ray
Harsharan Kaur	Sapana Mehta
Husna-Tara Prakash	Sharmistha Sarker
Jaspreet Grewal	Shilaz Dutta
Jayanta Chatterji	Shiva Pathak
Joshua Nassiri Giri	Sohini Banerjee
Kartik	Sohini Chakraborty
Léa Wilpier	Sonali Nandi
Leya Mammen	Soumen Halder
Madan Mohanka	Steve Hoscheit
Madeleine St. John	Subha Das Mollick
Mahaprajna Nayak	Sumita Roy
Mahashweta Maity	Surendranath Sinha
Malavika Banerjee	Swagata Mukherjee
Mallika Sarabhai	Swapnokalpa Dasgupta
Masoom Parmar	Sweta Patra
Medha Mallick	Tanima Maniktala
Meghdut Roychowdhury	Urvi Mittal
Mita Mitra	Varsha Sidda
Nandini Nopani	Varun Thapar
Mohor Mukherjee	Victor Mayot
Munir Mohanty	

ADVISORS AND PICKLE PALS

We are extremely lucky to have a wonderful group of advisors to guide us, challenge us, offer us succour and cheer us on. Our warmest thanks to:

Malavika Banerjee, Priyanka Raja, Sunil Shanbag, Preethi Athreya, Sunil Bhandari and Sujata Sen

And a big shout out to our many individual donors from across India who support us year after year.

Pickle Pulse for 2025-26

Debjani Banerjee, Aseng Borang, Choiti Ghosh, Kankana Singh, Shashwati Garai Ghosh, Pintu Das, Savitri Medhatul, Aishika Chakraborty, Joshua Sailo, Priyadarshini Ghosh Shome, Amitabh Srivastav, Bishnupriya Basak, Neelanjana Gupta, Abrar Saqib, Debashree Bhattacharya

Pickle Pals for 2025-26

Kathakali Jana, Sameera Iyengar, Menaka Rodriguez, Urmimala Sarkar Munshi, Arundhati Sarkar Bose, Yashoda Thakore, Sumit and Katy Lai Roy, Sumona Chakravarty, Abhimanyu Prakash, Sanjay Roy, Sharanya Chattopadhyay, Sandhya Apte, Neela Ghosh, Sujoy Prosad Chatterjee, Sangram Mukhopadhyay, Smita Misra, Nayana Gangooly

Pickle Patrons for 2025-26

Madhura Lohia

Pickle Pioneers for 2025-26

S. P. Sarathy, Anita Ratnam

Our supporters are from all over India – Calcutta, Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi, Jamshedpur, Hyderabad, Chennai, Roing, Aizawl, Shantiniketan – those listed above and those who wish to be anonymous.

Our annual Pickle Pals fundraiser is closed for 2025-26. But if you would still like to contribute, do get in touch. And if you would like to contribute with anything else – time, resources, space, expertise... – please do drop us a line.

LEGAL AND 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.

<u>Particulars</u>	<u>For the year end</u> <u>31.03.2025</u>
TURNOVER	31,95,896.
PROFIT BEFORE TAXES	5,39,395.
LESS: TAXATION	1,44,144.
PROFIT AFTER TAXES	3,95,251.

Registered Office: Flat 105, 8 Sultan Alam Road, Calcutta 700033, India

Contact: www.picklefactory.in | contact.picklefactory@gmail.com | picklefactorycalcutta@gmail.com

Inside Back Cover

Padmini Chettur, *Stilling* | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Dana Roy

Back Cover

Audience at Alipore Museum | Holding Space: Pickle Factory Season 5 | Image: Ahon Gooptu





DESIGN: Sukanya Ghosh

www.picklefactory.in

Follow us on
Facebook /picklefactoryindia
Instagram @picklefactoryindia
Twitter @picklefactoryin

email_contact_picklefactory@gmail.com