


NOVEMBER 22 - 25, 2018

10 AM ONWARDS,  
AT MULTIPLE VENUES

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“ WHERE DOES THE BODY BEGIN...AND END? ”

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CHANDRALEKHA

“ Our best machines are made of sunshine; they are all light and clean because they are nothing but signals, electromagnetic waves, a section of a spectrum, and these machines are eminently portable, mobile...people are nowhere near so fluid, being both material and opaque. Cyborgs are ether, quintessence ”

—

DONNA HARAWAY, 'A CYBORG MANIFESTO'



# SCHEDULE

## THURSDAY, NOV 22

## FRIDAY, NOV 23

10 - 11.30am	-	<b>TALK</b> Re View: Padmini Chettur on the relationship of body and her choreographic project Siddhartha Hall, MMB
11.45 - 1.15pm	-	<b>INDENT LAB</b> Siddhartha Hall, MMB
1.15 - 2.15pm	-	<b>LUNCH</b>
2.15 - 5.15pm	-	<b>INDENT LAB</b> Siddhartha Hall, MMB
2.15 - 3.45pm	<b>INTRODUCTORY SESSION OF INDENT LAB</b> Siddhartha Hall, MMB	-
4 - 5.30pm	<b>TALK</b> Ananya Chatterjea / Choreographing Social Justice: Dancing Stories of Women of Colour Siddhartha Hall, MMB	-
5.45 - 6.30pm	<b>LAUNCH OF JOURNAL AND RECEPTION</b> Siddhartha Hall, MMB	-
7pm	<b>PERFORMANCE</b> Altrove by Alessandro Schiattarella Chaumukh, NSD	<b>PERFORMANCE</b> Dai – Dancing Artificial Intelligence - by Jonathan O’Hear, Martin Rautenstrauch, and Timothy O’Hear Chaumukh, NSD





ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, EXCEPT FOR INDENT LAB,  
WHICH IS OPEN TO SELECTED PARTICIPANTS ONLY.

SATURDAY, NOV 24

WORK-IN-PROGRESS  
CONVERSATION

Ghosting by Bernice Lee and Talking Third Circle by  
Chloe Chotrani

Siddhartha Hall, MMB

TALK

Amitesh Grover / Wet Borders: The Future of Flesh,  
Technology and Aesthetics in our Bodies

Siddhartha Hall, MMB

LUNCH

INDENT LAB

Siddhartha Hall, MMB

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WORK-IN-PROGRESS  
SHARING

Tanashah by Navtej Johar

Commissioned by Serendipity Arts Festival

Serendipity Arts Foundation, Defence Colony

SUNDAY, NOV 25

TALK

Navtej Johar / The Somatics Body

Siddhartha Hall, MMB

TALK

Gee Imaan Semmalar / The Self as the Other: Body/  
Performativity and its Disruptive Potential

Siddhartha Hall, MMB

LUNCH

INDENT LAB

Siddhartha Hall, MMB

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PERFORMANCE

The Lost Wax Project by Preethi Athreya

Chaumukh, NSD



How do we imagine the body, the dancing body? Is it finite and singular; is it invariable? Does the dancing body bleed, scab, and grow new skin? Does it age? Does it feel fatigue? Does it die? Does it invite the audience into the spectacle of its degeneration?

What is the dancing body inspired by? How is it indented by crumbling democracies, wars, genocides, miracle vaccines, sculptures with fig leaves, sculptures missing body parts, cloned sheep and empathetic robots?

What new questions can we ask of the dancing body when we situate it in the space and time of the now? Are its extremities entirely physical and cellular, as a body that mediates its senses through technology, 'watching' on screens and 'loving' in hypertext? Can we leave this heterotopic notion of the body outside the studio space, severing the body from all its digital, social, historical, mechanical and philosophical extremities? Or is it time to disrupt our notion of the 'body', and ask of ourselves – where does the body begin and end, after all?

Spread over four days, the symposium Indent collates practices and ideas that enable, expand, and cluster around current notions of the body in performance, through a programme of talks, performances and work-in-progress sharings. It also marks the launch of Gati's eponymous annual journal, Indent: The Body and The Performative, a digital publication which in its first edition examines the ways in which the body demonstrates and deploys strategies of resistance, throwing up fresh questions about the relationship between the political and the aesthetic. The symposium also forms the backdrop for Indent Lab, a workshop and laboratory space that begins to consider what the act of writing adds up to in the tactile and febrile landscape of the digital interface.

Entry to all events besides Indent Lab is free. Indent Lab is only open to selected participants. On all days, morning and afternoon events are at the Goethe-Institut/ Max Mueller Bhavan New Delhi. The evening performances on Nov 22, 23 and 25 are at Chaumukh, National School of Drama, while the evening work-in-progress sharing on Nov 24 is at Serendipity Arts Foundation, Defence Colony.

Indent: The Body and the Performative is supported by Goethe-Institut/ Max Mueller Bhavan New Delhi and Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council.

**THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER, 2018**

2:15 – 3:45 PM

## **INDENT LAB**

(for selected participants only)

**SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN**

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What does it mean to 'write' about dance?

Indent Lab is a workshop and laboratory space for practitioners to engage in 'reading' and 'writing' dance through their chosen media. By expanding the notion of 'writing' to include multiple possibilities of articulation, going beyond text, Indent Lab, and by extension, the journal, begins to consider what the act of writing adds up to in the tactile and febrile landscape of the digital interface.

Participants at the lab will draw on programmes at the symposium, engaging in conversation with invited 'provocateurs' to probe how 'writing' can be imagined in relation to dance, and to treat it as a practice that moves beyond text, to consider different kinds of material, and the possibility of the ephemeral. The lab will culminate in the participants individually proposing a distinct starting point for developing a piece of 'writing' for the next edition of the journal.

The participants of INDENT LAB are Amritha Sruthi, Anishaa Tavag, Bernice Lee, Chloe Chotrani, Chintan Modi, Danish Sheikh, Greeny Francis, Manishikha Baul, Sharan Devkar Shankar, Shaunak Mahbubani, Simrat Dugal, Urvi Vora and Virkein Dhar.

The provocateurs at the lab are Dima Hamadeh (Lebanon), Indira (Indu) Chandrasekhar (India), and Urmimala Sarkar Munsri (India).

**Dima Hamadeh** is a researcher, writer and translator currently based in Beirut. She holds a research MA in Cultural Analysis (Culture and Arts) from the University of Amsterdam and a Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Media Studies from the Lebanese University, Beirut. Her work is focused on areas related to contemporary art practices within the Arab context, in terms of their epistemological frameworks and thematics, modes and conditions of production, institutions and labour. In 2014, Hamadeh launched an ongoing research initiative on Arab Feminisms, studying Arab female/feminist re-presentations, theoretical, literary and artistic, in anti-colonial struggles, as well as feminist Islamic hermeneutics, and militarized feminist movements. She has since been organising related study groups in collaboration with, a.o., 98Weeks and Lebanese feminist groups. Between 2014 and 2017, Hamadeh operated as assistant director of Beirut Art Center, where she initiated a platform that activates discussions on the future of institutional arts in light of a shifting definition of cultural labour.

**Indira (Indu) Chandrasekhar**, Publisher and Managing Editor of Tulika Books, New Delhi, has been associated with the book publishing industry in India since the early 1980s. She began her publishing career with Macmillan India in New Delhi and then worked for several years as a freelance editor, with brief stints of teaching in colleges in Bangalore and Delhi in the intervening years, before setting up Tulika Books in 1995. As Publisher of Tulika Books, Indira Chandrasekhar is a founding partner of the Independent Publishers' Distribution Alternatives (IPDA), a distribution network set up by eight independent publishers to promote alternative/independent publishing in India. She is also a member of the Paris-based International Alliance of Independent Publishers. She is on the editorial board of the Review of Agrarian Studies, a bi-annual journal published by the Foundation for Agrarian Studies, and is a trustee of the Sher-Gil Sundaram Arts Foundation (SSAF).

**Urmimala Sarkar Munsri**, Associate Professor at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University of India, is a cultural anthropologist and is specialized in dance studies. She is a dancer /choreographer trained at Uday Shankar India Culture Centre, Kolkata and continues her research on practice - theory interface in the special focus areas of politics and gender in dance. Trained as a visual anthropologist, she works and teaches research methodology for performance studies and documentation of living traditions as well as intangible cultural heritage masterpieces identified by UNESCO. Urmimala's recent publications include several academic papers in journals on dance as a tool for survivors of sexual violence, and her book (co-edited with Aishika Chakraborty), "The Moving Space - Women in Dance" (2017). Her current research is on intercultural connections in Indian dance history. Urmimala is currently the President of World Dance Alliance - Asia Pacific (WDAAP) and the Country Representative for International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM).

4:00 – 5:30 PM

## TALK / ANANYA CHATTERJEA CHOREOGRAPHING SOCIAL JUSTICE: DANCING STORIES OF WOMEN OF COLOUR

SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

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**Speaker's Note:** In this presentation, I will share the process by which I arrived at the particular Contemporary Indian dance form, Yorchha, that I created with the support of my company artists. I will also share the investigations which guided the shaping of my particular choreographic process, which allows me to weave together non-linear, metaphoric stories of women from different contexts, various global communities of colour. What does it mean to invoke social justice in this work? What does that have to do with sharing the labour and joy of vibration and breath? What does it mean to choreograph connectivity, to dance with our eyes on each other's backs? The artists of Ananya Dance Theatre will join me for the last part of this presentation as we invite audiences into a brief participatory exercise in keeping with our central principle of Daak.

**Ananya Chatterjea** (Guggenheim Choreography Fellowship; McKnight Choreography Fellowship; Joyce Award) is the Artistic Director of Ananya Dance Theatre and leader of the Shawngram Institute for Performance & Social Justice. Her dances intersect women artists of color and social justice choreography. She has toured her work to the Crossing Boundaries Festival, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with U.S. State Department support, to the Bethlehem International Performing Arts Festival, Palestine, the Harare International Dance Festival, Zimbabwe, the New Waves Institute of Dance and Performance, Trinidad, and other national and international locations. Dr. Chatterjea is Professor of Dance at the University of Minnesota where she teaches courses in Dance Studies and technique. She presented the keynote talk at the 2016 joint conference of Congress of Research in Dance and Society of Dance History Scholars. She is currently writing her second book, under contract with Palgrave MacMillan, exploring the politics of "contemporary dance" from the perspective of artists from global communities of color.

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5:45 – 6:30 PM

## LAUNCH OF THE INDENT JOURNAL AND RECEPTION

SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

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**Indent: The Body and the Performative** serves as a repository for a body of writing that stems (and then takes off) from the Gati Dance Forum's engagement with teaching methodologies, research and performance-making, with the intention of adding to the critical discourse around performance practices in South Asia. Digitally published as an annual journal, Indent draws great inspiration from notions of the archive - a term that tantalisingly suggests the urge to gather, accumulate, assemble, towards the possibility of bearing witness to constellations of questions, provocations, and processes. The theme for the first edition of the journal is Strategies of Resistance.

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7:00 PM

## PERFORMANCE / ALTROVE BY ALESSANDRO SCHIATTARELLA

CHAUMUKH, NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA

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In 1999, the choreographer was diagnosed with a rare form of neurodegenerative disease called Hirayama's disease. In the following years this condition brought him to face to face with disability, confronting him with issues such as: identity, invisibility, shame, otherness. Thus Altrove has become a way to explore these issues, a playground where Alessandro confronts the possibilities of his body and the surrounding space, trying to dismantle his "weaknesses" by reassembling them in strengths.

**Choreography, dance, light:** Alessandro Schiattarella

**Music:** Godspeed You! Black Emperor.

**Premiere:** 11.2014 ROXY Birsfelden

Cinema Prize of the Choreographic Captures Competition for the video-choreography Mani-Cure (2015).

**Alessandro Schiattarella** was born in Napoli, Italy. He graduated in 2000 from the Rudra Béjart School, Lausanne. During the next 15 years he worked with many internationally renowned dance companies, both freelance and repertoire, such as: Béjart Ballet Lausanne, Ballet Du Grand Theatre de Geneve, Konzert Theater Bern, EastWest Theater Company Sarajevo, Scapino Ballet Rotterdam, Da Motus Fribourg and The Ballett Basel. After his dance solo Altrove was successfully performed 2014 at the Roxy Birsfelden, Alessandro was selected to present it on the international platform Aerowaves Twenty17. In 2015, he created his first full evening solo-piece: Tell Me Where It Is, which focused on less visible disabilities from an autobiographical perspective. In 2017 he choreographed the 'inclusive' group-piece Strano, which questioned and challenged the topic of 'normality' and bodily perfection among dancers. One at a Time... (2018), his latest choreography for 7 disabled and non-disabled dancers, highlights important matters relating to disability: consent, voyeurism, sexuality.

FRIDAY 23 NOVEMBER, 2018

10:00 – 11:30 AM

## TALK | RE VIEW: PADMINI CHETTUR ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF BODY AND HER CHOREOGRAPHIC PROJECT

SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

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Within the history of mutating form and content in the contemporary dance context are embedded several moments when 'the performative' has been redefined. Whereas for the makers of dance, these shifts have followed a trajectory of personal research on the body, or reflected political concerns on the nature of entertainment, there has often been tension between performer and viewer. Through a series of excerpts from her repertory and a critiquing of the 'misreadings' of her own work, Padmini Chettur looks at the relationship of body and her own choreographic project.

**Padmini Chettur** began her contemporary dancer's career in 1990 as a member of the troupe of Chandralekha — the radical Bharatanatyam modernist choreographer, whose own opus dealt primarily with deconstructing the form of Bharatanatyam. Breaking away from Chandralekha's work in 2001, Padmini formed a practice that shifted the choreographic tradition to a minimalistic language and visually translated philosophical concepts of time and space as they relate to contemporary experience. Deriving vocabularies from phenomenology, cultural studies, insect movements, astronomy, physiotherapy and sports, she created a taut visual language that exit the narrow bounds of the stage. During her choreographer's career ranging over almost two decades, she collaborated with sculptors, light-artists, filmmakers, and sound-artists to realise her choreographic works.

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2:15 – 5:15 PM

## INDENT LAB (for participants only)

SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

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7:00 PM

## DAI – DANCING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE - BY JONATHAN O'HEAR, MARTIN RAUTENSTRAUCH, AND TIMOTHY O'HEAR

CHAUMUKH, NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA

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Dancing Artificial Intelligence (DAI) is an Artificial Intelligence artist. What this means is that it\* thinks; it doesn't follow a script or act randomly. Here, in its first physical form, DAI is a performer and is inviting you to view the second part of its movement creation process. In the first part of the process DAI had to explore its body and its environment. In this part of the process we're expecting DAI to search for ways to overcome some of the limitations that the physical world has imposed upon its virtual aspirations.

**Jonathan O'Hear** trained as a filmmaker in Vancouver in the late 80s where he acquired a taste for manipulating light, sound and video in various contexts. Today he lives in Switzerland and works primarily as a lighting designer for performing arts. His recent collaborations include choreographers Foofwa d'Imobilité, Marie-Caroline Hominal, Prisca Harsch and sculptor Martin Rautenstrauch. He gives workshops on the use of light as an artistic medium, supported by Pro Helvetia (the Netherlands, India, South Africa and Mozambique).

**Martin Rautenstrauch** studied at the Beaux-Arts in Paris and graduated with the jury's congratulations and the sculpture prize. He then created the Grand Garage du Nord, a fully equipped and versatile workshop that brings art, technology and dialogue together under the same roof. Imagined as an independent space capable of producing his own projects but also of hosting other short-term projects it abounds with activities and has enabled numerous local artists and craftsmen to carry out their work. The DAI project was also conducted in the Grand Garage du Nord.

**Timothy O'Hear** founded Virtually Unlimited, a company specialising in 3D technologies for video games and virtual reality, during his studies as an EPFL engineer in mechanical engineering. In 2000 he founded the company Revelate where he developed a business management software, managed software implementation projects and advised on IT management. Subsequently immersing himself in a total convergence of computing, human beings and society, he focuses today on the integration of artificial intelligence in companies and takes part in fundamental discussions on the consequences for our society.

**Performer:** DAI | Created by: Jonathan O'Hear, Martin Rautenstrauch, Timothy O'Hear

**Coproduced by:** Centre Culturel Suisse de Paris, Museum Tinguely, Neopost Foofwa dance company and the artists

DAI is supported by la Ville de Genève, le Canton de Genève, Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council, la Fondation Nestlé pour l'Art and la Fondation impactIA. Thanks to Fiduciaire Jaques S.A. for the rehearsal space, Ben O'Hear for the logo and Shana O'Hear for the brain stencils.

**SATURDAY 24 NOVEMBER, 2018**

10:00 – 11:30 AM

**WORK-IN-PROGRESS CONVERSATION  
GHOSTING BY BERNICE LEE AND TALKING THIRD CIRCLE BY CHLOE  
CHOTRANI**

SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

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Ghosting is an approach to creating and improvising, a postcolonial choreographic tactic. Also a solo performance work developing in the same name, the solo deals with the performer's memory and psychological states, subjective sensibility, and her desire to be seen on her own terms. Informed by practices ranging from Bharatanatyam to Javanese dance to Gaga to Passing Through, unfettered by singular aesthetic notions, Ghosting insists on increasing the palpability of the present moment, is an invitation to watch and be watched, living in the moments of uncertainty.

**Bernice Lee** is a dance artist who enjoys her shapeshifting work. As a mover and performance-maker she experiments with different forms and modalities, and cares about going beyond "action" into "activation". What does an action do beyond its effect on the doer? She sees dance as embodied culture, works with performative states and deals with time as her most important material. Her works have shown in international art festivals in Vientiane, Surakarta, Jogjakarta, Bangkok and New York. She often devises performances collaboratively and those pieces have been presented in Singapore at ArchiFest, ArtScience Museum, Arts House, The Substation, and TheatreWorks. A prolific performer, she has worked for the Singapore companies Frontier Danceland (2012-2014) and Maya Dance Theatre (2014-2017). Bernice holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from The Ohio State University.

**Talking Third Circle** is a work-in-progress solo that is an embodiment of a hybrid identity, explored through a rhythmic percussive pulsing of the body in relationship to the land by movement artist Chloe Chotrani. Currently, the work intends to evolve into a duet with collaborator and experimental sound artist Cheryl Ong. She is a percussionist and her acoustic approach with the intention of coming into the work as a co-performer, will challenge the piece, amplify the sound-scape, and allow it to grow into an evening-length piece.

**Chloe Chotrani** is a movement artist based in Singapore. She is an associate artist with Dance Nucleus, and a project-based dancer for Chowk, and P7:1SMA. She holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. She has traveled and learned dance forms and philosophies to West Africa, New York, and within Southeast Asia. She has performed and worked internationally with B Supreme London, Omi International Dance Collective, Evidence Dance Community and Movement Research in New York. Her artistic practice is centered on the studies on softness, which she explores as a way of life. When she's not dancing or writing, she is tending to plants in her food garden and is immersed in nature.

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11:45 AM – 1:15 PM

**TALK | AMITESH GROVER  
WET BORDERS - THE FUTURE OF FLESH, TECHNOLOGY, AND AESTHETICS IN  
OUR BODIES**

SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

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We are at the inaugural moment of the technological body, a body divested of what we have considered as interchangeable - its organs, forms, functions replaced by artificial devices and so relegated to the rank of useless accessories (we are reminded of the cases of atrophy that have occurred in the course of evolution) — what will this new body be? How will sensation, feeling, thought get reconstituted in this new sensorium of wetware? Navigating through the body of artists, this talk will propose new obligations for the body to be itself, to exhibit itself.

**Amitesh Grover** (India, b.1980) studied Live & Recorded Arts at University of Arts London, U.K. His work occupies the intermediate space between Theatre, Performance, and Interactive Art. He has created work on Grief, on Sleep, on Happiness, and several other ephemeral grounds of knowledge. His work has a strong orientation towards experiencing philosophy-in-performance. He was nominated for Arte Laguna Prize (Italy 2018), Forecast Award (HKW, Germany 2015), Bismillah Khan National Award (India, 2009), and is the recipient of numerous residencies including PACT Zollverein (Germany 2018), Tokyo Culture Creation Project (Japan, 2013), KMAT Residency (Australia, 2011), Prohelvetia AIR (Switzerland, 2008). His works are shown internationally at festivals and in theatres, galleries, public spaces, and on the internet. At present, he is Assistant Professor at National School of Drama (India), and leads a course on Interactive Art (M.F.A.) at Shiv Nadar University.



2:15 – 5:15 PM

## INDENT LAB

(for participants only)

SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

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7:00 PM

## WORK-IN-PROGRESS SHARING | TANASHAH BY NAVTEJ JOHAR

SERENDIPITY ARTS FOUNDATION, DEFENCE COLONY

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Tanashah, a solo by Navtej Johar, explores extremes. Based on the jail diaries of Bhagat Singh, particularly his essay titled, *Why I am an Atheist*, it examines the resolve of a young man to walk to the gallows with searing clarity, un-sublimated by religious doctrine or idealist philosophy. The impending moment of his youthful death almost seems to embolden him, propel him unto that final moment with a fierce veracity. Juxtaposed against this fierceness of a man tempting death, will be a *padam*, an amorous song, that talks of a lover's unbearable longing and unacceptable separation from his beloved.

Both the narratives—the powerful ardour of a revolutionary and the unbridled desire of an impassioned youth—dark, masculine, uncompromising, and almost heckling in nature—will be somatically interwoven in search of poised resolve in the finality of awaited death/consummation.

With the twin claims of unequivocal freedom and pleasurable repose or *sukha*, playing at the core of these two full-bloodied expressions respectively; the aim of the work will be to bring both courage and desire on the same register.

Tanashah is commissioned by Serendipity Arts Festival and will premiere in Goa in December 2018.

**Concept, choreography and performance:** Navtej Johar

**Vocals:** Madan Gopal Singh, K. Venkateshwaran

**Lighting and Stage Design:** Anuj Chopra

**Costumes:** Diwas Gill

**Assistant:** Simrat Dugal

**Sound Engineer:** Deepak Samson

**Photography:** Anshuman Sen

**Navtej Singh Johar** is a dancer-choreographer, scholar, yoga exponent, and a social activist. A recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi award for Contemporary Choreography (2014), his work—within all fields of his varied interests—remains consistently body-centric. It twines practice with critical theory and social action, traverses freely between the traditional and the contemporary, and rigorously engages both the philosophical and the sociological discourses of the body. His choreography draws on plural vocabularies: *bharatanatyam*, yoga, physical-theatre and somatics, and has won critical acclaim both nationally and internationally. A research fellow at the, International Research Centre, “Interweaving Performance Cultures”, Freie University, Berlin, Johar teaches Dance Studies at the Ashoka University, India. Founder-director of Studio Abhyas, New Delhi, a space devoted to refining the processes of embodied Indian practices as well as examining their historical contexts, Johar has devised two pedagogical methods, the BARPS method, designed to practice *asana* more effectively, and Abhyas Somatics, a practice that aims to evoke *rasa* and *sukha* that are essential to Indian aesthetics and Yoga respectively.

**SUNDAY 25 NOVEMBER, 2018**

10:00 – 11:30 AM

**TALK | NAVTEJ JOHAR  
THE SOMATICS BODY**

SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

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**Speaker's Note:** In this presentation, I would like to bring the focus on the materiality of the body as well as the word; and how this materiality in itself may have a free-willed intent, volition and direction. My attempt will be to extricate the body and the word from the conformist narratives of morality, doctrines of sublimation, and cultural exhibitionism—here I will like to throw light on the nexus between anthropology and performance theory. In order to evoke an alternative, somatic-body-centric narrative, I will cite ancient texts of materialist/realist philosophy as well as poetics. In a nutshell, I will be speaking of body, poetry, and politics!

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11:45 AM – 1:15 PM

**TALK | GEE IMAAN SEMMALAR  
THE SELF AS THE OTHER: BODY/ PERFORMATIVITY AND ITS DISRUPTIVE  
POTENTIAL**

SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

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How do we conceptualise our bodies? Do our bodies exist outside of socially and culturally mediated discursive systems of caste, gender, religion, nationality etc? Is it possible for us to peel away these labels ascribed to our bodies and access a naked truth underneath it all? The self is usually understood in terms of one's relationship to oneself and the outside. The boundaries between "inside" and "outside" as porous and the "self" and the "other" as fragile, tenuous and often violently constituted will be explored in this session. As a trans artist and activist, Gee Imaan Semmalar will provoke the participants to think of their gendered selves on and off stage, as creating performative affects and life itself as dramaturgy. Who constitutes the audience for such a dramaturgical exercise and what is the relationship of the performer to them and to the self?

When we say that gender is performed, we usually mean that we've taken on a role; we're acting in some way that is prescribed and pre-determined. For something to be performative means that it produces a series of affects. We act and walk and speak and talk that consolidate an impression of being a man or a woman or gender non-conforming. The communication of a gender or a gender identity involves not just a performance, but also a reception, understanding, or interpretation of the performance. By examining queer performative theory and practice, we will explore the idea of excess, the excess of being contained, not just in terms of performative potential but also in terms of epistemological meaning.

In times where there is growing political unrest, hate crimes against "othered bodies" and state repression, is there a possibility of heteroglossia of genders, races, nationalities, languages coexisting peacefully? Can we break down the idea of the "other" and see ourselves in them? Where does the "I" end and the "you" begin. Where does the "self" end and the "other" begin? In those liminal spaces between these constructions is the possibility of endless resistance.

**Gee Imaan Semmalar** is a trans activist, artist and writer. He co-founded Panmai Theatre along with Living Smile Vidya and Angel Gladly toured extensively in India and internationally with their debut production Colour of Trans 2.0. His short story, Emperor Penguins was published in 2016 by Zubaan in the book A Life in Trans Activism by A Revathi. He was a panelist on Queer Dramaturgies at the TPAM - Performing Arts Meeting in Yokohama, Japan, Feb 2017 and the Asian Dramaturgs Network Meeting and Labs in Yogyakarta in 2018. In 2016, he acted in a road trip experimental film called Naked Wheels which covered the issues of trans men and trans women. In 2012, he scripted, directed and acted in Kalvettukal (Sculptures, 2012) on trans men in South India. In 2015, he co-directed and acted in a stop motion animation film, "Won't the Real Transformers Please Stand up"? He worked as a radio jockey hosting his own show "Gee Oh!", on the first every LGBT radio channel hosted by Radiowallah Private Limited in 2015.

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2:15 – 5:15 PM

**INDENT LAB**

(for participants only)

SIDDHARTHA HALL, GOETHE-INSTITUT/ MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

7:00 PM

## PERFORMANCE | THE LOST WAX PROJECT BY PREETHI ATHREYA

CHAUMUKH, NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA

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There is no space and time before movement. The body does not move into space and time – it creates space and time.

Four bodies trace a trajectory of thought within a circular space, moving to feel the negative space around each other as much as the space within the intention to move.

Every time they move, they reach out towards something - constantly creating different relationships with everything around - constantly seeking to reinvent themselves.

Without a commitment to how we move, our bodies are no more than types – normalised within pre-decided categories – man, woman, citizen, refugee, homosexual, dictator, spectator.

The moving body may be the only recourse where we attempt to touch what is not yet. For it is a body that is constantly re-becoming something, always constituting itself beyond identity.

This potentiality is what exposes difference in systems that appear to be organised and unchanging.

Potentiality appears every time language exceeds its syntax, every time an other exceeds my reach, every time I sense more than I comprehend.

This potentiality is necessary for the times we live in.

**Concept and Choreography:** Preethi Athreya

**Performance:** Dipna Daryanani, Jahnavi Sreedhar, Kamakshi Saxena, Preethi Athreya

**Voice:** Bhairavi Narayanan

**Sound scape:** Darbuka Siva

**Sound editing:** Palani

**Lighting Design:** Jeong Hee Kang

**Design interpretation:** Dr.T.Balasaravanan

**Technical Direction:** Pravin Kannanur

**Costume:** Valsan Kolleri / Nanda Devanaesen

**Research assistance:** Devika Rani S, Maithily Bhupatkar, Kamakshi Saxena

**Co-production support:** The Goethe Institute, Max Mueller Bhavan, Mumbai/The InKo Centre, Chennai/ The Alliance Française of Madras.

**Thanks to:** Vijay Boothalingam, Jahnavi Sreedhar, Meera Krishnamurthy, Sharan Devkar, The Mumbai Assembly, the Goethe Institute, Chennai.

A Chennai-based contemporary dancer, **Preethi Athreya** trained in Bharatanatyam and later went on to do a postgraduate degree in Dance Studies (Laban Centre, London, 2001). Working within the Indian contemporary dance scene as a performer, choreographer and facilitator, Preethi's approach is marked by a constant dialogue with form and possibilities of reframing content. Preethi is one of the co-founders of Basement 21, a practice-based performance collective in Chennai. Her creations are 'Kamakshi' (2003), 'Inhabit' (2006), 'Porcelain' (2007), 'Pillar to Post' (2007), 'Sweet Sorrow' (2010), 'Light Doesn't Have Arms to Carry Us' (2013), 'Anki Bunki Kata' (2013), 'Across, Not Over' (2014), 'Conditions of Carriage - The Jumping Project' (2015). Co-produced by the India Foundation for the Arts (Bangalore), Prakriti Foundation (Chennai) and the Alliance Française of Madras, Preethi's works have been invited to leading festivals in India such as the Attakkalari Biennial, IGNITE! and the Bharat Rang Mahotsav, as well as internationally at Szene Salzburg, Impulstanz – Vienna International Festival, Jogjakarta International Street Art Festival, Singapore International Festival of Arts and JOMBA Festival of Contemporary Dance, Durban, South Africa.

## INDENT VENUES

### **Siddhartha Hall, Goethe-Institut/ Max Mueller Bhavan**

3, Kasturba Gandhi Marg

New Delhi - 110001

Nearest Metro: Barakhamba Road

### **Chaumukh, National School of Drama**

Bahawalpur House

1 Bhagwan Das Road

Mandi House

New Delhi - 110001

Nearest Metro: Mandi House

Serendipity Arts Foundation

C-340 Basement, Chetna Marg

Defence Colony

New Delhi - 110024

Nearest Metro: Lajpat Nagar

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PROJECT INITIATOR

**gati**  
DANCE FORUM

PROJECT PARTNERS

 **GOETHE  
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