

THE BARRE



Olga Szkabarnicki Art

Olga
Dec 14/15

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Ballet as an expression of ideas,
medium for creativity,
and source of inspiration

To celebrate the spirit of motion, The Barre publication is dedicated to ballet and dance. It aims to curate a collection of creative works related to ballet in India and around the world. Entries were accepted from October 3-25, 2017. It was commissioned by the 2017 Ballet Festival of India and will be released in conjunction with the festival.

Winning Image on Front Cover
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About: Ballet Festival of India

Objectives And Benefits:

- Opportunity to learn and network with international and local highly-qualified faculty
- Connect and engage the ballet community in India
- Enable nurturing and mentoring opportunities
- Further growth for students, dancers, and teachers
- Enable deeper, more holistic knowledge development in ballet
- Provide serious and competitive performance opportunity
- Reward and emphasize artistic and technical excellence in ballet within India
- Provide recognition, exposure and an avenue for other creative art mediums related to ballet
- Set high standards for quality in ballet

Mission:

To promote learning, networking, collaboration and performance opportunities in ballet with an emphasis on artistic and technical excellence using an in-depth, holistic platform.

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PRESENTS

BALLET

FESTIVAL OF

INDIA

MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 24 - 26, 2017

SUPPORTED BY

Founder



Karene Lawyer

Karene began ballet at age 5 at The School of Classical Ballet & Western Dance - Mumbai, where she trained under the RAD syllabus for 10 years. Karene continued her ballet training in the USA for another 6 years at Walnut Hill School for the Arts, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet Summer Intensive and Mount Holyoke College under Rose and Charles Flachs. Since returning to India, she has taught occasionally at various dance schools and also started Dance Essentials, one of the first dance wear stores in Mumbai.

"Ashifa and I want to bring top-level teachers and expose our young talent to the finer nuances of the dance form, and to provide a deeper understanding of dance movements. We want to provide a platform for participants to train, perform and network with fellow enthusiasts from all over the country."

Founder



Ashifa Sarkar

Ashifa began ballet at age 6 and trained for 14 years in the USA. She received intensive summer training at the School of American Ballet in New York and The Rock School for Dance Education (Pennsylvania Ballet). Performing for 11 years, her experience ranges from local community engagements to full scale pre-professional performances. Ashifa has been teaching ballet for 18 years and has worked with an array of students: all ages, levels, and abilities in different settings (schools, dance academies, and private studios).

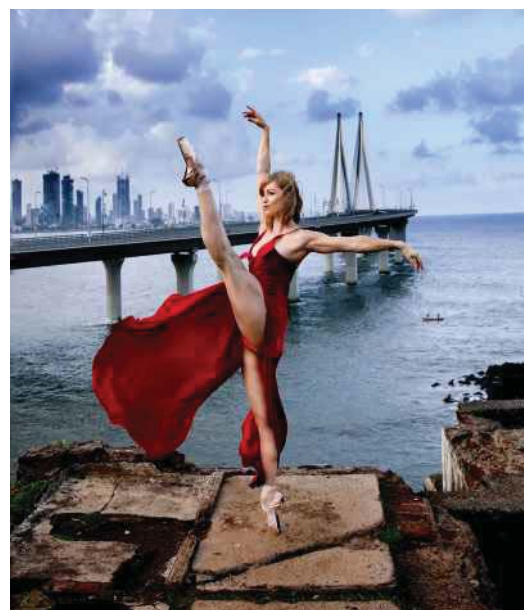
"We can learn a lot when together, that is the aim of the festival — to bring the ballet community together. We want to connect and engage the Indian ballet community and we want to foster artistic and technical excellence in ballet."

BFI Teacher Profiles

CINDY JOURDAIN

Cindy Jourdain began her professional ballet career at age 11 training at the Paris Opera Ballet school for 5 years. Thereafter, she continued at the Royal Ballet School from 1996-1998. She then danced with the English National Ballet (1998-2003) and the Royal Ballet (2003-2010), London in soloist and principal roles of ballets such as *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, *Cinderella*, *La Bayadere*, *Manon*, *Sylvia* and *Mayerling*, as well as contemporary work by the likes of Balanchine, McMillan, Ashton, Christopher Wheeldon, and Wayne McGregor amongst others. She rose to Principal dancer with the Royal Ballet. Cindy toured the world performing and was renowned for her acting abilities and sense of artistry.

In 2010 Cindy embarked on a freelance journey. She held the lead role in an award-winning feature film, "Love Tomorrow;" performed as the guest Principal Ballerina in Take That's Progress Live Tour; and coordinated the ballet section of the Closing Ceremony of the 2012 Olympics Games in London. Her achievements continue further in teaching, coaching, theatre, music and choreography for TV and music videos. Passionate about athleticism and physical fitness, Cindy designed a unique strength and conditioning program sharing her knowledge and love for Cross-Fit, martial arts, yoga, and dance. After moving to Mumbai and as a qualified personal trainer, she launched her fitness venture Cindy's Bootcamp and has looked after the training regimes of some of Bollywood's biggest celebrities. Cindy is now working on opening her own studio in Mumbai.



Photos by Taras Taraporvala



RENEE CHATELAIN

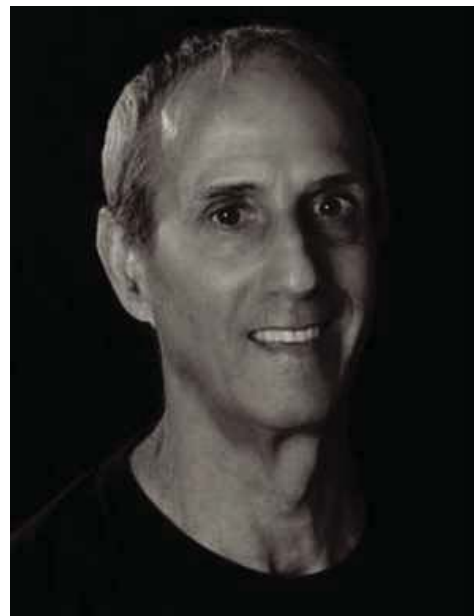
Renee Chatelain is a teacher, choreographer and former professional dancer from the USA. Her career as a dancer includes performing with the Eglevsky Ballet in New York, Delta Festival Ballet of New Orleans, Tampa Ballet, and American Dance Machine in New York. As part of her 36 years of teaching, she has been a guest teacher for Iceland Dance Theater in Reykjavik, Iceland, and at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York; Hunter College in New York City; Southeastern Louisiana University; as well as several local dance companies in Baton Rouge, Louisiana – her hometown. She is co-founder of Mid City Dance Project, Inc. and considers her passion project the creation and staging of *The Fading Line: A Commemoration of the 1953 Baton Rouge Bus Boycott*. Renee founded the dance programs for two independent local schools while serving on staff at both schools and presently serves on the board of the local school system foundation. She co-founded a local ballet studio in 1995 which she co-directed until 2001. She has also served as a panelist at the Association of Performing Arts Presenters in New York and at the inaugural Women in Dance Leadership Conference in 2015.

Renee is currently the President and CEO of the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge. Prior to this, she served as Executive Director at the Manship Theatre at Shaw Center for the Arts. A graduate of Louisiana State University, holding both a B.A. Degree in History and a Juris Doctor, she is also a respected lawyer.

YEHUDA MAOR

Yehuda Maor's ballet training started at a very early age in his native Israel. He later studied with such esteemed teachers as Inessa Alexandrovich (Bolshoi), Benjamin Harkarvy (Juilliard), Eileen Ward, Kenneth Mason (Royal Ballet) and Jean Geadis (National Ballet of Canada). One of his greatest influences was Maggie Black, with whom he trained in New York, and whose ideas he has incorporated into his teaching philosophy. Yehuda's illustrious performing career spans from a year-long stint with the Royal Ballet Company at Covent Garden to 12 long years as principal dancer and choreographer with the Bat-Dor Dance Company in Israel. He has worked and taught at several well-known dance institutions around the world, including Alvin Ailey, San Francisco Dance Theatre, Salzburg Experimental Dance Academy, California Dance Arts, Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, Broadway Dance Center and Peridance Center.

While working in New York, Yehuda developed a unique supplementary ballet training system called the Maor Placement Technique. This revolutionary technique "breaks from tradition to save tradition" and is designed to maximize training time for ballet dancers by ensuring proper placement and enhancing flexibility. Yehuda is currently in India and is the Assistant Director & Ballet Master of Navdhara India Dance Theatre (NIDT). He is also the Ballet Master & Program Advisor of the Classical Ballet Division of The Danceworx Academy.



MICHEL CASANOVAS

Michel Casanovas is a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method from southern France. He has studied ballet, contemporary dance, release technique, and contact improvisation. He graduated with a Baccalauréat de Danse from the Conservatoire de Toulouse, France in 1982 and has worked at different theatres and dance companies in Belgium, France, Canada, and Switzerland. In 1996, he co-founded with Patrick Collaud the Cie Morespace in Basel, Switzerland where he was able to choreograph five full-length productions. Between 2004 and 2008 he trained to become a practitioner in the Feldenkrais Method by Paul Rubin and Julie Casson-Rubin (San-Francisco) and regularly teaches group classes of Awareness Through Movement (ATM).

Michel combines his dance experience and the Feldenkrais Method to offer people a space of creativity and self-discovery. He leads people from functionality to a better quality of movement. This first step can become a foundation for work in dance, improvisation, the performing arts, or in general. Since 2006, he has been regularly teaching contemporary dance and Feldenkrais Method across India as well conducting art residencies and performances in the country. In 2015, he started the organisation ONA in southern France to develop creative work as well as to use the therapeutic approach of the Feldenkrais Method.

TUSHNA DALLAS

Tushna Dallas is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Dance (London), holding an advanced certificate of the Academy. She is also a Fellow of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (London). Tushna developed a keen interest in the arts, especially music and Western Classical Ballet at a very young age. Her love for dance and her desire to teach, took her to England. In 1962, she graduated from the London College of Dance, where she received her training and secured a College Diploma in teaching with a distinction, having qualified in 8 disciplines of the ISTD. She later went on to attain her Fellowship, with Honours, in the Imperial Classical Ballet Branch of the ISTD.

In September 1966, Tushna founded her own school of Classical Ballet and Western Dance in Mumbai. The school has grown and progressed over the last 50 years and is now one of the most established schools in the country. Tushna feels that the technique of Classical ballet is very sound, and is invaluable in any dancer's training. Her main focus however, has always been on developing self-awareness through ballet. She strongly believes that, through dance, one can learn certain values essential to every individual which can be implemented to life.



KHUSHCHEHER DALLAS

Khushcheher Dallas is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Dance (London) and holds a Licentiate and Associate degree of this college. She is also a Licentiate of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. As a young child, Khushcheher's fascination and love for ballet was carefully nurtured and developed by her mother, Tushna. She attended several summer programs at the Royal Academy of Dance (London) for which she received scholarships for two consecutive years. At the age of 16, Khushcheher was offered admission to the Royal Academy of Dance Teachers' Training College.

Upon her graduation in 1993, she returned to India to join the School of Classical Ballet and Western Dance, founded by her mother, and began teaching students from the Primary to the Advanced level. She successfully introduced other styles of dance in the School, including Modern, Jazz, and Latin American. In September 1998, she pioneered the Modern Dance and Jazz examinations of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (London) and secured excellent results. In September 2006, she introduced Latin American Examinations and produced all distinction results. Khushcheher now furthers her mother's vision and legacy and is at the helm of affairs at the Ballet school.

CZARINA VILLEGAS

Czarina Villegas is a company ballet dancer since 2006 from Ballet Manila, a 20-year old prestigious ballet school and company in the Philippines. Her repertoire includes the full-length productions of *La Bayadere*, *Swan Lake*, *La Fille Mal Gardee*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Pinocchio*, *The Nutcracker*, *The Swan*, *The Fairy and the Princess*, *Le Corsaire* and a few Filipino ballet productions. She has also danced in *Ballet Blanc* (Lead), *Dancing to Verdi*, *Archnida*, *Sotto Voce*, *Paquita*, *Maynilani Juan*, *Berlioz Overture*, *Dulce*, *Flux*, *Love Beyond Goodbye*, *Green*, *Pas d'Action*, *Paquita*, *Alon Ng Buwan*, *Buenos Aires*, and *Satanilla*. In 2005 and 2007, she competed for the National Music Competition for Young Artists – Ballet Category. She participated in the Yeosu International Youth Culture Festival in Korea 2008, the East Meets West tour in UK and Ireland tour in 2011, and the 2011 Gyeongju World Culture Expo in China. She started teaching in 2008 at the Ballet Manila School.

She is currently teaching ballet at Rhythmus Happy Feet in Mumbai. Rhythmus Happy Feet is associated with Ballet Manila. Rhythmus Happy Feet also provides a scholarship platform for kids to attend Ballet Manila to be trained directly under their prima ballerinas and award winning dance teachers and coaches.



LEAH RAPHAEL CURTIS

Leah Raphael Curtis is a choreographer, dancer and instructor from New York. Leah began her early training in the Pacific Northwest region where she danced with the Mt. Baker Ballet. She continued her training at Walnut Hill School of the Arts, Cornish College of the Arts, and on scholarship at Dance Theater of Harlem's Professional Program. She attended the Certificate program for Alvin Ailey in New York before earning her B.A. Honors in Contemporary Dance from London Studio Centre, UK. There she danced for the INTOTO contemporary dance company working with choreographer Finn Walker. Leah began her studies in Indian Classical dance in 2007 in New Delhi. She began presenting her choreography across India including Delhi, Trivandrum, and Kolkata and performed in the 2012 Khajuraho Dance Festival.

Leah co-founded Delhi Dance Theater (DDT) in 2011 to unite her work in India and New York. Through DDT she has co-produced, choreographed and danced multiple performances for DDT including *Beneath the Tamarind Tree*, *Brooklyn Looks East*, and *Hidden Spaces*. With DDT, she has been part of the Erasing Borders Festival and the Outlet Dance Project New York. Leah regularly dances and choreographs for various companies in the US and India including Bonnie Scheibman, PULSEensemble, and Natya Nectar Dance Company where she is the resident choreographer and principal dancer. Leah is an established dance educator specialising in ballet, contemporary dance, improvisation technique, and contact improvisation in India and abroad. This includes leading a new initiative to bring dance and music technique workshops, creative research and exchange to artists in Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, and West Bengal. Leah is committed to uniting music and dance, and strives to provide dancers with access to live music exchanges in the studio and performance.



Interviews

Quick Fire Questions

With **Antara Ashra**,
Founder of Future School
of Performing Arts (FSPA)



Q: What is your dance background? How did you get into the field of dance education?

A: I started dancing in 2013, initially as a recreational activity. Over time, dance became a big part of my life and I kept craving for more. During this time, I was also completing my Fellowship with Teach For India, where I taught for two years at a low-income school. Here, I learned about how dance can leave a long-lasting impact on one's life. I was drawn to the idea of an alternative and accessible education path for talented and aspiring professional dancers. This gave a birth to the idea of a formal school dedicated to dance education.

Q: Why did you set-up your studio? What was the inspiration and what is your mission?

A: In order for us to become a formal school, infrastructure was a key component. I began doing research on how we can make the best facility possible, keeping in mind the needs of professional dancers. We looked at the idea of large, but efficient use of space, sprung floors, and how we can build a facility that makes you feel inspired when you walk in, and most importantly, feels like a professional school. Our facility is a 5,000 sq ft space with 4 studios that are completely sprung floored. We also have showers and changing rooms!

Q: What models did you study from around the world to create your own here?

A: For FSPA, we conducted extensive research on the structures of schooling models around the world, across fields of academics, music, dance, sports, etc. Along with that, we also tried to understand the needs of the dance and performing arts space in India, and how we can cater to that. Our research will always be an on-going process in order for us to consistently try and improve our education programs.

Q: What is your dream achievement for your space?

A: At FSPA, we emphasize the importance of authenticity, excellence, and working for a larger purpose. We hope that all of our future students and alumni become artists who are doing excellent and authentic work, and contributing to the dance space and ecosystem in India.

Q: Where do you see ballet in India in the next 10 years? 20 years?

A: In 10 or 20 years, I hope India will have a strong foundation and trajectory for Ballet as a study, and as a respected art form that is appreciated by a wider Indian audience. I also hope to see a higher standard of Ballet, where there is a constant emphasis on pure, authentic training, and large scale performing opportunities that also motivate and employ future dancers. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring our students are always accurate with their technique, and never compromising on their safety and knowledge. Our Ballet classes are run by The School of Classical Ballet & Western Dance. We are extremely fortunate to have immense support and guidance from Tushna and Khushcheher Dallas, and Vaidehi Patel from the school. Working with them has raised the expectations and standard of Ballet at FSPA, and for our students and alumni as well.



Interviews



Parveen Rohilla photography

Quick Fire Questions

with 22-year-old
Prince Sharma,
one of the first Indian,
male ballet dancers

How did you discover ballet?

I learned about ballet after seeing Mr. Sanjay Khatri. Before meeting him, I had no idea what ballet was.

What made you pursue ballet as your career?

I feel happy when I dance. I do not want to be a star; I just want to do what I love.

What was your training path?

I trained with Mr. Sanjay Khatri and then received a one-year scholarship to the Kirov Ballet school in Washington D.C. for 2016. After that, I came back to Central Contemporary Ballet to continue my training and help other students who want to learn ballet.

Who are your inspirations in the Ballet world?

Leonid Sarafanov and Daniil Simkin. They are great dancers.

What is your dream achievement in ballet? As a dancer or teacher?

As a dancer, I want to perform on a big stage with great ballet dancers. As a teacher, I want to inspire people about ballet. It will be great if I can help ballet be known more in India.

Sanjay Khatri, founder of Central Contemporary Ballet with over 12 years of experience and having worked with the likes of American Ballet Theater and Universal Ballet Company, Korea, his repertoire includes Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake, La Bayadere, and Giselle among others.

Where do you see ballet in the next 20 years in India?

Thanks to many international teachers coming to India and spreading the art with an open heart, there has certainly been a change. We see it when dancers like Prince Sharma and Amir Shah get scholarships to prestigious foreign ballet schools. In my time there weren't too many resources to grow in ballet and travel abroad for ballet training. Seeing all these changes in the last 10 years, 20 years from now, we will easily find ballet studios, Indian ballet teachers and Indian ballet dancers.



With Best Wishes from

The School of Classical Ballet and Western Dance



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Features



Life After Ballet

Dancer/Writer: Cindy Jourdain

Photography: Rahul Jhangiani

This is my talent, this is my perfection and imperfection at the same time. I fit a specific mould, I'm built and conditioned to do one thing and one thing only. Everyday, I aim to excel at it and evolve inside a cocoon which year after year, becomes my only safety net. The mentality and rigour bring on a single-minded attitude and stubbornness hard to step away from, as I have a special purpose and only I know what it takes. Nothing will stop me, I sacrifice big, but I don't care. My quest is perfection. My quest is to show perfection. This picture by Rahul Jhangiani didn't make the final cut for me when we were building our 'Life After Ballet' series because it wasn't perfect, as I looked at it with that critical eye instead of seeing the beauty in the imperfection. Six years later, and I still find it hard to let go of that control over the smallest details when it comes to the way my body looks, the shape it makes, and the art I practised for so many years. The flick of the hair bothered me, my shoulder slightly too high covering the neck line bothered me, my legs are turned in, and I could go on and on. I'm glad I changed my mind though, I'm glad I managed to see the abandon and the vulnerability behind this shot which ultimately is the bigger and only message here. Our own vision often gets distorted looking at ourselves! Being imperfect is beautiful and it's real, showing imperfection is part of the story and contributes towards our own individual growth. Both perfection and imperfection are a great source of inspiration for ourselves and others, and it's often the latter that gets us closer to understanding who we truly are.



Ballet was my life, all I knew and probably all I consciously and unconsciously loved. I ate, breathed, slept ballet, everything came second, my family, the men in my life as well as my health at times! I was selfless to my art, yet so selfish and self-obsessed with perfection. The day I decided to walk away from that insular bubble of mine and step into that big black hole called the unknown was scary and painful as hell! Now I know that I wouldn't be the woman I am today had I never let go of THAT love! So many times I struggled to get my head around my decision, but never once have I thought of going backwards or felt any regrets. I kept my convictions alive and took tiny baby steps keeping in mind to discover and build a new me. I needed to explore every possible new door, losing myself sometimes in the process, trying, failing, re-evaluating, wondering and more... Looking back, I truly feel there is no way I could have gained as much as I did without losing what seemed so very precious to me for so long. There lies the harsh reality of our journeys, there is no manual on how to live the perfect life, make the right decisions, it's definitely not linear, nor crystal clear, it takes trial and errors, guts, intuition and resilience, and in my opinion the more adventurous you get the closer you'll eventually see what's really meant for you.

What I see is NOT what I am, what I feel is NOT who I am, mirror images are fragments of us, an expression, a creation, a work in progress that can continue to exist or be undone in an instant. When you create, remind yourself not to hold on to a moment, live it instead and take it forward with you as something beautiful and pure is bound to emerge.

Rahul Jhangiani

Touted as the youngest and the most upcoming celebrity and fashion photographer in India today, Rahul started his journey at a very early age. His work spans across various prestigious brands, magazines, and celebrities. He has a wide portfolio with a number of international works to his name. The 26-year-old photographer is now based in Mumbai and works for channels across London and Barcelona.





Artist Shiavax Chavda

Courtesy of The Chavda
Family Collection

Considered one of the pioneers of Indian modern art, Shiavax Chavda, was born in 1914 to a Parsi family in Navsari, Gujarat. He began his artistic training at the JJ School of Art in 1930. Later, he travelled to Europe to continue his training at the Slade School of Fine Arts in London, as well as the Saint Martin's School of Art, London and the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere, Paris. Chavda was known as a master draughtsman and his beautiful portrayals of dance in its various forms caught the art world's attention. He often created sketches of dancers from the Russian Imperial ballet, the Royal Ballet and New York City Ballet, including renowned ballerinas such as Margot Fonteyn and Maya Plisetskaya. His paintings are part of several museum collections including the Victoria & Albert Museum London, Budapest Museum, The National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, Baroda museum, corporate houses like Tatas and Godrej & Boyce, and other private and public collections in India and abroad.

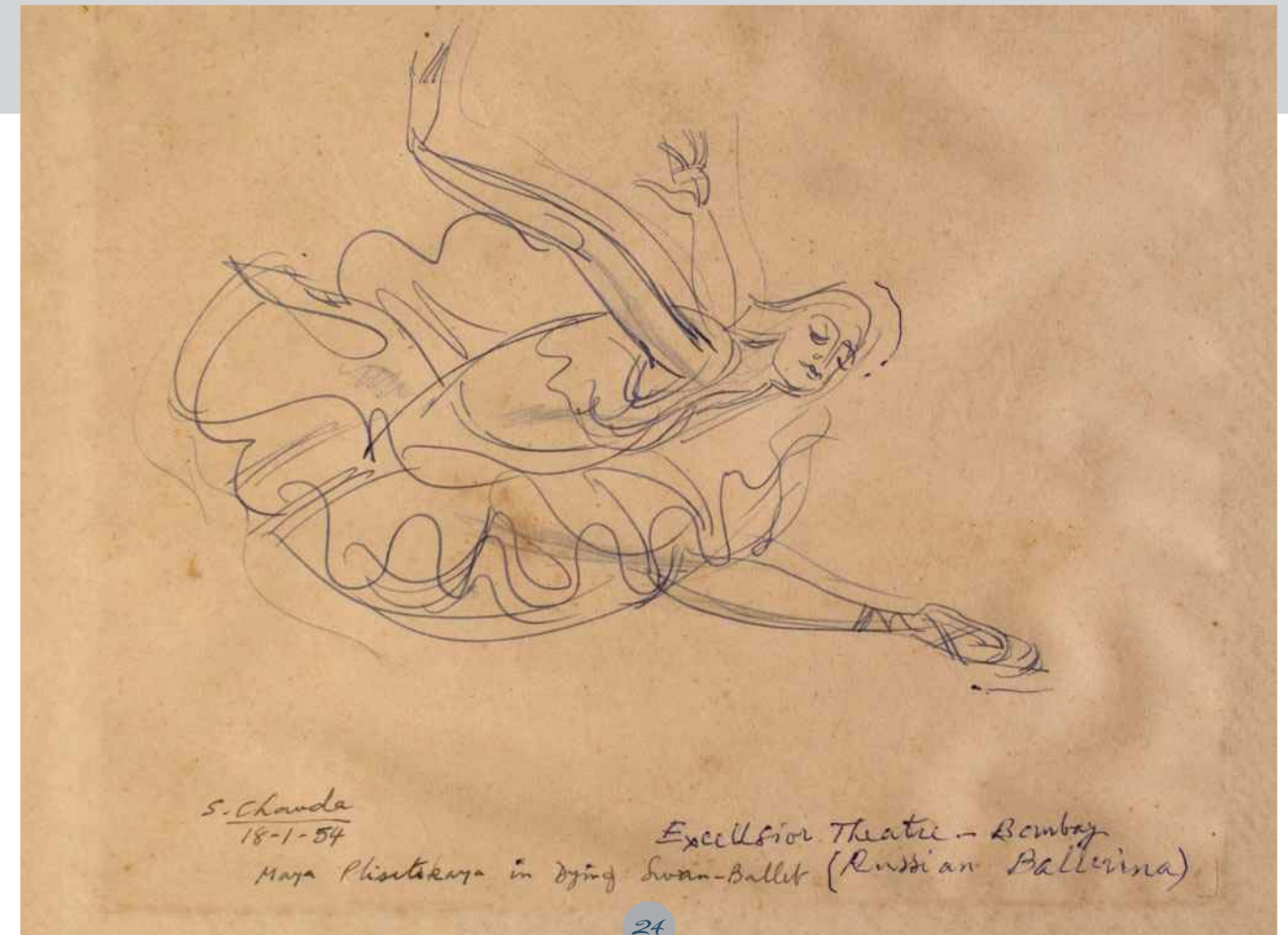


Russian Ballet (1967)

Maya Plisetskaya Russian Ballerina

(Dying Swan) Excelsior Theatre,
Bombay (1954)

Maya Mikhailovna Plisetskaya (20 November 1925 – 2 May 2015) was a world-renowned Soviet ballet dancer, choreographer, ballet director, and actress. She danced during the Soviet era at the Bolshoi Theatre and rose to the title of prima ballerina assoluta of the company.



Moving the Barre

Ballet and Literature

First Ballerina

By Mrinalini Harchandrai

She is the stage
and the velvet drop
she is the ocean's glissé
and the land's arabesque
she is the music box
the nutcracker in its suite
she is in the wings
has wings in her knees
she is pink skies
and tulle clouds
she is the art
an original choreography of time

she is the muse
ubiquitous in inspiration
for every generation
wild she is, sautéeing free
yet perfect in her symmetry
she is the black swan fury of a monsoon
and the Giselle in grand amour
the leap in Nureyev
the gravity of Pavlova
she is the principal dancer
and watchful audience to her creatures
she is the narrative within us
and the character of our nature.

Ballet Lessons

By Mrinalini Harchandrai

Sharpen your toes
into keen pointes
flex your muscles
relax your joints.

Keep rising up
with each developpé
pull your spine to the sky
while knees bend and plié.

Straighten your tendu
suck in your tummy
don't stick your bum out
like the Easter bunny.

If you sickle your wrist
and drop your elbow
forget Swan Lake arms
just broken wings will show.

Posture, posture, posture
three magic words for control
yet feel the movement from within
and pas de chat from your soul.

Listen to the rhythm
keep to the beat
para rum pum pum.
a-5-a-6-a-7-and-8.

Doesn't matter if your feet bleed
don't show it on your face
love the ache and the pain
performance is labour in grace.



The Slippers

By Mrinalini Harchandrai

They lie with crickets
dusted in the dragonfly
iridescence of wings
a pair of ebbd swan songs
that knew their place marks
on the dais floorboards
fashioned with pearly sweat
and ribbonary sinew
they leapt at the chance
to aggrandize limbs
gave leg to deep spins
and offered toeholds
to marquee lights
full of flashbulbs and stars.

They wear peels and tears
like faded dancers
whose skin know lines
from whipped whirls
taut with longing.

The zephyr has been spent
for the satin sylphs
a pas de deux
who capered in a cabriole
for polonaises and polkas
mazurkas and tarantellas,
after seeing all the world
in a stage
like fallen lovers
within a cobweb drawer
the star-crossed sugarplums
play their finale
sleeping...beauty.

Indo-Western Production
By Mrinalini Harchandrai

Leotards spill
mother-goddess chests
pink tights fill
kathak hips,
our bourée
with thigh and swing
distends tendon and bone,
our Carmens wear tutus
fashioned from Sita's earth
our sugar plum fairies
have Nataraj port de bras,
yet we bend lithe as yogis
pirouette like chakras
dance into our third eyes
and reset the barre.

Mrinalini Harchandrai's poems have appeared in literary journals like The Bombay Review, The Bangalore Review, Earthen Lamp Journal, The Joao Roque Literary Review, The Quill Magazine and Vayavya. Her poems have also featured in a visual art show entitled Breaking Ranks at the Headlands Centre for the Arts, San Francisco. Her poems appear in Sahitya's Akademi's forthcoming anthology, Modern English Poetry By Younger Indians. Her first collection of poetry, A Bombay in my Beat, an imprint of Bombaykala, is forthcoming in December 2017. She learned ballet with The School of Classical Ballet & Western Dance (Mumbai) under its founder Tushna Dallas during her school years.

Dance is Everything

By Tushna Dallas

Dance is a disciplined training, perfecting the body to perfected movement, thus enabling him to move with ease and grace, his years of controlled discipline rewarding him with perfect freedom - this combines with his inner spirit allowing him to express himself, and thus bringing to surface that which is 'true'. For this combination to take place, his intellect, his mind has to grasp, be alive and respond very keenly to the lessons that Dance offers - co-ordination, clear thinking hence judgement, awareness and a general awakening, sensitivity to the senses all follow to one who wishes to educate himself through Dance. This receptivity becomes finer, and thus through the physical he can awake to the spiritual. Dance is maturity and stability acquired through discipline which releases the spirit to ultimate freedom, which is joy, which wants to Dance.

The Artist (Margot Fonteyn)

By Tushna Dallas

Only the artist can move you, uplift you and do something for you. The artist stirs something much deeper within you; when her performance ends, something inside almost stands still, there is no desire to applaud, one does not want to break the atmosphere, rather one feels and owes a greater tribute to the artist by an outer silence but an inward surging, acknowledging the profound depth of the performance, you come away with a desire to grow, and this unfolds new meaning which does not die down, but rises even past rational thinking, which lures to faith, the mind cannot comprehend but the heart is assured, and who can do this for you? Only an artist. Fonteyn is one of those, she is among the handful.



The History of the Barre

by Giovanna Leva Joglekar

Director Kaustubha Ballet, Mumbai

When I see my young pupils in Mumbai practicing at the barre, I feel like telling them how much is behind that piece of rod that every dancer, from amateurs to prima ballerinas, holds to prepare and warm up their bodies.

Though Ballet began in the 1400's, it is only in the 19th century that the barre started being used with Carlo Blasis (1797-1878), director of the La Scala Opera Theatre in Milan. He was a famous writer, choreographer and teacher - an innovator in all the technical aspects of what is now everywhere called ballet. Barre practice was different from today: very short with only a few exercises, but with long repetitions of 16 to 24 Battement Tendus and very slow Grand Pliés.

The beautiful paintings of Edgar Degas show very clearly dancers with their legs on the barre in a class where Jules Perrot is teaching. Perrot used to partner with Maria Taglioni who officially introduced pointe shoes. They both went to Russia and together with choreographer Marius Petipa taught Ballet to the Russians.

At the beginning of the 20th century a very famous teacher Enrico Cecchetti from Italy went all over Europe to teach and was employed by Diaghilev's "Ballets Russes". He reorganised all the exercises for the ballet class. In his system, the barre started with Pliés followed immediately by Grands Battements; there were no Battements Fondus. Today, we generally practice the Grands Battements at the end of the barre.

Around 1950, Russian dancer and teacher Boris Kniazeff started the floor barre for the only reason that the Russian company on tour in Paris did not have a classroom with a barre. Therefore, for daily practice he decided to do the same exercises by sitting and lying on the floor.

● The Classical Ballet As A Medium Of Storytelling ●

A Case Study Of *The Nutcracker*

By Amanda D'Souza

The form of dancing known as Classical Ballet finds its roots in the court entertainments of fifteenth century Italian Renaissance. This highly stylised mode of dance was no mere act of entertainment; it was seen as one of the formal dramatic expressions of the aristocratic world view. These performances were the exclusive domain of the nobility and featured elaborate costumes and staging, accompanied by classical music. The grace and technique displayed in this performance art caught the fancy of the French and the Russians, who refined the techniques involved and perfected the form, leading to its eventual popularity as a concert dance form. Today, a ballet is referred to both as the Western classical form of dance that has had an impact on the basic techniques used in several other dance forms worldwide; and also as a theatrical production that uses choreography and music for dramatic storytelling. This paper seeks to explore the dynamics of the latter, exploring ballet as a form of storytelling and briefly looking at its impact on culture, using *The Nutcracker* ballet as a case study.

Ballet became an expressive art in its own right somewhere around the eighteenth century. Using the physical vocabulary of the dramatic theatre and the commedia dell'arte, ballet sought ways of telling stories purely through dance and movement. Jean-Georges Noverre, who became chief ballet-master at the Paris Opéra in 1776, strove to replace ballet's often cumbersome formality with naturalistic drama, and is credited with the creation of the ballet d'action, in which music, costume, and steps are all subordinated to plot (Bull 11).

One can thus apply a postmodernist label on this form of performance art, and call it inter-textual. Indeed, ballet combines distinct genres of artistic expression into a singular whole, giving the form several layers and forms through which its creative artists can interpret a single story. A ballet will typically adapt a simplistic tale (referred to as the libretto) and interpret it dramatically through the bodily movements and expressions of the ballerina, supplemented by the accompanying music, all of which is rounded off by conventional theatrical elements and staging. This paper seeks to demonstrate these inter-textual elements of the European art of ballet, using *The Nutcracker* as an example of the form.



The Nutcracker is widely regarded as one of the iconic pieces of classical ballet, and has a performance history dating back to more than a century ago. This ballet first debuted at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, on December 17, 1892. The performance was an adaptation of an adaptation, using Alexandre Dumas's retelling of E.T.A. Hoffman's classic *The Nutcracker* and *The Mouse King* as a libretto. The spellbinding choreography was a product of the talents of Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov. The interpretive and magical score was provided by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky and Petipa had previously collaborated on another classical ballet, *Sleeping Beauty*.

The Nutcracker was not an instant success. The first production was a commercial and critical failure. However, the ballet gained popularity with future productions, transcending continental boundaries to spread to the United States and Canada, where it eventually gained the status of a Christmas ritual. The National Ballet of Canada thus describes the influence of the ballet, "*The Nutcracker* has been an integral and irreplaceable part of Christmas celebrations worldwide and a work of theatrical exuberance synonymous with the unfettered joys of childhood wonderment" (national.ballet.ca). Indeed, the production has become such a permanent Christmas fixture, that legendary dance critic Richard Buckle quipped that the arrival of December meant we are all 'one more Nutcracker closer to death'.

What sets *The Nutcracker* apart from most other ballets is that it is a story seen through the innocent eyes of a child. The original tale by E.T.A. Hoffmann belonged to a great nineteenth century wave of children's tales in which the adult world loomed large and new experiences seem terrifying. Like fairy tales that symbolically allowed a child to navigate this overwhelming adult terrain, *The Nutcracker* too employed larger-than-life fantasy and magic to create an enchanting, whimsical world where the child can play out his/her fantasies and seek joy through the wonders of make-believe. The production accordingly capitalises on its child protagonist's point of view to create a sense of wonder and awe at every element of the fantastic, dreamlike world of the narrative. These elements are dramatised quite beautifully through Petipa's delicate and beautiful choreography, made all the more magical by Tchaikovsky's iconic and enchanting score, that accompanies nearly every rendering of the ballet. Alastair Macaulay aptly sums up Tchaikovsky's genius contribution, "The innocence and the confectionery of *The Nutcracker* were very deliberate choices." He goes on to laud Tchaikovsky, saying he was good at bringing magic into the lives of children, knowing well how to overwhelm his audience: Tchaikovsky's response to these (Petipa's) requirements was, by setting the simplest musical device on a huge scale, his way of showing the dimensions of a child's heart: not complex but vast. His other main way of tapping childlike wonder in this score is his orchestration. Marvelously distinct throughout, it takes the listener through one special sound world after another. (Macaulay, nytimes.com) Ballets like *The Nutcracker* succeed as a medium of storytelling due to the employment of such musical techniques, coupled with dramatic conventions such as the mime. Mime has been an intrinsic part of classical ballet for centuries. It is used to spell out particular moments in the story through a silent language. Using gestures, bodily movement and expressions, the choreographed mime in a ballet captures much of the thematic aspects of a narrative. Deborah Bulls praises the narrative arc of the production: (*The Nutcracker*) tells a good and imaginative story with Clara at its centre. We understand immediately that we have entered her dream – a dream tinged with the vague romantic longings of adolescence, in which the Nutcracker Prince is her courtly (and erotically unthreatening) spirit guide. The world outside the Stahlbaum house – a midnight blizzard – is shown to be not fearful, but beautiful, and the stage is set, Freudian props and all, for Clara's metaphorical transformation from childhood to womanhood. (Bulls np.)

Thus, *The Nutcracker* is an example of a classical ballet production that effectively employs the conventions of several distinct modes of storytelling and blends them into a cohesive and entertaining visual spectacle. It is a form of drama that displays the refined beauty of dance, it is a form of dance that wonderfully captures the mimetic richness of expression, and it uses music to transport its audience into an otherworldly realm that is presented in a rich tableau through the spectacular sets and costumes. It is a truly inter-textual, magnificently expressive form of presenting a tale that has captivated audiences across time and geographical boundaries. From its origins as a classical European form of dance, ballets such as *The Nutcracker* have managed to enchant audiences and inspire artists across the globe. Not even Hoffman would have imagined that his whimsical tale of a child's playful dream could be interpreted so magically as to have made room for itself in the hearts of audiences of all ages, becoming for the Western audience, as synonymous with Christmas as dreams with sleep.



Works Cited

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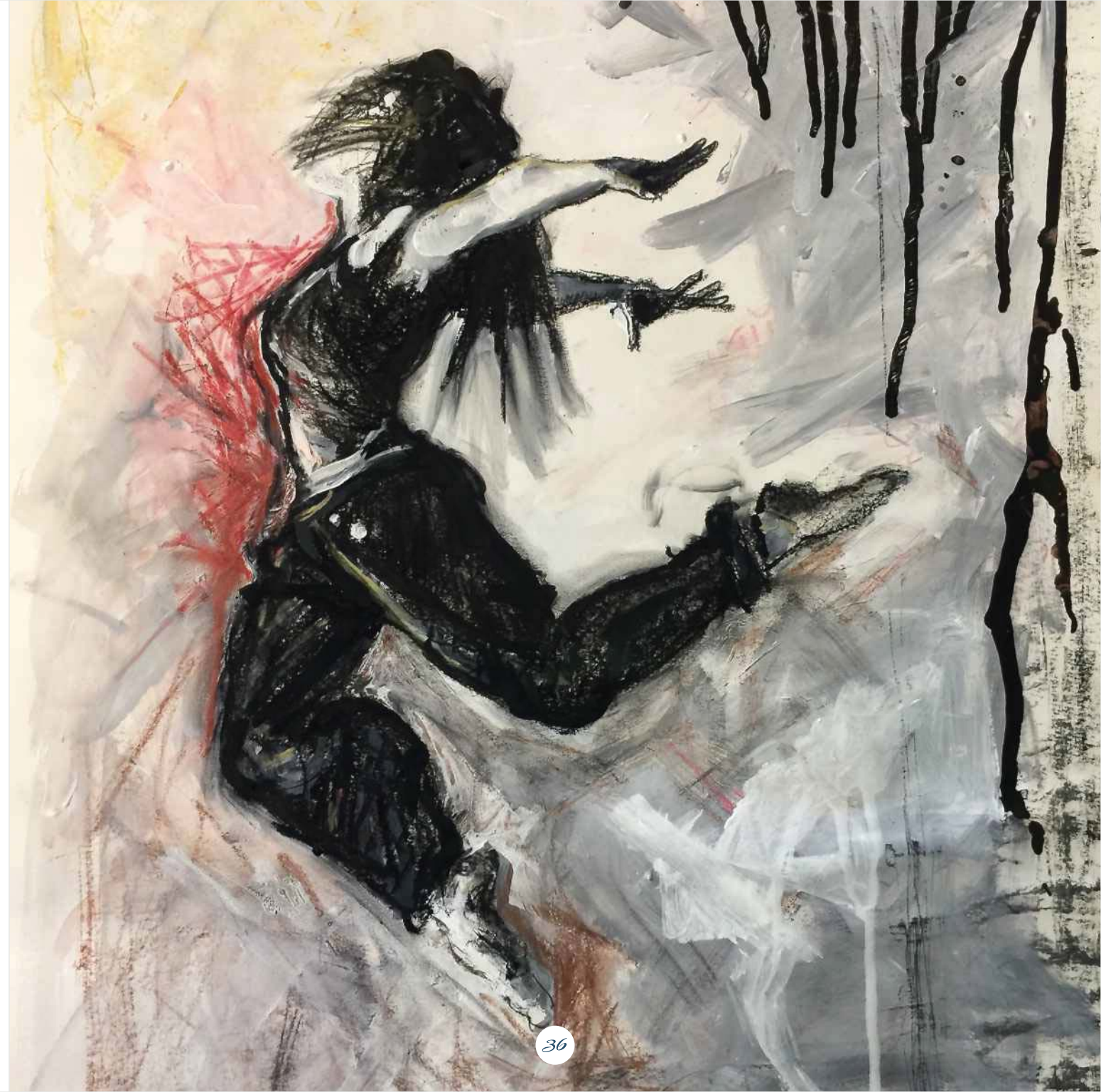


Raising the Barre

Ballet as an expression of ideas, medium for creativity, and source of inspiration

Artist: Olga Szkabarnicki

Olga is a Canadian artist based on Salt Spring Island, Canada, working almost exclusively with the human figures in an exploration of dynamic movement in 2D, using both live models and photographic references. Although her work tends to be expressive and can veer towards abstraction, it is always based on a solid understanding of anatomy. She developed her paintings in concept-driven series that challenge the viewer to see the old or familiar in new ways that are vital to contemporary life.





Liberating Self

Artist: Juhee Matta

It was very recently — about five years ago — that Juhee shifted her work ethics towards practicing art in a studio environment. Most of her work revolves around women's body as an expressive tool in a disguised world. It started as a generic topic of intercourse between nature of things and her reception to it. Her reflection to these scenarios have resulted in a series of dance postures and still poses of women wanting to be free of certain undesired elements in themselves. She plans to keep working on the basic idea of depicting woman's body in different mediums like drawings and paintings, as it is and further through installations, performance art, and art-dance collaborations.

The three pencil sketches are a study of posture, form, and power of stroke/line.
The treatment for all the sketches is different.



The first one is vibrance and cheer with liberating tones. The movement of lines is quick and bold to achieve her swift posture.



The second one is getting ready for her dance. There is a thoughtfulness and composure to go and perform the dance.



The third one is a relaxed, undertone of this dance form where each of them is probably discussing something before or after their act. It also focuses on the soft net dress/costume of the dancers which forms this brilliant flower composition.



Artist: Omkar Vijay Gotad

Omkar is an artist who graduated with a BFA degree in Applied Arts from the Sir JJ Institute of Applied Art. He is currently working as an illustrator designer.

Ink illustrations/sketches are of well-known ballet dancers from around the world: Roberto Bolle, Daniil Simkin, Derek Dunn, and Svetlana Zakharova.



Dancer/Poet: Avantika Kochar
Photography: Arjun Gulati

We measure time in months and days
And look forward to our times together to laze
We spin we dance we dream,
We run among the trees!
The energy we hold is pure
With you pulsing in my soul
We are alive and we glow
In the electric shell we soar.
Let's love and laugh baby
And wonder for starlight and dawn
And mystical mornings.



Experiences Of A Professional Dancer

Photographer: Priyanshi Vasani

Dancer: Narayan Sharma

Before I started dancing, I would watch a lot of videos of ballet dancers. This wasn't easy for me because I had a small phone which was only capable of making and receiving calls, and of course, telling time. So I ended up going to cyber cafes; the ones where you could pay Rs 15/hour and get unlimited internet. This way, I got access to ballet videos, but sometimes, I didn't even have enough money with me, and I would have to stop after just one hour. But I wanted more! So I decided to buy a phone where I could watch videos all day instead of just for one hour! I started collecting money, and after a few months, I bought a phone. I would watch these videos literally all day. That is when I saw how these male ballet dancers can fly. When they would jump – they were flying! After that I asked myself, “could I get myself to believe that I too could fly?”

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