

2021–2022 Artist in Residence Bijayini Satpathy

Image: Bijayini Satpathy in the Pontaut Chapter House at The Cloisters, photo by Stephanie Berger

Tuesday, September 13 at 7 pm
The Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium

Choreographed and performed by **Bijayini Satpathy**
Music composed by **Bindhumalini Narayanaswamy**

This performance is made possible by The Arnhold Fund for Dance Innovation at The Met and the New York State Council on the Arts.

Additional support is provided by the Jerome Robbins Foundation.

Notes on the Program

Dohā, or “couplet,” is the culmination of Bijayini Satpathy’s year as the 2021–2022 MetLiveArts Artist in Residence. Building on a series of movement explorations at The Met Cloisters, the Modern and Contemporary Art and Islamic Art galleries, and the Astor Chinese Garden Court, this evening-length work navigates the relationship between prayer and play.

The idea of prayer is central to the Odissi dance form and much of the traditional repertoire addresses or praises a deity. In her choreography, however, Bijayini abandons theistic depictions to emphasize the *bhāva*—the emotional experience—of prayer as an embodied human act. Through intricately patterned choreography, she constructs her own solitary rituals, oscillating between precision and spontaneity. Within the strictures of ritualized prayer, she embraces play and playfulness as an essential part of the individual’s search for the divine.

Bijayini’s long-standing interest in expanding Odissi’s physical vocabulary finds new direction in this work, which looks beyond gestural ornamentation. Here, Bijayini hones in on the skeletal nuances of Odissi’s lexicon to find abundance and sensuality within a more austere palette. She also moves away from textual narrative and performs only one couplet of poetry, written by the 18th-century Urdu poet Mir Taqi Mir. The lines address neither god nor beloved. Instead, they talk about slowing down even the smallest breath to appreciate the fragility of the universe.

لے سانس بھی آہستہ کہ نازک ہے بہت کام
آفاق کی اس کارگہ شیشہ گری کا

“If you breathe, breathe softly:
The mirror work of the cosmos is delicate.”

translation: Nandini Majumdar

This evening of dance is in memory of the painter Sam Gilliam (1933–2022).

This work sincerely acknowledges and offers gratitude to the Mahari temple dancers and young Gotipua dancers of Orissa, whose contributions have made Odissi as loved and rich as it is today.

— Bijayini Satpathy

Artists

Bijayini Satpathy, choreographer and performer
Bindhumalini Narayanaswamy, composer
Sujay Saple, lighting and stage design
Poorna Swami, dramaturgy
Irene Dowd, anatomy research guide
Brigitte Singh, costume advice
Claudia Norman, manager and producer
Elaine Lipcan, tour strategy and consultant
Masoom Parmar, India coordinator and costume production assistance

*Bijayini wishes to thank **Tracy Strauss** for being her host in New York during this residency.*

Production

Lydia Lovell, technical manager
Lenyx Rose, stage manager
Rick Theroux, audio/visual specialist
Alban Sardzinski, lighting director
Ross Graham, lighting operator
Frank Ravis, lighting grip

Music

Bindhumalini Narayanaswamy, voice
Bijayini Satpathy, rhythmic voice
Shivshankar Satpathy, mardala
Sameer Rao, flute
Neil Mukherjee, oudh and classical guitar
Rithu Vysak, strings
M.S. Krsna, classical guitar; production and arrangement
Sridhar Varadarajan and **Krishna**, editing and premixing
Protyay Chakraborty, mixing and mastering

Music recorded at Studio 304 and Laya Digi Studios, Bangalore

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As of September 2022

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