

ANANYA CHATTERJEA

ANANYA
DANCE
THEATRE

MCKNIGHT
ARTIST
FELLOWSHIPS

Contact

Ananya Dance Theatre
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Bio

Ananya Chatterjea's work as choreographer, dancer, and thinker brings together Contemporary Dance, social justice choreography, and a commitment to healing justice. She created Yorchhā, Ananya Dance Theatre's signature movement vocabulary, and was the primary architect of Shawngrām, the company's justice- and community-oriented choreographic methodology. Chatterjea is a 2011 Guggenheim Choreography Fellow, a 2012 and 2021 McKnight Choreography Fellow, a 2016 Joyce Award recipient, a 2018 UBW Choreographic Center Fellow, a 2019 Dance/USA Artist Fellow, and recipient of the 2021 A. P. Andersen Award.

Ananya Dance Theatre has earned a reputation for engaging performances, intellectual and artistic rigor, and an uncompromising commitment to social justice. Its BIPOC women and femme dance artists are cultural activists who believe in the transformative power of dance. In dancing stories where the lives and dreams of women from the global majority occupy the center, they challenge the landscape of mainstream culture, build understanding about arts and social justice, and empower artistic voices.

Ananya Dance Theatre 2023 APAP Showcase Performances at Ailey Citigroup Theater

405 West 55th Street @ 9th Avenue, NYC

Saturday, January 14, 12:00–12:30 PM & 4:30–5:00 PM

Visit us at Americas Booth 302 at APAP



What are you working on in the next two years?

I am currently creating *Micchil, Amra* ("we are the procession"), for premiere in Fall 2023. In this work, my personal history wrestles with epic themes that resonate globally. It emerges from and is a response to the multiple pandemics of Covid and racial and cultural injustice that fed on each other to spread dis-ease among marginalized communities. It questions our illusions and projections of normalcy as it explores the long game of grassroots BIPOC organizing, and suggests that no return is possible to constructions of normality that incorporate systemic violences.

The title, *Micchil, Amra*, pays tribute to an iconic play written and produced by the Kolkata-based Third Theatre pioneer, Badal Sircar (*Michhil*, 1974), which juxtaposed current socio-political unrest, capitalist exploitation, dissent, and a search for "home." The work layers core experiences of my growing up in Kolkata, a city where political protests and processions occupied public spaces, caused traffic snarls, and interrupted daily business to amplify community needs, with my current experiences of the pandemic and the Uprising in the Twin Cities. This evening-length ensemble work will incorporate an original recorded score and live music by Twin Cities music legends.

My long experience in community-embedded performances convinces me that dancing together is not necessarily ensemble work. Readiness to journey together requires that we keep alive the process of building BIPOC solidarities through a lens of transnational feminism that is at the core of my work.

Antaranga, a full-length, devised dance theater work for premiere in Fall 2024, will explore notions of community via the concept of “humsafar” – those who journey together.

Antaranga is set in a surreal world where history and memory clash repeatedly as familiar categories of identity fail to provide one with real knowledge of others. The artists repeatedly encounter each other, differently each time, seeking to see each other and to signal safety in each other's presence. Shifting landscapes of time, context, and energy insist on bending their relationships, chiseling a shifting view of the world. Recurring whispers of “Who are you?” echo through this world, reveal no easy answers, and pose more questions.

In a cultural context that often seeks to understand BIPOC communities through pre-determined categories, *Antaranga* insists on complex and intersectional understandings of beingness, with particular relationship to the Black and brown femmes who are part of my cast.

I welcome support of this creative process, and tours of the work from residency centers and presenters following its fall 2023 premiere.

Repertoire Available for Touring

Nün Gherão: Surrounded by Salt, commissioned by the Center for the Arts at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, and created with the support of Chatterjea's McKnight Fellowship and a residency at Jacob's Pillow, is a full-length dance theater work that interweaves movement, text, and sound, to explore betrayal, dispossession, and exile, and the desperate global resistance against great odds that fuels hope and survival.

Structured in three movements, *Nün Gherão* takes its point of departure from the 1978-79 massacre of 10,000 refugees on Marichjhapi Island in West Bengal, India. Danced to a mesmerizing score created by Spirit McIntyre and poignant text by Mimi Mondal, the work becomes activated through shared breath and rhythms, practices of mourning, overlapping time cycles, ritualized movement, dances of fire and of personal connection that tag different sites of memory through meditations on dancing in salt water, where one's tears meet the rising and warming oceans of our world.

Premiere: October 2022, The O'Shaughnessy at St. Catherine University

Touring Party: 9 performers + 1 production manager

Tech: Full theatrical lighting, side wings, sound system, fly system, projections

