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Fictional masterpieces

A show that uses digital innovation and artistic creation to give 12 fictional works is coming to town as part of Bonjour India

For the Francophiles in Bangalore, this is a period of excitement as the second edition of Bonjour India showcases a series of collaborations between the French and Indian artistes. On the cards is an interactive choreographic navigation by n + n Corsino that has been termed the “playful and poetic alliance of choreography and digital art”. Titled Bangalore Fictions, it’s much awaited because the choreographers are known for presenting a new realm of digital art, in this case, 12 works of “fiction” that are the base of choreographic patterns. Corsino stands for the French choreographer-researcher couple Nicole and Norbert Corsino who had been wanting to work on a new creation based on the artistic and technology exchange with Indian partners. The duo hails from Marseilles in France and specialises in creating works of dance navigation that is based on the principles of a graphic novel, text, images and music. These elements blend together in a narrative process and construct an imagination of body movements. Hence the word ‘fiction’ is used. Their choreographic fictions are presented in the form of films and installations, without the real presence of dancers (although real time dancers are used to generate the body movement). Each of these installations is the result of a choreographed sequence, danced live and filmed from all angles.

The couple had visited India several times and had met dancers Revanta Sarabhai and Pooja Purohit from Darpana Centre for Performing Arts in Ahmedabad as well as city-based writer Anjum Hasan. Hasan says that she had first met them in February 2011. “I spent the next few months mulling over ideas, making notes, and got down to the actual writing in October of that year. I met them a few times in December in Bangalore, showed them a sample of what I was working on, and discussed options for translators. I sent them the final texts in March, 2012 and then spent the next couple of months working with the translators in the three languages.” Hasan had agreed at once to be on board, partly because she was excited to be collaborating with artistes from such a different medium and partly because they gave her the complete freedom to write the texts on any theme that she chose. “It was also encouraging for me that they had collaborated with writers in the past and that they see text – both what the words are saying, as well as text as graphic or image – as integral to the complex, multimedia work they do.”

What Hasan produced eventually was a series of 12 prose poems, each piece connected to a particular, ordinary, everyday experience of Bangalore. According to this prolific author, the experiences could be the “languages one hears in the city, the feel of a railway station at night, the people one sees in a mall, the way an outsider to Bangalore might negotiate it, the different ways old-timers remember the city, and so on. At the same time, these texts are philosophical reflections on the very idea of a city and what it might mean to live in one”.

For n+n Corsino, as they are usually called, “it is a research scholar’s or a child’s curiosity that makes us experiment in unknown landscapes where we can share a common experience with people”. They were particularly impressed by Hasan’s text and appreciated the fact that the text was “open ended and replete with poetic and visual qualities”.

The texts have been translated into Kannada, Hindi and French by a team of translators; Neelabh Ahsk, Usha Rao and Jean Poncet. Hasan informs, “I worked with each of these translators to some extent, unpacking the meanings of my text for them and, in the case of the Hindi translations, helping to edit them.” The text has also been published separately in France as a slim book called Carnets de Bangalore.

Of particular interest is the fact that these 12 works of fiction will be available as an iPad application. These non-conventional composers of choreographic fictions have thus created a world wherein the spectator can interact with certain works and dance while caressing images in movement on a touch screen.

Hasan is eager to know the outcome of their works. “I am very excited to see how the texts have been translated into performance by Nicole and Norbert,” she says.

THE FUNDA BEHIND N+N CORSINO

Norbert, of the n+n Corsino, says that the title Bangalore Fictions came to the duo’s mind since Anjum was chosen to write the text. “We visited India about 4- 5 times to finalise on the artists for the project and through contacts, we got the suitable artistes. We prefer to work with the local artistes.” Nicole and Norbert have been working together for about 30 years now. “We complement and understand each other, but both of us feel that we work better if we don’t think the same,” says Norbert. “Irrespective of the disagreements, we both agree that the outcome should be good work.” The duo usually does mixed media projects that combine graphics, text and music. They have done similar projects in China, Korea, Russia and Canada. Confessing not to know too much about technology, Norbert says that they are constantly imagining new and different technologies to show dance on unique platforms. “We work with developers in order to get our ideas translated into actuality. Three years ago, we had presented the choreographic navigation on iPhone and now it is the iPad,” says Norbert. According to n+n Corsino, new technology and poetic choreography are essential to entice different audiences, like the young generation and those who may not go to a theatre, to watch and enjoy dance.

Bangalore Fictions will be on at Gallery Ske from March 18 - 21

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