

# Look, here is your machine. Get in!

## CURATORS

**Anuja Ghosalkar** is the founder of Drama Queen, a Documentary theatre company evolving a unique form of theatre in India since 2015. Her practice focuses on personal histories, archival absences and blurring the hierarchies between audience and performer, to extend the idea of theatre to create audacious work.

Iterations around form and process, modes of (social) media, sites, technologies, reclaiming narratives on gender and intimacy are critical to her performance making and pedagogy.

As artist-in-residence at Art Lab Gnesta, Sweden, she created her debut show, *Lady Anandi* which travelled extensively across India, and showcased independently in Berlin and Stockholm. Her performances and workshops have been programmed by the University of Oxford, New York University, Abu Dhabi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Serendipity Arts Festival, National Centre for Biological Sciences, Forum Transregionale—ZMO, First Post, and Kerala Museum, among others. Anuja is the co-curator of the international workshop series on Documentary Theatre with her German collaborator that programmed artists like Boris Nikitin, Rimini Protokoll, Zhao Chuan and Gobsquad. As guest faculty at Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology, she uses practice based pedagogy. In the past, she was programme officer at India Foundation for the Arts, film programmer for Experimenta and India researcher for University of Westminster. She is an Art Think South Asia Fellow (2017-18) and has written on film and performance for Nang Magazine, Art India, Bioscope, Hakara, Scroll, and The Ladies Finger.

**Kai Tuchmann** is a director and dramaturge whose theatre works circle around the very specific relationship that theatre claims with events in the real world. In this context, Kai is interested in theatre's division between spectators and performers—which turns theatre into a paradigmatic site of reality construction. His works engage in particular with the question of how technologies of theatre, ranging from acting techniques to the utilization of new media in performance, contribute to the production of truth claims and reality effects. Kai is developing his approach of theatre in close collaboration with artists from China and India. His stagings and dramaturgies were invited, among others, to I Dance Hong Kong, Seoul Marginal Theatre Festival, Zürcher Theaterspektakel, Kunstfest Weimar, Festival d'Automne à Paris, Wuzhen Theatre Festival, Asia Society New York, and OCAT Shenzhen. Thematically, these works examine, among other things,

the afterlife of the Cultural Revolution in present-day China, the effects of urban development on the population of migrant workers, and the application of digital technologies.

Kai studied Directing at Drama Academy Ernst Busch, Berlin. He is a member of Beijing's Central Academy of Drama – Dramaturgy Faculty, where he develops, together with Li Yinan, the curriculum for the first Dramaturgy program in Asia. He has taught and lectured at Beijing University, University of California Santa Cruz, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi. Currently he is a Fulbright Scholar at The Graduate Center, City University New York. Kai published articles and chapter contributions on dramaturgy and documentary theatre in several books (e.g. for Routledge and the Brecht Yearbook), and he has written for *Theatre Times* and the German weekly *Der Freitag*.

## **ARTISTS**

**Amitesh Grover** studied Live & Digital Arts at University of Arts London, U.K. His work explores the immaterial conditions of our bodies, and occupies the intermediate space between Theatre, Performance, and Interactive Art. He has created work on grief, on sleep, on happiness, and on several ephemeral grounds of knowledge. His works are shown internationally in theatres, galleries, public spaces, and on the internet. He is the recipient of several awards and artists' residencies including MASH FICA New Media Artist award, FORECAST Emerging Artist HKW (Germany), Arte Laguna Prize nomination (Italy), and Bismillah Khan National Award (India) among others. He serves as Artistic Director for ITFoK Theatre Festival, Kerala till 2021. He writes prolifically on performance, and teaches at various universities including National School of Drama, and Shiv Nadar University, India.

**A. Mangai** is the pseudonym of Dr. V. Padma. She retired as Associate Professor in English from Stella Maris College, Chennai. She has been actively engaged in Tamil theatre as an actor, Director and Playwright for close to thirty-five years. Presently she runs the Marappachi theatre group. She hopes that her academic, activist and artistic selves can find a vibrant intersection. Her fields of interest are theatre, gender and translation studies. Her passion is to concentrate on community theatre—to make theatre the voice of the voiceless, or the marginalized. She has many publications to her credit in Tamil and English. Her study *Acting Up: Gender and Theatre in India 1979 Onwards* has been published by Left Word, New Delhi. *Listen to the Flames*, a text book on Dalit writing has been edited by Tapan Basu, Indranil Acharya and Mangai and published by Oxford University Press in 2016. Two of her plays are available in English translation. She

received an IFA research grant to work on Pammal Sammandha Mudaliar's writings. The lockdown has led her into the uncharted territories of the virtual world.

**Ayesha Susan Thomas** is an Applied Theatre Practitioner who works primarily at the creative intersections of education, gender and sexuality.

As an IBDP/MYP & IGCSE Theatre facilitator, she has taught at the Dhirubhai Ambani International School Mumbai, and currently teaches at Neev Academy in Bangalore, India. She has also worked as a workshop facilitator, dramaturge (The Inspire Passion Project 2014), and director on a range of projects.

In a former life, she curated the Literature section at the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival Mumbai, and performed as a Christmas Elf at an amusement park near Bradford. She has an MA in Theatre and Global Development from the University of Leeds, UK and a BA in English Literature from the University of Mumbai.

**Ranjit Kandalgaonkar** lives and works in Mumbai and his art practice primarily comprises a lens directed at the urban context of cities. Projects such as 'cityinflux', 'Gentricity' and 'Stories of Philanthropic Trusts' map vulnerability within redevelopment strategies of urbanisation or record timelines and 'blindspots'—alternate markers of a city that's unraveling. A study of combative histories of reclamation and speculation has led to projects such as 'Isles amidst reclamation' and '7 Isles unclaimed'. Another decade-long project named 'Modelled Recycled Systems' records ship-breaking practices at Alang, Gujarat and currently maps invisible shipping infrastructures in the global shipping logistics chain. Most of his long-term projects are research-intensive and attempt to unlock historical and contemporary data by placing the work in the context of an unseen social history.

Awards & grants include Majlis Visual Arts Fellowship, UDRI Fellowship, The Leverhulme Trust Artist Residency, Harvard University SAI Artist Residency, Seed Funding Award-Wellcome Trust, Atelier Prati Print Residency and a Gasworks Artist Residency in collaboration with Wellcome Collections. His works have been showcased at Bergen Assembly'16, OCA Norway, Colomboscope'19, UCL Cities Methodologies '14, Group Show-Project 88, 'Ayurvedic Man-Wellcome Collection'17, 1Shanti Road Blr, and the show 'The Stonebreakers', curated by Murtaza Vali is currently on display at Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi.

**Soumyabrata Choudhury** currently teaches at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU. He has previously taught at CSSSC, Kolkata, and has been a fellow at CSDS, Delhi and IAS, Shimla. His book *Theatre, Number, Event: Three Studies on the Relationship of Sovereignty, Power and Truth* was published by IAS, Shimla in 2013. His new book *Ambedkar and Other Immortals: An*

*Untouchable Research Programme* came out in 2018. He has also acted and directed in a number of performances across the country for the last thirty years. His latest performance was an adaptation Franz Kafka's story "A Report to the Academy" at the Expression Lab, Pune, in July 2019.

**Venkat Srinivasan** is a visiting researcher and archivist at the Archives, National Centre for Biological Sciences in Bangalore, India.

The Archives at NCBS (<http://archives.ncbs.res.in/>) is a public collecting space for the history of contemporary biology in India. It has one underlying philosophy: to enable a diversity of stories. And it has three main objectives going forward: continuing to build up the archive as a space to strengthen the commons, a focus on education through archival material, and to build a broader consortium of science archives with a discovery layer for the public to find, describe and share archival material and stories (e.g.: <http://stories.archives.ncbs.res.in/exhibit/13ways/>).

Prior to this, he was a research engineer at the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Stanford University (<https://lcls.slac.stanford.edu/overview>). He is an independent science writer, with work in *The Atlantic* and *Scientific American* online, *Nautilus*, *Aeon*, *Wired*, and *the Caravan*.

He graduated with a Masters in Materials Science from Stanford University (2005), a Masters in Journalism (science) from Columbia University (2009), and a Bachelors in Engineering from the University of Delhi (2003).

**Yalgaar Saunskrutik Manch** was started in 2015 with the aim of doing community work. With constitutional values at its core—freedom, equality, justice, brotherhood, Yalgaar aims to bring social awakening to the people. They perform street plays, poetry recitations, songs, and hold public meetings and also experiment with video work through social media and other varied programmes. They regularly conduct workshops and also work in slums and schools with children in Mumbai.

**Zhao Chuan** works across theatre, literature, film and visual art. He creates alternative and socially engaged theatre and is the founding member and mastermind of the Shanghai-based theatre collective Grass Stage (established 2005). For over a decade, as a theatre maker and writer, he has created a number of theatre works across China together with his collective Grass Stage. However, they are often unable to present these works in conventional theatres because of the issues addressed and because of their non-professional set-up. The group encourages people from different backgrounds to consider human living conditions and historical issues, and stimulate participants and audiences to respond to those issues through creative process, rehearsals, performances and post-talks. Given its strong interest in social practice, the group's

theatre activities have often been considered too rough, ideological, marginal and undefined by the mainstream. In recent years, Grass Stage has supported industry workers to make their own theatre pieces; through dialogues with young people from diverse backgrounds, the group has developed stage plays on youth issues in today's China. His theatre works include *Wild Seeds* (2016–present) and *Social Theater Trilogy* (2006–2017), comprising *World Factory*, *The Little Society*, and *Madmen's Stories*. He has been awarded several international literature awards, including the Unita Prize for New Novelists (Taiwan 2001). His publications include fiction, essays and art criticism: *On Radical Art: the 80s Scene in Shanghai* (author, 2014), *The Body At Stake: Experiments in Chinese Contemporary Art and Theatre* (co-editor, author, 2013). He is also the producer of an independent documentary titled *Shanghai Youth* (2015). He has been involved in many international art residencies, collaboration projects and teaching.

**Zuleikha Chaudhari** is a theatre director and lighting designer based in Delhi.

Her works shift between theatre and installation. Her ongoing research considers the structures and codes of performance as well the function and processes of the actor as reality and truth production.

Her current research uses archival documents (texts and photographs) to develop theatrical performances as a way of thinking about the relationship between production of memory, the role of the archive and how that pertains to the retrieval and reliving of an event. These works use a combination of reportage, portraiture, documentary, and fiction—the editing, re-interpretation and re-positioning of speculative ideas, opinions, beliefs and anecdotes towards the production of new narratives is central to these investigations about the relationship between history and theatre.

Since 2015, she has been exploring the framework of law as performance, the role of performance in law and the performativity of legal truth-production.

Her works have been shown at the Weiner Festwochen, KunstenFestivaldesArts, Festival D'Automne, Seoul Performing Arts Festival, Asian Performing Arts Festival, Tokyo, Berlin Biennale, Kochi Biennale, Dhaka Art Summit, INSERT2014, New Delhi Chronus Art Centre, Shanghai, Essl Museum, Vienna, IFA GALLERIES, Stuttgart and Berlin, Johannesburg Art Gallery, and the Asian Art Biennale, among others.

She is currently the director of the Alkazi Theatre Archives at The Alkazi Foundation for the Arts, New Delhi.