

Pallabi Chakravorty
Swarthmore College

Publications and Choreographies

Publications

Books

- Chakravorty, Pallabi and Nilanjana Gupta. Editors. 2018. *Dance Matters Too: Markets, Memories, Identities*. New Delhi: Routledge.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2017. *This is How We Dance Now: Performance in the Age of Bollywood and Reality Shows*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Chakravorty Pallabi and Scott Kugle. Editors. 2009. *Performing Ecstasy: The Politics and Poetics of Religion in South Asia*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi and Nilanjana Gupta. Editors. 2009. *Dance Matters: Performing India*. New Delhi: Routledge.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2008. *Bells of Change: Kathak Dance, Women, and Modernity in India*. Calcutta /Chicago: Seagull/ /University of Chicago.

Journal Papers and Book Chapters

- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2020. "Why the Adivasi Will Not Dance: Yoga, Bharatnatyam, Chhau and Processes of Expropriation," (submitted) in *Oxford Handbook of Indian Dance*. A Sengupta and P. Purkayastha, Ed. New York: Oxford University Press. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, Forthcoming, "Yoking: Artistry and the Moral Body," *Journal of South Asian History and Culture*, Special Issue, A. Chakraborty and U. Sarkar Munsii, Ed. New Delhi: Routledge. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2018. "Dance Off, or a Battle for the Future: Dance Reality Shows in India," in *Oxford Handbook on Dance Competition*, Sherril Dodds, Ed. New York: Oxford University Press. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2018. "Cosmopolitan Then and Cosmopolitan Now: Rabindranrtiya Meets Dance Reality Shows," in *Dance Matters Too: Markets, Memories, and Identities*, Pallabi Chakravorty and Nilanjana Gupta, Eds. New Delhi: Routledge. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2018. "The Tawaif and the Item girl: A Struggle for Identity," in *Moving Space*, Urmimala Munshi and Aishika Chakraborty, Eds. New Delhi: Primus Books. Refereed

- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2018. "In Between" for *Fabrique De L' Art? Fabric of Art*, French-Indian Yearly Journal on Art.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2016. "Sensory Screens, Digitized Desires: Dancing Rasa from Bombay Cinema to Reality TV." *Oxford Handbook of Screen Dance Studies*, Douglas Rosenberg, Ed. Oxford University Press. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2013. "Intercultural Synthesis, Radical Humanism, and Rabindranritya: A Reevaluation of Tagore's Dance Legacy." *South Asia Research*, 33: 245-260. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2011. "Dancing the Sacred and Dancing the Secular," in *Poetics and Politics of Sufism and Bhakti in South Asia: Love, Loss and Liberation*, Kavita Punjabi, Ed. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2010. "Global Dancing In Kolkata," in *A Companion to the Anthropology of India*, Isabelle Clark-Deces, Ed. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. 137-53. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2009. "Moved to Dance: Bhakti, Commodity, and a New India." *Visual Anthropology*. Vol 22, Issue 2 (3), 211-228. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2009. "From Interculturalism to Historicism: Reflections on Classical Indian Dance," In *Dance Studies Reader* (Second Edition, Routledge), Alexandra Carter and Janet O' Shea, Eds. (Reprinted from *Dance Research Journal* 32/2 Winter 2000/01: 100-111.)
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2009. "The Exalted Body in North Indian Music and Dance," in *Performing Ecstasy*, Pallabi Chakravorty and Scott Kugle, Eds. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, also reprinted in *Bhakti-Sufi*, Editor Kavita Panjabi. New Delhi: Orient-Longman. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2009. "Remixed Practice: Bollywood Dance and the Global Indian," in *Dance Matters*, Pallabi Chakravorty and Nilanjana Gupta, Eds. New Delhi: Routledge. 169-181. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2007. "Dancing Into Modernity: The Multiple Narratives of India's Kathak Dance." *Dance Research Journal*. Vol 38, No.s 1,2, 115-36. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2005. "Bhakti in Modernity and Modernity in Bhakti: Kathak and Kabir." *Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Writings*, Vol 5: 2. 91-103. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2006. "Some Limits of Orientalism: The Discourse of Heritage in Classical Indian Dance," in *Reorienting Orientalism*. Chandrei Niyogi, Ed. New Delhi: Sage. 89-100. Refereed

- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2004. "Dance, Pleasure, and Indian Women as Multisensorial Subjects." *Visual Anthropology* 17(1): 1-17. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2004. "Kathak in Calcutta: A Story of Tradition and Change," in *Culture Studies: An Introduction for Indian Readers*, Nilanjana Gupta, Ed. Worldview Press: New Delhi. 187-214.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2004. "In Search of a Past for the Present." *Pulse*. Summer, Volume # 8, P: 20-22.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2003. "South Asian Dance: Coming of Age in U.S. Universities." *Pulse*. Winter, Volume # 4:14-15.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2002. "Symposium on South Asian Dance (a report)." *Dance Research Journal* 34/2, Winter, P:121-124. Refereed.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2002. "Dance Symposium on South Asia." *Sruti* August, Issue 215: 33-35. Chennai: India.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2000. "From Interculturalism to Historicism: Reflections on Classical Indian Dance." *Dance Research Journal* 32/2 Winter 2000/01: 108-119. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 1998. "Dance, Hegemony, and Nation: The Construction of Classical Dance in India." *South Asia* 21: 107-120. Refereed

Reviews

- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2015. Review of the book "Fertile Disorder: Spirit Possession and Its Provocation of the Modern by Kalpana Ram," *South Asia*. Volume 38, Issue 4, Pages 841-842.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2015. Review of the book "India's Kathak Dance in Historical Perspective" by Margaret E. Walker. Review titled "Whose History? Kathak Dance and Its Practitioners." *Dance Chronicle*. Volume 38, Issue 3, Pages 410-414.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2015. Review of the book "Illicit Worlds of Indian Dance; Cultures of Exclusion" by Anna Marcom. *South Asian History and Culture*. Volume 6, Issue 2, Pages 303-307.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2008. Review of the book "At Home in the World: Bharatnatyam on Global Stage" by Janet O' Shea. Review titled "Bharatnatyam Mapped: Not Subjectivity but Subject Position." *Dance Chronicle* Volume 31, Issue 3, Pages 471-5.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2008. Review of Films "Performing Konarak, Performing Hirapur" and "Interpreting and Reconstructing Indonesian Dance and Music" by Alessandra Lopez y Royo. *Dance Research Journal*, issue 40.1 92-95.

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2006. Review of the Film “Guria, Gossip and Globalization” by Amelia Macizewsky for *H-Gender-MidEast Review*.

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2002. Review of the Film “Runaway Wives: Customary Divorce and Remarriage in Shivpuri District.” *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol.18 (1-2).

Promotional endorsement for “Dancing Bodies of Devotion: Fluid Gestures in Bharatnatyam by Katherine C. Zubko, Lexington Books. 2014.

Promotional endorsement for Scripting Dance in Contemporary India, Anup and Gulati (editor), Lexington Books. 2016.

Proceedings

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2013. Conference Proceedings of *Transformation of the Performing Arts in Contemporary India*. Kyoto University. “Lens on Reality: Dancing Desire and The Aspirational Indian.” Translated into Japanese.

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2009. Conference Proceedings of “Understanding Dance,” Bytom, Poland. “Remix: The Culture and Aesthetics of the New Dance of India.” Translated into Polish.

Chakravorty, Pallabi, Editor. 2004. *Dance in South Asia: New Approaches, Politics, and Aesthetics, Proceedings*. Swarthmore College Cooper Publication.

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2004. “Agency in Tradition: Gendered Subjectivity through the Practice of Kathak.” In *Dance in South Asia: New Approaches, Politics, and Aesthetics, Proceedings*, Pallabi Chakravorty, Ed. Swarthmore College Cooper Publication.

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2002. Kathak in Calcutta: A Story of Tradition and Change. *Society of Dance History Scholars Proceedings*. June 2002, P: 15-20.

Work in Progress

What is “New’ in Indian Dance Avant-gardism?”. In *Radical Aesthetics and the Avant-Garde in India*, Edited by Brinda Bose. Routledge.

The Paradox of the “Subtle Body” between Dance, Tantra, and Science. In *The Articulate Body: Dance and Science in the Long Nineteenth Century*. Edited by Lynn Brooks. University of Florida Press.

A monograph on dance, yoga, and healing with the working title *The Expressive Spine: Yoga, Women, and Performance*.

An edited book in collaboration with Nilanjana Gupta on *Indian Dance and Dissent* based on a virtual international symposium that I organized at Swarthmore College in partnership with Jadavpur University Calcutta, 2020.

A full-length dance-theater piece titled *birds in circled flight* on individual and collective mourning.

Other Writing

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2020. La Bayadere and the Footprint of the Indian Temple Dancer. *The Dance Journal*, a publication of Philadelphiadance.org, March 15.

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2018. "Performing the Liberal Arts". The Aydelotte Foundation, Swarthmore College.

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2017. "The real cultural product of India's new economy? It's not Bollywood but the dance reality show." Book excerpt in *Scroll.in* <https://scroll.in/reel/857905/the-real-cultural-product-of-indias-new-economy-its-not-bollywood-but-the-dance-reality-show>

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2016. "Reality Shows are letting even underprivileged Indians break free of stereotypes through dance." *Scroll.in* <https://scroll.in/article/806078/reality-shows-are-letting-even-unprivileged-indians-break-free-of-stereotypes-through-dance>

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2015. "Duality in Multiple Hues." Review of Dwita performed by Rama Vaidyanathan and Dakshina Vaidyanathan, *Sruti Notes*.

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2010. "Joyous Nrityagram." Review for *Narthaki* (Narthaki.com)

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2006. "Stitching it Together: A Report on the Live Tradition Festival." *Celebrasia*.

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 2005. "Letter to the Editor." *Dance Research Journal*. 37/1.

Chakravorty, Pallabi. 1997. "Readers Feedback," *Little India*.

Numerous articles were published in *The Telegraph* (1983-86) where I worked as a dance critic.

Ethnographic Film

Kathak in the City: Women of Calcutta Speak and Dance. A 20-minute ethnographic film on the women practitioners of Kathak dance in Calcutta; in collaboration with Sanjoy Chakravorty and Cate Leonard.

Artistic Works/Choreographies

(Most are with my company Courtyard Dancers, some involve Swarthmore students)

Where is my body? (2021)

A collaboration with contemporary dancers and choreographers Kung-Yang Lin and Gus Solomons Jr. Project supported by the Pew Foundation.

First show in New York City planned for mid-September.

The Khusrau Circle (2020)

This is a work exploring the works of Amir Khusrau and his deep influence on South Asian expressive cultures.

Venues: Virtual performances for Rasa Festival, Michigan and Indo-Persian Musical Connections, Ethnomusicology seminar at UCLA.

Riyaz (2019)

Riyaz – practice – is more than just the repetition of movement and music. It is a way of life, a path to enter deeply into communion with the body, the self, community, and the world. It is the constant process of polishing the essential while stripping away all that is unnecessary and impeding, including the ego. Previewed in *The Philadelphia Dance Journal* and reviewed in *ThinINKing Dance* and *Broadway Review*.

Four East Coast contemporary dance companies come together to explore the many dimensions of Riyaz, drawing from the rich foundations of their respective styles:

Venues: Premiered at Facing East Festival in Philadelphia. New York at 14th street Y, Lafayette College, (Spring 2022, planned).

Find Metiabruz (2017)

Metiabruz in Kolkata is the place where the British exiled Wajid Ali Shah, who was a poet, an aesthete, and the last emperor of Awadh. In this dance theater piece, Metiabruz is a metaphor for the habitations of poetry in our lives.

Venues: Premiered at *Facing East Festival* in September, 2017 at The Painted Bride Art Center. Previewed on *Narthak.com*. Invited to perform at the Rasa multiple-arts festival, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Excerpt performed for the Spring Dance Concert at Swarthmore College. Selected for *New York Kathak Festival* in 2019.

The Mahatma is Fasting (2015, re-choreographed)

Newly choreographed a 2002 piece for a new two-day dance and music festival launched by the Courtyard Dancers titled *Facing East*. The festival was imagined as a collective prayer and protest that unite us against violence. The festival celebrated the richness and diversity of Indian dance and music artists in Philadelphia.

Venues: Painted Bride Art Center, Philadelphia, September. Previewed in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Philadelphia Dance Journal*. Earlier at The Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2002.

Asunder (2014)

A dance theater piece on the partition of India.

Venues: Painted Bride Art Center, Philadelphia (June). Also invited to show work in progress by Saaz, an organization that promotes South Asian music in Philadelphia. Asunder was previewed and reviewed in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Philadelphia weekly* (it was their arts and culture pick), *The Philadelphia Dance Journal* (*PhiladelphiaDANCE.Org*), *Narthaki.com*.

Unsung Arrivals (2012)

This evening-length composition uses classical and contemporary Indian dance, and live music and percussion and poetry to explore the ordinary stories of unacknowledged lives—from the nautch girls of India's past to marginal and empowered women today.

Venues: Villanova University, fundraiser for the nonprofit Profugo (April). Painted Bride Art Center, Philadelphia (June).

Celluloid E-motions (2010)

Premier of a dance theatre piece titled Celluloid Emotions in celebration of Courtyard Dancers tenth anniversary. Celluloid E-motions uses Indian dance, music, Urdu poetry (Ghazals) and Bollywood dance to explore spiritual/aesthetic and commodified emotions. This work challenges elite and monolithic views of cultural heritage by creating a complex slice of contemporary and past emotional experiences. Anthropologist/film maker Nandini Sikand was commissioned to create a film that was integral to the choreography.

Previews and Reviews in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Philadelphia Weekly*, *Narthaki.com*.

Venues: Asian Arts Initiative (October).

Plural (2010)

This is a dance-theatre impression of the poetry and melody of a Faiz Ahmad Faiz composition. It celebrates the synthesis and cross-fertilization of Islam and Hinduism, pluralism practiced every day.

Venues: Swarthmore College, LPAC Theater, for the Presidential inauguration of Rebecca Chop; Weavers Studio, Calcutta.

Chess Players (2008/9)

Based on a Ghazal sung by Farida Khanum. The lyrics depict a lover's lament.

Venue: Faculty Dance Concert, Swarthmore College; Classical Indian Dance Conference, Towson University, organized by Jayamangala (a Bharatanatyam dance organization in Maryland).

Replaced Rituals (2006/7)

A collaborative dance-theater piece with Bharatanatyam and modern dancer Daniel Singh. The work blends Kathak and Bharatanatyam to explore a new vocabulary of movements to give voice to the South Asian diaspora community. The key concept of this work is centered on the relationships between ritual, memory, body, and identity. By focusing on Hindu and Islamic rituals drawn from Bhakti and Sufi traditions, and through movement and gestures (from Bharatanatyam and Kathak) and day-to-day life, the work highlights what it means to be a south Asian today.

Venues: Community Education Center; Bryn Mawr College Faculty Dance Concert; Swarthmore College Faculty Dance Concert; Painted Bride Art Center.

Previews and Reviews in *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Philadelphia Metro*, *Narthakionline*, *Maraas Newsletter*.

Union/Dissolution (2005)

A collaborative dance theatre piece conceived and performed with theatre artist Ulla Denzer. It uses an eclectic blend of material adapted from Peter Weiss' 1965 play *Marat/Sade*, 13th century Persian poet Iraqi's *Lama'at*, and twentieth century Polish poet Anna Swir. Kabir's verses (translated by Linda Hess and Sukhdev Singh) frame the entire piece and form its core.

Venues: Painted Bride Art Center as part of the Live Tradition / Contemporary Issues Performance Festival organized by The Asian Arts Initiative in Philadelphia; Swarthmore Faculty Dance Concert; Bryn Mawr College Faculty Dance Concert as a guest artist; PS 122 in New York.

Longing (2004)

This short composition explores the essence of the aesthetic theory of *rasa* through the emotional state of longing. Rabindranath Tagore's poetry is interspersed with a traditional north Indian song to evoke a heightened emotional state due to the arrival of the monsoon.

Venues: Swarthmore College Student Dance Concert

In Search of Sound (2003)

Based on Kathak and various pedestrian movements and gestures, the piece choreographs the cacophony of sound and movement that surrounds us. This piece blends various percussion beats from *tabla*, *taiko* drums, and vocal tones.

Selected in the arts pick section of the *Philadelphia City paper*.

Venues: St. Josephs College for the Philadelphia Women's Studies Consortium; Swarthmore College Student Dance Concert; Pragati Bengali Association in Philadelphia.

Threads: The Story of a Sari from Labor to Market (2002)

This thirty-two minute performance piece, inspired by the weavers located in rural India, tells the story of the journey of saris from villages to the global market. The dance vocabulary is a blend of Kathak interpretive work gestures and contemporary movements.

Selected in the arts pick section of the *Philadelphia City paper*.

Venues: Kumquat Theatre, Philadelphia, for the Glue performance Series; University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

The Mahatma is Fasting (2002)

A twenty-five minute performance piece specifically created for Mahatma Gandhi's birthday celebrations at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The piece uses song, dance and poetry to interpret his political and moral philosophy and presents his method of nonviolence as a tool for social change.

Venues: The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

At Play in the House of the Lord (2001)

Choreographed for the Student Dance Concert at Swarthmore College. This piece explores the relationship between performance, play and ritual enactment. The music evokes the festival of colors or Holi, where Radha and Krishna play with colors (*abir*) with friends in the guise of mortals. This is known as *leela* or divine play.

Imagining Jamuna (2000)

This is a forty-minute composition; it uses four to five dancers and is a critique of the orientalist rendering of classical Indian dance. Using classical dance movements and everyday gestures, this piece imagines the lives of domestic women workers whose labor maintains the comforts of bourgeois life in India.

Featured in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* Calendar section. March 16th, 2001.

Venues: Premiere of Courtyard Dancers, Goodhart Theatre, Bryn Mawr College. Asian Arts Initiative for a forum on Women and Labor in the Global Economy. Women's Conference at Seton Hall College. Feminist Future Conference, Rutgers University. Faculty Dance Conference, Bryn Mawr College.

Silencing the Nautch (2000)

This twenty-minute composition uses video and dance performance to represent the repressed history of the (Nautch) dancing girls in India. The dance movements are based on traditional and interpretive Kathak.

Venues: Premiere of Courtyard Dancers, Goodhart Theatre, Bryn Mawr College. Faculty Dance Concert at Swarthmore College. Asian Arts Initiative, Rap series. Department of Anthropology, Temple University. Sapatasur Music Circle, Calcutta.