

Dancing with the pixels

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Nicole and Norbert Corsino amidst Bangalore Fictions Photo: Murali Kumar K.

Digital art is a new space of representation for dance and gives another point of reference to view it, says researcher-choreographer Nicole Corsino

Nicole Corsino is holding the iPad connected to a screen. The iPad offers the option of choosing the language: Indian flag for Hindi, the British flag for English, and the French flag for French.

She clicks and a window composed of panels arranged in a rectangle opens up. The title panel reads: “Bangalore Fictions, n + n Corsino” and the rest of the panels are numbered in French.

She opens a panel and the iPad shows the text of a story while the screen in front reads like a graphic novel frame. The main characters are two dancers, a male and a female and the reader can “interact” with their movements. This could mean freezing the frames of the dancer, or creating graphic motifs of the dance using calligraphy.

Calligraphy, sometimes in the Devanagari script, also unfolds in movements in the frame while the graphics arrange themselves as the frame opens. Since the story is set in the city, familiar sights and sounds are encountered — the view from a moving bus, for instance.

“Calligraphy is motion, it’s part of the body and for many years we have been interested by movements — of the body, and of objects in space. So calligraphy becomes a leitmotif,” says Norbert, Nicole’s husband. “The Hindi letters contain a lot of movement, more than English or French letters,” adds Nicole.

The graphics are also interactive. For instance, the viewer can make it rain in the city by tapping over a cloud. The whole frame is in 3-D and can be controlled and moved around by the iPad, which Norbert explains, acts like a remote control.

The entire installation, which also includes sound effects, is up at the exhibition, “Bangalore Fictions”, which is a part of the Indo-French Bonjour India festival and is now on view at Galley Ske.

Choreographers-turned-researchers (through they remain choreographers, since dance is the core of the projects) Nicole and her husband Norbert Corsino are the directors of this combination of poetic technology and dance that is formatted around a graphic novel composed of text, images, and movements.

The project, titled “Bangalore Fictions” that revolves around 12 stories written by Anjum Hassan, is performed by Revanta Sarabhai and Pooja Purohit, and has been choreographed by the Corsinos who worked with artists in Delhi, Ahmedabad and Bangalore. The project features calligraphy by Amit Kharsani and illustrations by Tudu Saheb Ram.

“We are the only choreographers in France who do this,” says Nicole, who explains that they tailor each such digital choreographic project based on the device or the screen that will be used to project the installation.

“Bangalore Fictions” is also set to release next month as an iPad application, which is akin to this installation, though the app, naturally, will be suited to the flat panel of the iPad instead of being a 3-D experience.

“We have been working with digital arts and digital technology for the last 15 years because it is a new space of representation for dance and we give another point of view of looking at the dance in the new space, where you can approach the dancer and interact,” explains Nicole.

“Also it brings together different sections of people who are concerned with these different layers of arts and the youth who use tablets or smartphones. It’s not only a way of communication but also a way of perception. And we do this for pure artistic pleasure,” says Norbert.

The couple is known for other digital works such as Totempol, Captives 2nd movement and Soi Moi for the iPhone.

“Bangalore Fictions” will be on view today at Gallery Ske, 2, Berlie Street, Langford Town. For details, contact 41120873.