

Artists in Action

BAM Visual Arts Initiative

Next Wave Journal

Interim

After the end and before the beginning

A work-in-progress conceived and directed by Kristin Jones/

Andrew Ginzel /Chandralekha

Scenography by Kristin Jones/

Andrew Ginzel

Choreography by Chandralekha

Lighting design by Eric Cornwell

Company Manager,

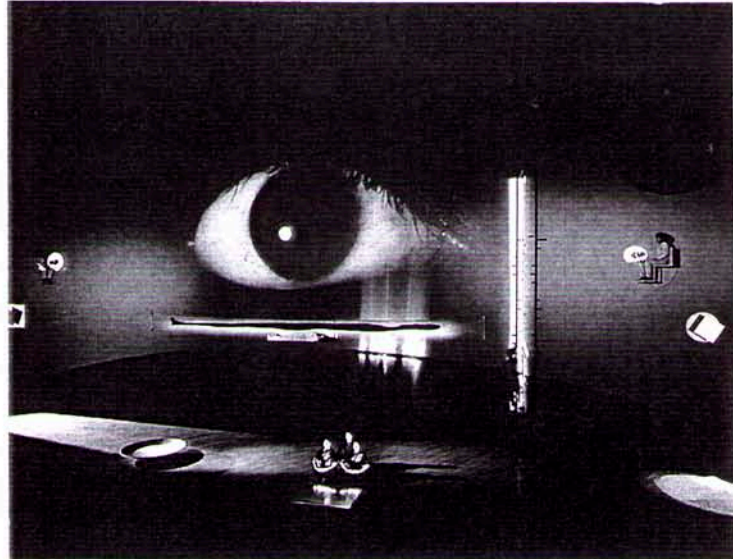
Sandanand Menon

Production Manager, Gayle Jeffery

Technical Director, Zeke Zaccaro

Original music by T. H. Subash

Chandran



October 19—21

Queens Museum of Art

WHAT HAPPENS when the visual artist, whose role in the performing arts is usually limited to set or costume design, conceives the entire project? The performer becomes a graphic medium, shaped to fit within the creative dreams and schemes of the visual artist.

October 1995 marks the inauguration of BAM's *Artists in Action*, in which this reversal takes center stage. BAM asked key figures in the visual arts to comb the scene, and from fifty possibilities they narrowed the field to Vito Acconci, Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel, and Ilya Kabakov. The works-in-progress debut at three sites—the DIA Center for the Arts, the Queens Museum of Art, and the BAM Majestic Theater. At DIA, Acconci collaborates with the Mekons, a rock band, and the audience becomes part of the production in a play on the notion of what it is to be a group and what it is to be an audience. At Queens, Jones and Ginzel contribute the "scenography" for movement choreographed by the eclectic Indian dancer Chandralekha. And for BAM, Kabakov has conceived *The Flies: A Musical Phantasmagoria*, a multimedia performance that describes everyday Soviet Russian life, with music by the Lithuanian composer Vladimir Tarasov and choreography by David Dorfman.

The resulting works could not be more disparate, but what they share is that in each case a new language has been forged where, it seems fair to say, none existed before. The program comes out of BAM's long history of commissioning and presenting collaborative performing-arts projects involving visual artists, although not in the leadership role. The list of past Next Wave participants, from the festival's 1983 founding through today, reads like a roster of the most significant visual artists on the contemporary scene, including Robert Rauschenberg, Francesco Clemente, Judy Pfaff, Marisol, Keith Haring, David Salle, and Martin Puryear. That this "turning of the tables" came about reflects the responsiveness of the institution to the expressed desires of many artists, according to BAM President and Executive Producer, Harvey Lichtenstein, who feels that "people who work and have experience on the stage are almost too practical. I'm interested in the idea that these visual artists may not know enough to be too practical." *Artists in Action* provides the visual artists intimate exposure to the demands of the theater and a unique opportunity to stretch their creative limits. The resulting performances cannot help but stretch their audiences.

Artists in Action

BAM Visual Arts Initiative

Jones and Ginzel

Interim: after the end and before the beginning

Conceived and Directed by
Kristin Jones/
Andrew Ginzel/
Chandralekha

Choreography:
Chandralekha

Original Music:
T.H. Subash Chandran

Lighting Design:
Eric Cornwell

Performers:
T.H. Bhuvaneshwari
Sudha Jāgannath
Shaji K. John
Usha K. Nair

Animators:
Jennifer Cohn
Emily Greenhill
Ian Hill

Company Manager:
Sadanand Menon

Production Manager:
Gayle Jeffery

Technical Director:
Zeke Zaccaro

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Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel have worked collaboratively for the past twelve years. The artists have invented a diverse range of works for museums, galleries, public spaces, and for performance. Exploring the nature of time, equilibrium and memory, using a broad range of materials, they have created both ephemeral and permanent works in many venues including the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage, The New Museum, and the P.S.1 Museum in New York; nationally for the List Visual Arts Center at MIT, the Chicago Cultural Center, and the Wadsworth Atheneum; and internationally at the Kunsthalle Basel, and the Museo D' Arte Contemporanea in Prato, Italy among others. In performance, the artists have worked with Matthew Maguire, David Dorfman and Merce Cunningham. Recently the artists have invested themselves in a variety of public arts projects, building large scale site specific works. Jones and Ginzel have received a variety of awards including the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship for Sculpture in 1986 and 1994, a Bessie Award, the U.S. Indo Fellowship, the Pollack-Krasner Foundation Grant, and the Rome Prize in 1994.

Choreographer Chandralekha is one of the most important voices in the Indian counter-cultural movement today. A firm believer in the need for revitalizing traditional dance forms with contemporary energies, Chandralekha utilizes the structures of Bharatanatyam, martial arts forms like Kalari, and therapeutic forms like yoga to create her unique dance compositions. With productions that have been hailed as major landmarks in contemporary dance, Chandralekha has created a new audience for Indian dance both in India and abroad. In 1994 she performed her work *Yantra* in the United States co-sponsored by Jacob's Pillow and the Dancespace Project. In 1995, she toured Germany and France and performed in Hamburg with Pina Bausch. Chandralekha lives and works in Madras, India.

T.H. Subash Chandran is among the most outstanding percussionists in India in the classical Carnatic style. In the past 35 years, he has accompanied almost every top Carnatic musician in concerts all over the world. He has accompanied the Chandralekha Group for the past two years, playing the "Ghatam" (special clay pot), the "Morsing" (jewish harp), and "Konnakkel" (vocal percussion).

Lighting Designer Eric Cornwell has lighted dance, opera, and theater across the United States, Europe, and the Far East. He has worked with Peter Sellars, Robert Wilson, Lucinda Childs, Mabou Mines, The New York City Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and dozens of New York shows on and off Broadway. Last year he co-created the lighting performance piece *deLights: Art on Six Outlets* for the Whitney Museum.

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A giant eye, coming in and out of focus, watches over *Interim: After the end and before the beginning*, Andrew Ginzel and Kristin Jones's investigation through music and dance of the seizure of a moment within a continuum. The artist team first met the choreographer Chandralekha in 1991 while in India on a travel fellowship. Since then, they have been committed to the study of one another's work. What drew them together is a shared vision, an obsession with, as Jones says, "impossibilities," and what she calls "slowing down the moment to an almost exquisite agony of time." For the dancer, this involves an exploration of the moment when movement slows down to become almost nonmovement. The body is pushed to accomplish the near impossible. It is the artists' idea to remind us that this effort permits us to examine more profoundly what is before us.

**The Brooklyn
Academy of Music**

Interim also aims to measure the finite moment within the infinity of time. Or, as Ginzel and Jones have said, "to attempt to measure the extreme fragility of mortal life within the scope of potential of the individual conceptual mind." *Interim* will involve dancers, a martial artist, and a percussionist, all of whom will travel here with Chandralekha from Madras, India. "Our piece," says Jones, "has everything to do with the sheer nature of performance itself, that which you cannot seize but which you can witness." And she expresses her gratitude to BAM for the opportunity for this very different collaboration: "We have built and destroyed so many ephemeral projects. We always dreamed that a work could be living and be named a living work rather than be called an exhibition."

by Jean Nathan 42