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Press photos available at www.brokenseeds.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

nava
dance
THEATRE



Pictured: Nadhi Thekkek; Photo by Amitava Sarkar



Pictured: "The Grove": by Rupy C. Tut

NAVA DANCE THEATRE
in association with CounterPulse
Presents
the San Francisco Premiere of

Broken Seeds Still Grow: Taking Root
March 29-31, 2019 at Counterpulse in San Francisco

*A newly designed multi-media collaboration and performance experience using
bharatanatyam, live music, Indian miniature painting and video animation, exploring the
continuing impact of displacement and belonging among the South Asian American
community.*

Tickets on sale now at:

<http://counterpulse.org/event/broken-seeds-still-grow/> or 415-626-2060

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – December 11, 2018– **Nava Dance Theatre**, in association with CounterPulse, today announced the San Francisco premiere of ***Broken Seeds Still Grow: Taking Root***, an immersive performance experience featuring story-telling, bharatanatyam, Indian miniature painting, video animation and live music, **March 29-31 at CounterPulse in San Francisco**. *Broken Seeds Still Grow: Taking Root* is the continuing major collaboration between Nava Dance Theatre Founder/Artistic Director **Nadhi Thekkek**, and Painter/Calligrapher **Rupy C. Tut**. First premiered in 2017 in Oakland, this project initially took inspiration from research and archival resources pertaining to the 1947 Partition of British India. This new iteration of *Broken Seeds Still Grow: Taking Root* turns the lens more on the South Asian American experience and takes inspiration from the stories of immigrant families struggling with the enduring impact of South Asia's past and the current climate of xenophobia here in the United States. ***Broken Seeds Still Grow: Taking Root* runs for four performances on Friday, March 29 and Saturday, March 30 at 8pm, and matinees on Saturday, March 30 and Sunday, March 31 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$22-\$35 and are available at <http://counterpulse.org/event/broken-seeds-still-grow/> or 415-626-2060.**

The 1947 Partition of British India created over 15 million refugees and killed over one million people. Many South Asians emigrated to the U.S, eventually settling in the Bay Area and passing down the stories of their experiences for generations. Against this backdrop, the current national struggles over immigration, citizenship, race and nationalism are felt deeply by South Asian Americans who need look back only several decades to their own othering and brutal alienation in British India.

“The past continues to inform the present. These debates are happening now and here in the Bay Area,” explains Thekkek. In addition to their current research in part through the South Asian American Digital Archive (<https://www.saada.org>), Thekkek and Tut are drawing on their own extensive family histories and those shared by the overwhelming responses to 2017 performances of *Broken Seeds*. “People came to us with their stories, their photos and their family lore,” says Tut. “Our community hasn’t heard these stories publicly,” adds Thekkek. “They’ve only shared them in their own families. It’s time to tell these stories out loud for everyone to hear.”

Thekkek will create several new dance vignettes inspired by these historical accounts and personal narratives in the South Indian classical dance form of bharatanatyam, while Tut is doubling the number of new Indian miniature paintings and calligraphy featured in *Broken Seeds Still Grow: Taking Root*. The result is a work in which visual art, dance, and spoken word unite past and present stories and personal experiences.

Also new to this production is the video animation of several of Tut’s artwork, making vivid and alive this ancient art form. “The struggle for traditional artists is getting people to relate to the work and experience it today,” says Tut. “By animating certain images audiences are able to enter into a different world and have a more kinetic experience with this ancient art form and the stories it tells.”

Tut's artwork also will be displayed in CounterPulse as part of an interactive installation inviting the audience to connect directly with objects, family artifacts, videos and sounds prior to entering the theater.

Composer G.S. Rajan is creating the original musical score to be performed live by Rajan on flute, percussionist Rohan Krishnamoorthy on *mridangam* and *ghatam*, Akshaya Ganesh on *nattuvangam* (cymbals), with additional musicians on cello and vocals. The dancers of Nava Dance Theatre are Thekkekk, Shruti Abhishek, Vertika Srivastava, Lalli Venkat, Shelley Garg, Nitya Narasimhan, and Kavita Venkateswar.

Broken Seeds Still Grow: Taking Root is presented through CounterPulse's curated Co-Production Program. CounterPulse is building a movement of risk-taking art that shatters assumptions and builds community. For more information, please visit counterpulse.org.

Nava Dance Theatre and *Broken Seeds Still Grow: Taking Root* are supported by California Arts Council Cultural Pathways, East Bay Community Foundation, Zellerbach Family Foundation, Theatre Bay Area CA\$H Grants, City of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program, ACT Artshare Residency, CounterPulse House Artist and Co-Production Programs, Center for Cultural Innovation, Dancers' Group and individual donors.

www.brokenseeds.com

www.facebook.com/brokenseeds

www.instagram.com/brokenseedsstillgrow

VIDEO TEASER: <http://bit.ly/2rhZQbk>

ABOUT NAVA DANCE THEATRE

Nava Dance Theatre is a bharatanatyam dance company based in San Francisco, California, led by Nadhi Thekkekk, which uses the classical South Indian dance form as a medium for artistic reflection and discovery. Moreover, Nava operates on the belief that bharatanatyam, while classical, is a modern medium that can be used to discover and understand both traditional and contemporary themes. Nava has held two consecutive residencies at CounterPulse through the Performing Diaspora Program to develop and perform *The Cloud Messenger* (2014), a commission from the Oakland Ballet entitled *The Little Elephant in the Room* (2018) and a 2018 residency through American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco. www.navadance.org

ABOUT NADHI THEKKEK

Nadhi Thekkekk is the Artistic Director of Nava Dance Theatre, a San Francisco-based bharatanatyam dance company. She believes that bharatanatyam, while classical, is a modern medium that can be used to discover and understand both traditional and contemporary themes. She tends to favor simpler costume design and staging than that of her classical

counterparts, instead focusing on the inherent expressivity of the movement rather than on the accoutrements of the production.

Thekkek has performed at various venues, including Scotiabank Dance Centre in Vancouver, La Mama Experimental Theatre Club in NYC, Dance Place in DC, Southbank Center in London, National Steinbeck Center in Salinas and in the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival in San Francisco. She also works as a freelancer/collaborator in other productions, most recently with Seeta Patel in London as a part of the Akademi Choreography Commissions, with Sujit Vaidya in Vancouver and with Randee Pauvve here in the Bay Area. She received her foundational bharatanatyam training from Gurus Sundara Swaminathan (Kala Vandana Dance Company, San Jose, CA), Padmini Chari (Nritya School of Dance, Houston) and has continued training under A. Lakshmanaswamy (Chennai, India) since 2012. Nadhi returns to Chennai each year to perform in multiple venues during the Chennai Music and Dance Festival. Thekkek earned her PhD in Bioengineering from Rice University in 2013 under the guidance of MacArthur Genius Grant Fellow, Rebecca Richard-Kortum.

www.nadhithekkek.com

ABOUT RUPY C. TUT

Rupy C. Tut is an Oakland based visual artist blending mainly two unique traditional art forms: calligraphy and Indian miniature painting. She is among the very few practitioners of these art forms in the North America and her work has been presented through exhibits, talks and demonstrations at major venues including London City Hall, Stanford University, Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, and Peel Art Gallery and Museum Archives in Toronto, Canada, and her work is part of significant private and public collections around the world. She is also a leading voice on the importance of arts in the South Asian Community and shares her views through leadership panels and conferences around the world.

Tut produces collections that challenge norms of identity and belonging as well document the richness of her experiences as a first generation Punjabi Sikh immigrant. She has been supported by the City of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program, the Sikh Foundation of Palo Alto, CA, and the Sikh Foundation of Canada, Toronto, ON.

She received training in London at Prince's School of Traditional Arts, beginning with calligraphy and Mughal miniature painting. She continues to study miniature painting with Guler miniature master painter Dr. Susana Marin of Prince's School of Traditional Arts. While calligraphy of South Asian languages has been a mostly lost art form, Tut designed her unique calligraphy style which she incorporates into her paintings.

Tut earned her Bachelor's degree in Biology from University of California, Los Angeles, and a Masters in Public Health from Loma Linda University with a specialization in Global Health.

www.artbyrupy.com



“Unmuting history: in art, the long-hushed saga of the British India partition.”
- *San Francisco Chronicle*

CALENDAR LISTING

Dance, Theater, Performance, Music

WHO/WHAT:

Nava Dance Theatre in association with CounterPulse presents

Broken Seeds Still Grow: Taking Root (San Francisco Premiere)

Concept by: Nadhi Thekkek and Rupy C. Tut

Co-Director/Choreographer: Nadhi Thekkek

Co-Director/Visual Art, Design and Animation: Rupy C. Tut

Music Composition/Orchestration: G.S. Rajan

Video Design & Projections: Darl Andrew Packard, Wolfgang Wachalovsky, Kat Cole

Lighting Design: Richard Board

Rehearsal Director: Shruti Abhishek

Dancers: Nadhi Thekkek, Shruti Abhishek, Vertika Srivastava, Lalli Venkat,

Shelley Garg, Nitya Narasimhan, Kavita Venkateswar

Music performed live by G.S. Rajan (flute), Rohan Krishnamoorthy (mridangam and ghatam), Akshaya Ganesh (nattuvangam) with additional musicians on cello and vocals

WHEN:

Friday, March 29 at 8pm

Saturday, March 30 at 3pm and 8pm

Sunday, March 31 at 3pm

WHERE:

CounterPulse, 80 Turk Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

BOX OFFICE:

<http://counterpulse.org/event/broken-seeds-still-grow/>

or (415) 626-2060

TICKETS:

\$22-\$35

MORE INFO:

www.brokenseeds.com

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