



**culture**

**event hop**

**Surf spotlight**  
The live 101 Open Mic sessions continue this week, offering a platform for aspiring artists, solo acoustic singer-songwriters, stand-up comedians, poets and public speakers to come forward and present their views about all and sundry. *Door passes 200.* At *Unwind Centre*. On *March 23, 7pm-9pm*. To register, call 4212-1631 or email [artiste.events@gmail.com](mailto:artiste.events@gmail.com)

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**Pillows, pillows me**  
Maya's Krishnan (in pic) and Madri Jeevarathnam introduce themselves as women breaking moulds in the Tamil film industry. At *Pillow Talk*, a late-night talk show, they talk about their journeys, crazy victories, and favourite pickup lines. Also featuring a dance performance by Afrozita. *450k*. At *The Leather Bar, The Park*. *9pm-10.30pm*. Details: 98444-93601.

**SPY**  
The JCB Prize for Literature has announced a call for entries by publishers, giving authors the chance to win ₹25 lakh, the country's richest literary award. Details: [thejcbprize.org](http://thejcbprize.org)

**movement/dance**

**choreography**

# The body beautiful

*Meghna Bhardwaj's Edges (Beginnings)*

**Yoga, non-verbal communication, and other movement-based ideas inform the contemporary dance performances at the March | dance festival**

**T**HIS year's *March | dance* festival of contemporary body-centric work, co-hosted by Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan Chennai in association with Basement 21, will focus on artists who rely on practices other than dance as a way to articulate their ideas, as creators and choreographers. The main event is a workshop led by Antonio Carallo, a dancer-actor, choreographer and former member of the Pina Bausch dance company, Tanztheater Wuppertal. While the "mind and body" are among Antonio's stated interests, he also extensively studied Kinomichi and Eutoinic, apart from Ayurvedic massage, and is a certified Yoga instructor as well — almost setting the tone for the festival's purview of mixed, and multiple practices.

**Say, What?**

The festival also brings together a host of artists for audiences in Chennai, including Meghna Bhardwaj from Delhi, a trained ballet, modern, and contemporary dancer, who sets things moving with *Edges (Beginnings)*, as part of her *Edges, Trilogy* series, combining live performance, films, and textual installation.

Naveel Singh Johar, the dancer, yoga instructor and Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee, presented *Abyaya Somatics Lab*, which included films by Marcel Zaes, Kalpana Subramanian, and Meghna Bhardwaj on loop, a series of drawings titled *Asor* by Simrat Dugal, and a 'Wall of Keywords', based on the discourse's making at Studio Abyaya. This week, the festival will host performances by Avantika Bahi Goyal, Malayika P.C., Deepak Kurki Shivawamy and Meghna, apart from a discussion led by Antonio.

Avantika, from Mumbai, who also helps run Dance Dialogues, the platform for independent dance makers, will present *Say, What?* with Vishal Sarvatiya, a dancer-actor and certified sign language tutor. "Say, What?" puts a lens on the notion of communication between two bodies that have a very different relationship with sound," offers Avantika in an email interview. "Sign language is used as a point of entry to set up varied relationships

in space, and the role of gesture is deconstructed and de-mystified through this piece.

*Say, What?* thereby lends itself to abstract proportions, opening up a world of meaning that is both embodied and visceral in nature.

My work throws up questions about inclusivity, privilege, equal art and stereotyping," says the dancer. "There are important conversations to have, and I feel that the more we discuss these issues, the more sensitised we will become to such matters."

**The indie route**

When it comes to preserving traditions, and keeping a modern purview for newer audiences, Avantika explains that for her, "As a maker and performer, the idea of tradition lies in finding rigour in the way one makes and performs a production. It is about the investment in the body that informs the work — a contract rooted in honesty and transparency."

As for avenues such as *March | dance*, she elaborates, "In India, I find that practitioners are simply not waiting around for funding or so called opportunities to make work, but instead taking the plunge and finding their own resources to produce and tour with their performances."

The dancer who is also a performer for Preethi Ashraya's *The Lost Wax Project* adds, "There is a lot more independence in the way one thinks of performance

making, and that sense of liberation is giving rise to more work that is produced and performed."

**Art of interaction**

The closing day of the festival will feature *Trance/IT* by Deepak Kurki Shivraswamy, a contemporary performing artist, creator and teacher based in New Delhi, who also co-founded the art collective, The Kha Foundation.

Presented as a contemporary dance duet and a work in progress, "*Trance/IT* treats the body as a map of the consciousness, demystifying the complex architecture of the body by isolating and articulating specific parts," offers Deepak in an email exchange. "It evokes fragmented images and memories of being in limbo, of passing from one place to another," he explains.

"*Trance/IT* began with the body as the starting point, unlike my other works, where the starting point was always a social issue," offers Deepak. "The work looks at connecting to the space with a simple act of moving for and with the audience," he explains. The plan, he adds, is to present an insider view to their process of creating work. They also plan to take the performance to schools and colleges, and offer movement workshops to students.

The aspect of 'cultural conditioning' does make a crucial difference, when it comes to learning the

**Surf photography**  
Momentum: A Decade of Surf Photography will showcase Ram Mohan Paragipati's 10 years of surf photography. The IT Group's Arun Vasu has played a huge part in the growth of the surf scene, and this show will showcase the growth of the surfing revolution in India. Film Director Gautham Menon will inaugurate the exhibition on *March 23, 11 am*. At *The Folly, Jewellery*. *March 23-24*. Details: 98842-72572.

**Trance/IT**  
A moment in *Trance/IT*

**Rehearsals**  
A scene from *rehearsals*

**Manju Sharma**

*A cast member in Abyaya Somatics Lab*

*Avantika Bahi Goyal*

https://www.facebook.com/saywhat.performance/photos/a.759244307570078/922589337902240/

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