

Plastic Drastic Fantastic



About

A South Asian dance theatre work for children and their families which explores our complex relationship with plastics – the fantastic possibilities they offer, as well as the drastic consequences to the environment.

Plastic Drastic Fantastic is an inclusive experience, accessible for D/deaf young people and children aged 7+ years.

The performance can be complemented by a specially curated workshop.

Drawing from South Asian dance techniques, the artists explore plastics and the dangers of their misuse through intricate movement, gestures and play infused with interaction with the audience. The processes and stories underpinning this project have been steered by children and young people – who are at the heart of the research for this work – created in collaboration with material scientists at UCL.

[Watch the trailer here](#)

Originally co-produced with Polka Theatre

Let's Connect

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Website www.akademi.co.uk



Supported by



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

“It’s wonderfully refreshing to see classic South Asian dance performed so playfully and in a contemporary context.”

MARY POLLARD
EVERYTHING THEATRE

**“Excellent and stunning...”
“Breath-taking and astonishing...”
“Amazing and beautiful...”**

YOUNG AUDIENCE MEMBERS

“I strongly recommend that parents and children catch this wonderful show.”

ANITA CHANDA
PULSE MAGAZINE

Music

Plastic Drastic Fantastic takes Akademi's commitment to artistic innovation to the next level, with music intricately composed around plastics.

The show's composition draws inspiration from the chemical formulae of plastics, creating rhythms and patterns that mirror their molecular structures.

Collaborating with acclaimed artists **Kathy Hinde** and **Matthew Olden**, the production incorporates unconventional sounds like the rustling of plastic sheets and the crumpling of plastic bottles into its musical tapestry. The result is an auditory experience that explores the essence of plastics in an utterly unique way.

Costume

The show's costume design, led by **Brian Hartley**, emphasizes sustainability and sustainable sourcing, whilst keeping in mind the appropriate material for high intensity dancing.

The green top is made from fishing net sourced from Scotland based 240 year old local business.

The vintage and pre-loved sarees have been bought from a Devon-based small business that supports economically disadvantaged communities in India, through their sales.

Reviews:

[Young audience](#)
[Everything Theatre](#)
[Pulse Magazine](#)



Brian has designed a pattern including plastic bottles and fishing net that he then screen printed on the sarees. He collaborated with visual artist **Lorna Brown** in this process.

Sustainability

We are committed to adopting sustainable practices in our work, aiming to get better and wiser with each project.

We have kept sustainability in mind throughout the phases of conception, creation and touring. Creative reuse and upcycling of material from Akademi's previous productions, or sourcing them from sustainable companies, and reduced printing of marketing assets were some of the steps we took, aligning with the show's theme of responsible resource use.

Set Design

The set, again designed by **Brian** in collaboration with artist **Jesal Patel**, serves as a 'theatre of materials' displaying how different types of plastics can perform and move on stage and under different lighting, each with its distinct properties.

This nuanced and complex exploration of materials becomes an integral part of the production, with items on the set actively engaging with the performance rather than merely serving as background elements.

One striking feature of the set is a luminous wall constructed from empty milk cans. The set is beautifully complemented by the lighting design by **Aidene Malone** and **Ben Cowens**.

Touring

Since 2022, Plastic Drastic Fantastic has been performed at venues across **London, Oxford, Ipswich, Coventry, Woking, and Leicester.**

For tour details, please visit [our website](#).

In Oct 2023, we also did a special closed performance at **Great Ormond Street Hospital** in London, dedicated to NHS staff, patients, and their carers, underscoring Akademi's commitment to engaging with communities and making art accessible to all.

Workshops

At some venues, workshops are organised for families, school pupils and those with Special Educational Needs and Disability.

1. Fun, engaging, energetic and full of craft
2. Participants encouraged to be creative through movement, storytelling and visual arts using their ideas & knowledge about plastics and their recycling.
3. Visual art used to express emotions we associate with plastic waste and create artwork using recycling.
4. Bharatanatyam gestures and movements used to show the images and stories we know about the misuse of plastics.
5. Schools are left with workplans and materials to develop the theme further.

[More info on workshops](#)

[Have a look at the Schools' Resource Pack](#)



Accessibility

The show is accessible for d/Deaf and hard of hearing audiences.

Ramesh Meyappan was our Creative Consultant in furthering our understanding and developing **sensorial soft cushions** that respond to the music and sounds, offering an enhanced sensory experience.

These tactile, vibrating cushions, available in limited quantities per show, contain small vibrating motors, allowing d/Deaf and hard of hearing audience members to connect with the music and rhythms of the dance performance on a deeper level.

Relaxed performances

At several venues, we have organised relaxed performances to create a supportive atmosphere for audiences and provided a [Relaxed performance information pack](#)



Performing artists



**Kirsten
Newell**



**Anekha
Pillai**



**Mithun
Gill**

Kirsten is Bharatanatyam dancer based in Scotland. Following her training in India at renowned institutions as Kalakshetra, she has been a part of several notable productions throughout the UK and India. These projects include working with celebrated artists and companies such as Leela Samson, Shane Shambhu, Seeta Patel and more. In 2019, she established Cosmic Dance with Oxana Banskikova, to promote and grow innovative and high quality South Asian Dance. Kirsten is focusing on productions that work in the contemporisation of Bharatanatyam within Scotland. Her recent successful productions are 'Hebridean Treasure: Lost & Found' and 'MaMa'. She is currently working on a new outdoor production called 'Rise Goddess Rise'.

Anekha is Croydon-based Bharatanatyam and semi-classical dance artist. She trained with Guru Smt Shalini Shivashankar at Upahaar and soon joined their teaching faculty. She has performed at Yuva South Asian Dance Competition at Southbank Centre; Dharani School of Arts and Guruvayoor temple in India; the Queens Gallery at Buckingham Palace and at venues such as Richmix, Chats Palace and The Bhavan Centre. She has also performed as part of the Natya Project, as a curtain raiser for Seeta Patel's 'Rite of Spring'. In the recent years, she has appeared as a dance artist in Hollywood movies, including 'The Eternals' and 'What's Love Got to do With It'. Works like the Emerge Project curated by Nupur Arts and Kamala Devam Company, performing urban Tamil dance styles for Jeya Raveendran's production, observing and being a studio assistant for Vidya Patel's 'Good Mourning Earth' piece at Tate Modern has inspired her to reach new heights.

Mithun is trained in Kathak and contemporary dance, giving him a unique performance quality. Kathak has installed rhythm and musicality in his dance and the contemporary training has brought a wider range of movement dynamics allowing his body to find its own style. Mithun has collaborated and toured both in the UK and internationally as a freelance artist and as a company member with Sujata Banerjee Dance Company. Mithun was also included in Akademi's 40 under 40 list of South Asian Dancers in the UK 2019. Performances Include: Pravaas, Akademi (2023), Hemantika Festival, Sujata Banerjee, Commissioned new work choreography by Gary Clarke for the SBDC company dancers (2022), Sevens, Srishti creations Nina Rajarani (2022), A time to mourn a time to dance, Springs Dance Company (2022), Creator, Northern Connections and Resolution festival, Chandenie Gobardhan (2022), Understory, Hannah Pickett dance Contemporary (2021), Silent Spaces, Music video as part of a visual arts / music album. Soumik Datta (2021).

About Akademi

Akademi makes vibrant, fascinating, and meaningful South Asian dance. We use the compelling power of storytelling, rhythm and gestures to create deeper connections with each other and our wider world. Care is at the centre of all that we do. Akademi has been the beating heart of South Asian dance in the UK, since 1979. We are known for our world-class dance performances and groundbreaking wellbeing programmes. Our work is for everyone, and we bring our work to you. You can find us in everyday places from theatres, parks, shopping centres and festivals to hospitals, care homes and schools. We engage with internationally recognised dancers, choreographers and artists to nurture the future generation of South Asian dance form leaders. We collaborate with environmental, science and health specialists to share stories of the societal and scientific issues of our world today.

The Team

Direction and Choreography: **Suba Subramaniam**

Sound Artist and Composer: **Kathy Hinde**

Sound and Technical Artist: **Matt Olden**

Set Designers: **Brian Hartley & Jesal Patel**

Costume Designer: **Brian Hartley**

Lighting Designers: **Aideen Malone & Ben Cowens**

Creative Consultant for d/Deaf Audiences: **Ramesh Meyappan**

Visual Artist: **Lorna Brown**

Production Manager: **Simon Beyer & Jordan Whitwell**

Stage Manager: **Meg Le Marchant**

Akademi team

Executive Director: **Kirsten Burrows**

Artistic Director: **Suba Subramaniam**

Marketing & Operations Director: **Antareepa Thakur**

Administrator: **Gabrielle Marie**

Finance Administrator: **Keisha Bhamra-Barr**

Programmes Coordinator: **Kavya Iyer Ramalingam**