

# **SUPER RUWAXI: ORIGINS**

a queer Asian-American comic book performance



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The Good Little Confucian Girl discovers her super-identity as the Hairy Arm-pitted Feminist, armed with magical gender-bending body odor that can change the course of patriarchal oppression. *Super Ruwaxi: Origins* mashes together theater, multimedia, and contemporary Indian dance to create a live comic-book story about queerness, coming of age, and the immigrant experience. Drawing parallels between the contemporary world of Southern California and the Indian mythological world of the *Mahabharata*, the work is inspired by American comic books and *Amar Chitra Katha*, the popular Indian comic book series. *Super Ruwaxi: Origins* was developed as part of the Post *Natyam* Collective's long-distance creative process and was supported in part by the City of Santa Monica Artist Fellowship Program.

## VIDEO

excerpts: <http://vimeo.com/channels/ruwaxi>

full show: <http://vimeo.com/shyamala/superruwaxi>,  
password: Ruwaxi

## CREDITS

Script, Choreography, and Performance:

Cynthia Ling Lee and Shyamala Moorty

Director, Dramaturg, and Contributing Writer: Alison De La Cruz

Music Composition: Derrick Spiva Jr., Ravindra Deo, and Ian Smith

Animation: Adnan Hussain

Costume Design: Danielle A. Domingue

Technical Director & Lightning Designer: Kedar Lawrence



## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- professional theatrical sound system
  - light and sound board operators
- audio mixing console with 2 available stereo channels or 4 mono channels with 1/4 inch inputs
- stage monitors
- 2 wireless lavalier mics, 3 boundary mics
  - lighting grid with theatrical lighting that can be focused in the front area of the playing space (without blowing out video projection)
- minimum 2 light specials for live feed camera
- programmable lighting console with 24 channel dimmer pack
  - projection surface such as a cyclorama that fills the entire back wall and goes flush to the floor
- 2 video projectors OR a video switcher and 1 video projector (must be focused flush to floor) with video cables that run to the booth
- easy performer access from stage directly to audience
- sprung wooden floor (with or without marley)
- ideal playing space – 25 ft wide by 25 ft deep or larger

*NOTE: Some items are negotiable; please contact us for a detailed technical rider.*

## TOURING TEAM

2 performers and 1 technical director



Ruwaxi with audience participant



the show



## LEAD ARTISTS



**Shyamala Moorthy** (choreographer/performer) is dedicated to collaborative and transformative art making practices drawing from contemporary Indian dance, theater, multimedia, yoga, and community engagement. A founding member of the Post *Natyam* Collective, Shyamala is also a CORE ensemble artist with TeAda Productions and has performed as an ensemble member with Great Leap, the Rangoli Foundation, and as a soloist and principal dancer for the Aman International Folk Ensemble. Acclaimed as a “tour de force” by the Los Angeles Times, she has performed her work across the U.S. as well as to Canada, Europe and India; her work is featured in the seminal books *Desi Divas: Political Activism in South Asian American Cultural Performances* (2013) and *Contemporary Indian Dance* (2011). Shyamala has directed several solo shows including Sariyah Idan’s *Homeless in Homeland* about finding home in the face of the Israel-Palestine conflict. An MFA graduate of UCLA, she currently is an Adjunct Faculty member at West LA College, Project Director of Pop-Up TeAda, Teaching Artist with the Aman Dance Educators, and is touring her two current shows: *Stories...on the MOVE!* – sharing Indian mythological stories through dance with Sheetal

Gandhi, and *Super Ruwaxi: Origins* - a live comic-book story about queerness and the immigrant experience with Cynthia Ling Lee. Shyamala has received two Durfee ARC grants and two Long Beach Arts Council Professional Artist Fellowships.



**Cynthia Ling Lee** (choreographer/performer) creates choreography focusing on postcolonial, queer, and feminist-of-color approaches to contemporary South Asian performance. Trained in North Indian classical kathak and American postmodern dance, she is committed to intimate collaboration and ethical intercultural exchange. Cynthia's interdisciplinary performance work has been presented at venues such as Dance Theater Workshop (New York), REDCAT (Los Angeles), East West Players (Los Angeles), Taman Ismail Marzuki (Jakarta), Kuandu Arts Festival (Taipei),

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IGNITE! (New Delhi), and Chandra-Mandapa: Spaces (Chennai). In addition to the Post *Natyam* Collective, Cynthia's artistic partners-in-crime include the Desijam Collective; musicians David Cutler (jazz/new music), Ravindra Deo (Hindustani) and Loren Nerell (Indonesian/electronic); and visual artists YaYa Chou (sculptural installation), Carole Kim (multimedia) and Adnan Hussain (animation).

Cynthia was the recipient of a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship, an Asia-Pacific Performing Arts Exchange Fellowship, a Taipei Artist Village Residency, a NET/TEN grant, two Santa Monica Individual Artist Fellowships, and two Artists' Resource for Completion grants. She holds an MFA in choreography from UCLA, and her teachers include Simone Forti, Eiko & Koma, Judy Mitoma, Pallabi Chakravorty, Bandana Sen, Kumudini Lakhia, Anjani Ambegaokar, and the contact improvisation community. Cynthia is a board member of the Network of Ensemble Theaters, dedicated to propelling ensemble practice to the forefront of American culture and society, and an assistant professor of dance at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a cross-appointment in women and gender studies. [www.cynthialinglee.com](http://www.cynthialinglee.com)



**Alison De La Cruz** (director/dramaturg) is a multi-disciplinary theater artist, facilitator, producer, and cultural organizer. De La Cruz has spent the last 18 years creating original performance works and events; collaborating with artists, communities and cross-sector allies; and producing within the diverse arts and cultural production landscapes, theatrical communities, educational institutions and non-profit social service agencies in the multicultural Los Angeles sprawl. She is currently a Producing Ensemble Member with TeAda Productions and a Community Organizer in the Artistic Department at the Pasadena Playhouse. A lead facilitator for the Network of Ensemble Theaters' MICROFEST Art Impacts Place Cycle and TCG Young Leader of Color Alumni, De La Cruz has been exploring how colleagues around the country are engaging their communities and welcoming them into their

audiences. SUPER RUWAXI: ORIGINS marks De La Cruz's full production directorial debut. On Twitter: TweetsbyDeLa [www.alisonmdelacruz.blogspot.com](http://www.alisonmdelacruz.blogspot.com)





**The Post *Natyam* Collective** is a transnational, web-based coalition of women artists who creatively and critically engage South Asian dance. Unique to our networked nature, we use collaborative processes online to produce innovative dance and media work that rigorously tackles South Asian traditions and theory. Post Natyam Collective members are steeped in South Asian and other movement forms, such as bharatanatyam, kathak, kuchipudi, yoga, and post/modern dance, and the training of each artist is unique. In addition to dance, we work with multimedia, theater, art installations, creative writing, music, and scholarship. Drawing on these diverse tools, we create feminist, postcolonial, border-crossing artistic works shared with audiences on the web, in theaters, universities, and with communities. The Post *Natyam* Collective consists of Sandra Chatterjee (Munich/Salzburg/India), Cynthia Ling Lee (Greensboro/Los Angeles), Shyamala Moorthy (Los Angeles), and Meena Murugesan (Los Angeles/Montreal).

The artistic and academic work of Post *Natyam* Collective members has been presented internationally at venues such as Actor's Studio (Kuala Lumpur); Adyaya (Bangalore); ArtSensAsian Project 06 (Munich); Asia Society (New York); Congress on Research in Dance Conference (Ann Arbor); Chandra Mandapa: Spaces (Chennai); Chhaya Nat (Dhaka); Dancing in the Margins Festival (Los Angeles); Dance Theater Workshop (New York); Galerie Kullukcu (Munich); Department of Performing Arts (Phnom Penh); Diasporadics (New York); ICCR (Kolkata); IGNITE! Contemporary Dance Festival (New Delhi); India International Centre (New Delhi); Indonesian Dance Festival (Jakarta); Kuandu Arts Festival (Taipei); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles); Masala, Mehndi, Masti!! (Toronto); Merkin Hall (New York); National Asian American Theater Festival (Los Angeles); the Park's New Festival (Chennai); Painted Bride Arts Center (Philadelphia); the Other Festival (Chennai); REDCAT (Los Angeles); and Tanzhaus nrw (Düsseldorf).

## press quotes

“Working from within Indian aesthetics and philosophy, the choreographers take the exploration of the body in postmodern directions, deconstructing it, subverting its gaze, questioning its stereotypes of femininity and restrictive social codes, and openly, though subtly, exploring female desire and pleasure. Their work as a collective, their use of new media to enable work across geographical distances and their collaborative spirit create the wave of the future and can serve as models for other twenty-first-century artists.”

- Ketu Katrak, *Contemporary Indian Dance: New Creative Choreography in India and the Diaspora*, 2011

“Their cutting edge explorations break through gender stereotypes, refuse exotification and disrupt strict dichotomies between East and the West.”

- Nita Vidyarthi, *The Statesman*, 5 October 2010

“Ranging from the subtle emotions of contemporary abhinaya to unexpectedly funky transformations of classical Indian rhythms...[the Post Natyam Collective] sheds light on the notions of home, cultural hybridity, longing, and translation.”

- VR Devika, *The Times of India (Chennai)*, 1 January 2010

“...sharply etched that the art of body movements can speak against any form of subjugation, linguistic or political.”

- *The Times of India (Kolkata)*, 30 Aug 2010

“A playful take on how cultures interact and collide with hilarious consequences...blended rhythms, sensual, seamless movement patterns, and humour.”

-Kathakali Jana, *The Telegraph*, 28 August 2010

“...simultaneously recognizes and refuses borders in order to enact a feminist critique of violence and argue for an ethic of care.”

-Christine Garlough, *Desi Divas: Political Activism in South Asian American Cultural Performances*, 2013

“Talk about fusion – not only did Bollywood meet rap meet performance art meet modern dance and bharata natyam but there was humor, depth and beauty to burn.” - Victoria Looseleaf, *Los Angeles Times*, January 2004





## teaching and outreach

We offer embodied workshops and performative lecture-demonstrations for community, university, and professional settings that intersect art-making, activism, and theory. Our show specifically addresses the communities of trans\* and gender nonconforming people, East and South Asian immigrants and second generation Americans, devised theater practitioners, and contemporary South Asian dance artists. Academic subjects relevant to the performance work include gender studies, queer and feminist theory, critical race theory, diaspora, religious studies, and performance. If you are interested in a workshop or lecture-demonstration, we are happy to develop something for your particular needs.



## BOOKING INQUIRIES

Cynthia Ling Lee (cynthialinglee@gmail.com) or  
Shyamala Moorty (shydance@gmail.com)

For more on the show: [www.postnatyam.net/work/super-ruwaxi-origins/](http://www.postnatyam.net/work/super-ruwaxi-origins/)

For more on the Post *Natyam* Collective: [www.postnatyam.net](http://www.postnatyam.net)



Photo credits: Michelle Magalong, Andrei Andreev, Ben Yalom, Cynthia Ling Lee

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