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THE WALL BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH : ARTISTIC CROSSINGS¹

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In his 2009 book *L'obsession des frontières (The Obsession with Borders)*, geographer Michel Foucher remarks that the fall of the Berlin Wall introduced not only a long-awaited model for peaceful revolution, but also a contra-model effectively legitimizing a new global wave of wall construction over the past 20 years: 17 walls representing 26,000 kilometers of new geopolitical borders. Despite growing interest at interdisciplinary university gatherings regarding this « paradigm of the wall », precious little space has been dedicated to the perspectives of current artists working on the topic.² Rare too are those who have dared to speak about the wall built in 2009 by India to encircle Bangladesh with a 4095-kilometer boundary, 1116

¹ This article was presented at the June 2012 colloquium, « Geopolitical and Geoartistic Borders, » organized at the French National Institute of Art History (INHA), by Université Paris 8 and the Labex Arts H2H program. The article was originally published in French as a chapter in the book *Borders/Geopolitics and Geoartistry (Géoartistique et géopolitique / Frontières, dir. F. Soulages)*, L'Harmattan : Paris, Local and Global collection, p. 165-176.

² Hélène Yèche, « The paradigm of the Wall in contemporary society: evolution and perspectives, 1989-2009, » Notebooks of the MIMMOC - Memory(ies), Identity(ies), Marginality(ies) in the Western Contemporary World - Number 5 / Notebooks / Foreword, 2010. Related readings on this topic: the cultural program of Chantal Akerman's workshops (2003, « From the other side, » MIMMOC); the program of « Barriers, walls and frontiers: state of insecurity or insecurity of the State? » International Colloquium organized in May 2011 by the Raoul-Dandurand Chair in Strategic and Diplomatic Studies at the University of Quebec at Montreal, as well as the program of « Impassable Frontiers? » International Colloquium, organized in December 2011 at the universities of Cergy-Pontoise and Paris 8 by the French Institute of Geopolitics.

kilometers of which are located in the rivers of the Ganges delta. It was not until 2011, the 40th anniversary of Bangladeshi independence, that Bangladeshi artists were invited for the first time to the Venice Biennale and to the international exposition in New Delhi. In April 2012, Bangladesh, which still does not have a single art gallery, organized its first international art fair, the Dhaka Art Summit.

Several of the artists interested in Bangladesh are directly connected to this geopolitical issue concerning walls. Their common interest resonates with the idea of boundary as a « semiotic object, » as conceived by Bernard Reitel in *Working Papers*.³ In effect, the wall may be thought of and experienced as a place in motion, a fluctuating line, and more specifically as a multidimensional process, an interface with an « inside » and an « outside » that replicates itself within the individual and within the context of his life simultaneously. Looking beyond the polarity of interior versus exterior spaces, we observe that these artists create another space, one that is interstitial, a space that is not concerned with crossing to the other side but rather one that aims to transpose a utopian wall upon the geopolitical boundary.

Contemporary dancer Akram Khan chooses the element of water in *Desh* – which premiered in London in 2011, the most recent creation dedicated to his Bangladeshi origins – in order to move beyond the binary oppositions of India/Bangladesh, and Europe/Indian subcontinent. The word *desh* means « land, native land, homeland » in Bengali and Hindi. The word weaves an intimate link connecting the ecological question of global warming and the threats it presents to Bangladesh via increasingly frequent floods, with the psychic and physical tensions that Khan experiences as an artist of the diaspora, his father having fled Bangladesh to live in London. These tensions are created between the omnipresence of the fluid, free movements that he discovered in contemporary dance in London, and the rigor of traditional Indian codifications he learned in the Kathak dance that shaped his body as a child. The Indian poet Karthika Nair offers

³ Bernard Reitel, « The international border, semic object, multidimensional process, meaningful interface, » *Working Papers* review, no. 43, CEPS/INSTEAD, Esch-sur-Alzette, 2011.

another form of geoartistic shifting of this wall. Nair wrote the texts of *Desh* in the presence of Akram Khan. They highlighted the role of the artist's dialogue between several living languages in order to transcend the linguistic boundaries imposed by Bangladesh's imprisonment. The concept is to cultivate the foreignness within each language as a means of poetic and creative connection among the languages. Recall that in this respect, the geopolitical borders of modern India were born in a bloodbath in 1947, giving birth to two states: the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of India, prompting the migration of more than 12 million people, and inciting conflicts among the three languages of Urdu, Hindi and Bengali, in addition to numerous local dialects.⁴

We are familiar with the manner in which the geopolitical view of borders brings out power struggles that are both quantitative (populations and resources) and qualitative (terrorist networks, survival diasporas), and it provokes rivalries among diverse actors in a territory for strategic and military aims. Conversely, the geoartistic vision of artists like Khan and Nair is founded not upon this polarized and territorialized power, but instead upon the idea of the power inherent in raw nature, a power that humans cannot master. Akram Khan conceives of water as an infinite potentiality of forms both manifest and ephemeral. Water exceeds and creatively immerses any border that results from an exclusive association between politics and land. Khan thus connects three worlds currently separated by the wall between India and Bangladesh: the world of scientific analysis of the Ganges' devastating waters, the world of his own individual creativity as it is expressed on European stages (and not on those of the Indian subcontinent), and finally the world of Indian mythology told by the Kathak actor-dancer. Such mythology is embodied in the symbolism of the goddess Ganga, she who covers the celestial world

⁴ In 1999, UNESCO launched International Mother Language Day, celebrated annually on 21 February. For the first time, in February 2012, several thousand Indians and Bangladeshis met at the zero point of the wall, three kilometers from the center of Agartala, capital of the Tripura region. Performances took place all night long, often crossing back and forth across the border, without punishment or intervention from the armed forces present.

as a manifestation of Shakti, the feminine power of Shiva, god of dance. This fluctuating and imaginary line projected upon the barbed-wire wall thus proposes a new artistic form of *métissage* (hybridization) between cultures, in the sense intended by François Laplantine, as he replaces the idea of borrowing with that of transmutation:

It is irreducible to the sum of « components » that would be primary in an ontological or chronological sense. In other words, if a hybridized logic exists, it is that of a budding multiplicity, which is not one of accumulation (of signs or of goods) but of tension. Thus it is appropriate to abandon the notion of totality (of assembled elements) in favor of what I will call tonality, intensity or rhythmicity.⁵

Knowing that the process of creating *Desh* was undertaken over 30 weeks split between France, England and China, this question of *métissage* points us toward an initial point of reflection we will consider in Khan's work: the idea of rhythmic transmutation of the border. This concept is represented in the scenography of *Desh* by the walls of water and by three particular actions of the dancer: bending over, turning, and turning around. Secondly, this analysis will address another genre of danced movement: one that breaks the wall into pieces by cutting and symbolically moving certain human body parts connected to the history of Bangladesh's independence. This interweaving of stories between collective memory and subjective impressions was conceived by Khan with a non-linear, reversible order, and it is at the heart of the mise-en-scene, as described by Karthika Nair:

Akram feels the emotions of these characters deeply, but this is not his story. In each scene, the elements – real, historic, fictional, intimate, social, familial – are mixed together with an undeniable poetry. The narrative thread is not always clear, although the choreographer is perfectly equipped to bring multiple characters to life with just one

⁵ François Laplantine, Preface to *Le métissage interculturel*, edited by Rodelyne de Villanova and Geneviève Vermès, Espaces Interculturels, L'harmattan, Paris, 2006. Quotation translated by the author of this article.

body. He comes from Kathak [...] The essence of Kathak consists of telling a story. The dancer embodies Krishna and Radha at once, the god-lover and the beloved.⁶

1. In DESH, « Bangladesh is the story of man versus nature. »⁷

Even in exile, Akram Khan defines his personal history as inseparable from the tragic destiny of Bangladesh and based upon the oppositions between creation/demise, alliance/conflict, fluidity/resistance, and land/water:

In a world where things are increasingly disposable, where aesthetics are dictated by trends, and quality by ephemera, I wanted to go back to my origin to a certain extent, in order to find and create something that would be an experience of lasting value... Strangely enough and sadly ironically, climate scientists are saying that Bangladesh may be one of the first countries to perish and disappear under rising waters ... I am fascinated by water inside the earth, it is the core principle of the way I think and move, fluidity within form... and Bangladesh has an abundance of both water and earth ... It is these two factors, that the people of Bangladesh continuously depend upon to build their lives with and against. I am fascinated to search for and explore a story that addresses the tragedy and comedy of lives in Bangladesh.⁸

Why give such importance to the element of water? With 158 million inhabitants, Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated nations, at 1099 inhabitants per square kilometer. At the same time, its land is tremendously fertile, thanks to the alluvial deposits from the confluence of the Ganges and Brahmaputra as well as the presence of some fifty other major rivers. However, the latest report from the International Organization for Migration in Geneva predicts that from now to 2050, more than one-tenth of Bangladesh's territory

⁶ Nicolas Six, « Akram Khan in Bangladesh, » *Danser review*, March-April 2012, p. 85-90. Quotation translated by the author of this article.

⁷ *Ibid.*, remarks by Akram Khan, p. 87. Quotation translated by the author of this article.

⁸ www.akramkhancompany.net

will be flooded by rising water, displacing between 15 and 20 million people.⁹ On one hand, this massive immigration has already reached a critical threshold, due to the increasing annual number of floods, tropical cyclones, tornadoes, and tsunamis, events that have increased the salinity of many of the nation's lands, thus rendering them infertile. On the other hand, this relationship does not take into account the unimaginable effect that the melting glaciers will have on the rivers that originate in the Himalayas and run into Bangladesh, first upon mountainous slopes undergoing massive deforestation to reach the delta country, which is located at least 12 meters above sea level. Let us recall also that in 1947, the country was divided in two for religious reasons: the western half, reserved for Hindus, was renamed Bengal and given to India, while the eastern half, reserved for Muslims, became a province of Pakistan. After a war of independence, this eastern part of Pakistan became Bangladesh in 1971.

The border is without a doubt one of the most complex in the modern world, with 92 Bangladeshi enclaves on the Indian side and 106 Indian enclaves on the Bangladeshi side, with residents living in extreme poverty and lacking any civil identity. Clandestine migration between the two countries is growing, specialized in human trafficking. Under the pretext of cracking down on uncontrolled immigration and fighting against Islamic terrorist infiltration, the Indian army constantly patrols more than 2500 kilometers of barbed-wire barriers. Bangladeshi newspapers provide daily reports of the violent retaliations against fugitives.¹⁰ In *Desh*, Akram Khan plays the role of a Bangladeshi who was apprehended as he attempted to smuggle himself across the border, by hiding in an airplane engine. The army cut off the soles of his feet. Yet despite this amputation, Khan dances, lying on the ground, giving the articulations of his ankles and wrists an extraordinary fluidity and lightness.

⁹ Official site of the IOM, 11 November, 2009 article by Rabab Fatima and Adnan Amed Sirajee

¹⁰ Brad Adams, « India's shoot-to-kill policy on the Bangladesh border », *The Guardian*, 23 January 2011.

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Akram Khan plays a Bangladeshi amputated by the army (Desh © Richard Haughton)

Desh gives the audience just one image of the fixed border, a border whose symbolic territorial limits are those of the family unit. The paternal authority figure is represented onstage by a giant chair. At the beginning of the scene, Khan is seated nearby on a small child's chair, also oriented toward the audience.



Akram Khan alternates between the role of the child and the role of his father as he climbs upon the giant chair (Desh © Richard Haughton)

The dancer uses himself to transform the usage of the giant chair. He builds a house between its four immense legs, but a transparent screen serving as a wall allows the audience to see only the menacing

shadows of human bodies, as a dispute scene plays out. The dancer, like every Kathak actor-dancer, plays all the roles and showcases the gestural language (*mudrâ*) belonging to this Indian art. We can see a biographical allusion to the conflict between the child dancer and his father, in the coded language of this theatre which is always played out on the other side of the wall in India, but also in the houses cut in two when the wall was constructed, shattering the previous unity within families and entire villages.¹¹



A dispute scene evoked in shadow play, with Akram Khan's movements inspired by Kathak dance (Desh © Richard Haughton)

The improvised house pivots onstage, and via lamplight, the audience discovers the immense back of the chair: an old wall covered with writing, graffiti, and old film posters, partly torn.¹²

¹¹ Fazlur Rehman tells the story of his own village divided by this new wall in the *Times*, 5 February 2009.

¹² Among the graffiti, we can make out the Bengali phrases « Ganatantra Mukti Paak » (« Let Democracy be Freed ») and « Aamar Ananda » (« My Happiness »).



Akram Khan reveals the back of the giant chair (Desh © Richard Haughton)

At the same time, perhaps Khan is revealing the hidden base of Indian power, without face or body, power that claims to assure the security and stability of Bangladesh. He reminds us too of the priority given in Hindu art to the frontality of bodies, including the bodies of deities in temples where the back is inaccessible, as well as the frontality of Kathak actor-dancers who place their transcendent, divine gaze in the audience. In the temples, they danced before the gods. Consequently, the dancers cannot shift the orientation of their backs onstage. However, in *Desh*, Akram Khan transgresses this rule of Kathak dance, and in the same way, he challenges the concept of a body - be it a screen/wall/border - standing between a visible, sensorial side and an invisible, forbidden « beyond. » He effectively erases the image of this geopolitical wall and replaces it with walls of water symbolizing the diluvian rains of the monsoon, which Tim Yip (set designer of the Chinese film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000)) has represented with a multitude of sumptuous silken panels in shades of blue, unfolded in slow-motion from high above the stage. Hanging by his feet, Khan descends at the same time as the fabrics, his suspended body whirling in circles.



Akram Khan whirls within the dramatic « walls of water » scenic treatment

Ever so gradually, this curtain of rain gently deposits his body upon the ground. Is he dead or alive? Newborn or corpse? Such uncertainty characterizes these torrents of water, forces that are certainly regenerating and fertile but also destructive. In doing this, Khan upends the spinning movement characteristic of the Kathak dance technique in Hindu India. Since the sixteenth century, Kathak dance has exerted a strong Muslim influence in the heart of the Mughals, and shows similarities with the art of the whirling dervishes founded in eighth-century Turkey by Sufi master Djalâl ad-Dîn Rûmî, as Khan explored in his 2011 piece, *Vertical Road*. Just the opposite of this cultural and spiritual codification that glorifies the intoxication of the soul liberating itself from the earth's gravity, the dancer's body, head down, caught up in the spirals of the rain setting, seems to again fall upon the stage, subject to his earthly weight.

The power of earthly water thus allows the artist to show, via this vertical sky/land movement, a form of transgression of the cultural and geopolitical borders between India and Bangladesh. The monsoon waters affect both countries similarly, impacting the Muslims as well as for the Hindus; as such, these waters are a sign of divine grace (called *Barakah* in Arabic or *Ganga* in Hinduism). Without being subjected to a unique expression of fluid movements, the dancer maintains the

sense of gravity, alternating convolutions and angular gestures, in order to resist the invisible force that could reduce him to immobility. These fluctuating lines, shared by the aquatic scenery and the dancing body, thus displace a number of borders that were previously considered stable.

In his book *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha explains how the artist of the diaspora invents a revisionist time, « a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity. » For this, the artist manipulates codes and sensibilities from two sides of a cultural frontier to create a third space, which Akram Khan manifests by way of specific physical movements, a theme we will explore in the second section.

[To dwell 'in the beyond' is also]... to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither side. In that sense, then, the intervening space 'beyond,' becomes a space of intervention in the here and now. [...] The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such a does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living.¹³

2. Fragmentations and movements of human body parts connected to the history of Bangladeshi independence

The element of water plays the role of an unpredictable, universal and un-human cosmic force as Akram Khan creatively breaches the wall between India and Bangladesh. Next, Khan adds a world made up of parts of the body, a microcosm in which he is ceaselessly deconstructing and reconstructing boundaries. He thus creates invisible but significant connections between the map of the Indian

¹³ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. Routledge: London. 2002 p. 7.

subcontinent and the cartography of his physical movements. We will examine two examples of this phenomenon: first his head, and then his feet.

An initial remark: Khan considers that language imprisons the parts of his body, and that the alliance between an actor's physical and verbal performance made between « barrier » words that liberates the individual from these geopolitical limits. The fragmentation of the body is rightly due to the multiple personalities that the society imposes on him by passing from one language to another. In alternating dance and theatre - without ever juxtaposing or necessarily connecting the historical telling of his nation's independence with his body's rhythmic deployment - the artist reveals to the public the intimate cartography of these politically oppressive lines.

His bald head, too, plays the role of a major character. With a few facial features drawn on it, Khan uses the top of his head to retell a story that his father had told him, that of an old cook brutalized in his Bangladeshi village by Pakistani soldiers. To do this, he brings his chin to his chest and holds his forehead in his hands, showing the audience the top of his head, like a mask or puppet separated from his own body.



Akram Khan performing, his bald head transformed into a mask (© Richard Haughton)

The audience has the strong impression of watching a decapitated man, similar to a scene from Khan's 2011 show *Gnosis*, where he performed a war scene from the celebrated Indian epic *the Mahâbhârata* with his head bent, though in that case it was bent behind him. In *Desh*, despite this difficult posture stretching his neck to the extreme, the dancer speaks to the audience, selling them food, but the words seem dehumanized, remaining outside the dancer's body. The head no longer reaches toward the sky, the man onstage has abandoned his vertical orientation, and the spoken word has lost its creative power. Indeed, its social function is packaged in an expression that should be perfect in a foreign language: the character exclaims, « How difficult it is to be a man ! » and then excuses himself for having such a terrible accent in English. This bodily posture, challenging anatomical norms and boundaries, plays the role of the cook and much more. Via changing accents, the performance reveals distances: that of misunderstanding and marginalization in a language, as well as the gap between the symbolic resemblance (that of a decapitated body) and the semiotic difference (as speaking « poorly » creates barriers by generating multiple interpretations according to the social backgrounds of the listener and of the speaker.) Homi K. Bhabha insists on this « foreignness of languages » as defined by Walter Benjamin, a « nucleus of the untranslatable that goes beyond the transferal of subject matter between cultural texts or practices »:

In the restless drive for cultural translation, hybrid sites of meaning open up a cleavage in the language of culture which suggests that the similitude of the symbol as it plays across cultural sites must not obscure the fact that repetition of the sign is, in each specific social practice, both different and differential. [...] Too often it is the slippage of signification that is celebrated in the articulation of difference, at the expense of this disturbing process of the overpowering of content by the signifier.¹⁴

This balance is particularly well-struck in *Desh*, as the soloist dancer successively embodies several characters, created in collaboration

¹⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, op cit. p. 163-164.

with poet and writer Karthika Nair: those of the land, the river, the fabric, the language and Akram Khan. This choice of terms shows how his own identity cannot be reduced to an intercultural mixture, but that it is at once the result of a complex intersection of natural elements with universalizing force and the little stories of Akram Khan's father tied to a specific cultural conditioning, since a non-Bangladeshi spectator is unable to situate himself in the history of that country.

Karthika Nair knows the northeast border of Bangladesh well, as her father worked there as an officer in the Indian army. Akram Khan asked that she write the script for *Desh*. In order to create the characters and their stories, Khan and Nair decided to spend the year traveling within the country. The native tongue became of paramount importance when Khan explained his mother's outrage in front of her young nephew, member of the third generation of « English » Bangladeshis, a Bangladeshi who will no longer learn Bengali. She reminded him that his brothers had died during the 1971 war in order to preserve cultural and linguistic autonomy for their country. This question thus came into the forefront during the development process for *Desh*. « So the story becomes a sort of a password into a magical kingdom which the nephew (the niece in *Desh*) can access only by learning Bangla. »¹⁵ The idea of the show as a « password » is interesting: the passage, the border between the real world and the magical world is the Bengali language as it is learned in childhood. Furthermore, the back of the giant chair representing the wall encircling the country must also be deciphered as it is covered with words in this language. The artistic treatment of these languages effectively moves boundaries: *Desh* superimposes several symbolic walls upon the same line, enabling us to pass freely from one to another, between child and adult, the imaginary and the real, English and Bengali. The production of *Desh* opens with a soundtrack of deafening noise from a packed street in Dhaka, since the child Akram has begun to listen to the history of Bangladesh before living it.

¹⁵ Karthika Nair, in *The Hindu*, 19 April 2012.

This brings us to the second example of the frontier between the parts of the dancer's body and the geopolitical world: the movements of his feet in a scene in front of the jam-packed street in Dhaka. The dancer tells us of the assassination of Nur Hossein, an emblematic figure in the Bangladeshi independence movement. The soundtrack of the performance blends noises of the city and its crowds with the sounds of striking metal objects. Documentation of the creative process published on the *Desh* website provides explanation of the sequences about the worker communities that Khan encountered in Bangladesh, and the difficulty of their physical efforts given the resistance of the materials (a rusty ship's cabin, stone floors to dig up, mud to move by hand.) The rapidly moving projection of white lines on the stage resembles a crosswalk, suggesting that the dancer navigates these urban spaces in a frenetic rhythm where each movement – dodge, jump, run, rapid and uninterrupted action – is in order to avoid a collision, an accident, a clash.



Akram Khan. Frenetic rhythm in urban spaces (Desh © Richard Haughton)

The body moves instinctively in order to survive. With each step, it avoids invisible walls; it invents a passage or opening; it avoids

getting trapped, abandoned, or erased. For an instant, the body freezes, petrified when the noises sound too much like a round of machine gun fire. Although this danced scene is a performance of both a murder and a daily Bangladeshi street at rush hour, the foreign spectator is linked to what connects all these city-dwellers: the idea that to live is to make one's own passages, to sneak through the interstices, to avoid being erased or obliterated at any moment. Akram Khan spins round and round himself with the elegance and virtuosity of a Kathak dancer, causing us to sometimes forget the tragedy of this story.

The interplay between borders and movements of dancing bodies creates physical, symbolic acts that are understood by all: whirling, climbing, turning over, fighting one's way through. But the chair is not merely the sign of dominant power, nor is it a simple metaphor of the wall between the two countries. The ever-present water, whether surging from the sky or simply a tranquil blue, is more than a symbol of life or death. From one scenic concept to another, the dancer reveals a multitude of different cultural meanings, sometimes untranslatable. The « wall-chair » can be turned upside down, broken by water, transformed into a child's toy or reveal the broken intimacy of a home. Akram Khan's dance does not suggest the assimilation or absorption of cultural differences in a body that becomes a homogeneous whole, nor does it propose the opposite, their accumulation or visible coexistence within a successively more complex vocabulary of foreign movements. Beyond this polarity lies a theatrical space in which movement is no longer to be interpreted with clear signs freely reconstructing pre-defined materials (sounds, words, materials), but rather via a variety of « forms in transformation, » which, according to François Laplantine, reveal these foreign spaces as present in every culture or mother tongue:

These forms in transformation do not decode themselves. They interpret or present themselves in the sense of translation, but also in theatre and music. Let us take the example of Handel's *Messiah*. It is rarely performed in its original, uncut version; since 1950, it has given way to several « arrangements » that we could also consider *derangements* (trouble). Yet, among these arrangements, there was one called

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the « Mozart version »: Handel's *Messiah* had become a work by Mozart, but we continue nevertheless to perceive Handel through Mozart¹⁶.

Thus, although *Desh* incorporates walls of incomprehension between India, Bangladesh and Europe, these borders are forged by the human artistic imagination that moves, transposes, reinterprets and enriches culturally codified languages like those of Kathak while symbolically feeding upon this flood-prone land, shaped by waters both visible and invisible, material and immaterial.



Imagined voyage of Akram Khan as a child within the Sundarbans forest (© Richard Haughton)

The tension between local and global is an ecological one, but the artist intensifies the contradiction between man's technical mastery over the world on one hand, and the unpredictable, extreme power of celestial and terrestrial water on the other. In relation to a history of the world already written by a dominant people, Akram Khan opposes the vision of a child, and the child's dream of immersing the wall: the moving background of blue that ends the performance is sufficiently suggestive to break the boundaries between the celestial world and the submarine universe.

¹⁶ François Laplantine, Preface to *Le métissage interculturel*, *op. cit.*, p. 11. Quotation translated by the author of this article.

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Art would thus have the function of aligning the principle of fluidity that defines the spirit and the power of water as an absolute condition of all human creativity. The force of this alliance enables the artist to refuse to submit to the geopolitical signs of imprisonment and planned disappearance of his people, a people who are caught in a vise more terrifying each day: between the impassible Indian barbed-wire wall and the wall of water from an inevitable deadly tsunami.



Akram Khan. Kathak-inspired movements set against the moving background of blue (Desh © Richard Haughton)

Traduit du français par Jennifer Post Tyler