

THE CLAY CONNECTION in association with Supple Productions presents

Lives of Clay

Conceived and performed by Vidya Thirunarayan
directed by Tim Supple



**A vivid, visceral and vital event of theatre,
Bharatanatyam dance, music and clay. Rooted
in Southern India; universal in appeal.**

*memorable, mesmerising, and magical...
vibrant and poetic...
Moving and powerful...*

Audience Comments, Salisbury International Arts Festival, May '22

Three women and one potter's wheel



Prajapati, Sanskrit for potter, represents both the supreme creator and the lowest of the low: this is the starting point for a unique event of engrossing theatre, thrilling dance and expressive live ceramics about the myth, exploitation and creative force of women.

Lives of Clay is the story of three women:

Parvati, the goddess of divine strength and power, is abandoned by her new husband Shiva. Desperate for a child she takes the dirt and sweat of her body and fashions Ganesh from the earth.

Meena works alongside hundreds of thousands of others in the clay and construction industry in India today that exploit India's poorest women, whose labours echo the blood and sweat of women and children buried in the soil of Western financial power.

Vidya Thirunarayan, Bharatanatyam dancer and potter tells us their stories through the expressive art that has defined her own.

Featuring exceptional dance, throwing pots at the wheel, startling new text and original sound ***Lives of Clay*** is a vivid, visceral and vital experience that spins together stories of ancient myth, harsh reality, and intimate truth. Performed on a spectacular set with the audience on three sides, whilst not a children's show it is accessible for all ages. The performance will be immediately accessible to audiences who typically attend theatre, dance, contemporary performance, installation and visual arts events. It will also be enjoyed by ceramicists and craft makers.

Engagement Activities. Performances can be accompanied by lecture demonstrations, post-show discussions, participatory workshops and residencies. Participatory activity will offer insights into the multi-disciplinary approach that is at the heart of the creation of ***Lives of Clay*** and can be tailored for community groups, professional artist/crafts groups, schools, FE and HE institutions. Longer residencies can be designed to include input from other members of the creative team and can result in the making of a curtain raiser piece. Touch tours available on request.

Watch our trailer video [HERE](#) Full length film available on request.

Creative Team

Lives of Clay builds on Vidya's 20-year track record of performing at the highest level both in the UK and overseas. As a potter, Vidya's aesthetics, approach and creativity with clay are informed by the dancer in her. These two disciplines are brought together as **The Clay Connection**.

Biographies

Vidya Thirunayan has over 25 years of experience as a dance artist and ceramicist. From this core she has reached out to the cultural sector in diverse roles such as founder, choreographer, performer, tutor, board member, entrepreneur, and advisor. She was the founder, co-artistic director of Sankalpam dance company, that toured over a dozen productions nationally and internationally including festivals such as Dance Umbrella and Spring Loaded in Europe. Sankalpam was an RFO(NPO) of Arts Council England during her leadership. www.vidyathirunayan.com

Tim Supple, director

Former director of London's Young Vic Theatre, Tim has directed, adapted, researched and taught theatre across the world in a wide range of languages - including in Europe, India, North Africa and the near East, Iran, Turkey, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Russia and the post-Soviet States, and North and South America.

In the UK he has worked regularly at the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and in London's West End. For Dash Arts, he created the celebrated multi-lingual Indian production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the six-hour adaptation of *The One Thousand and One Nights*, with artists from the Arabic-speaking world (Edinburgh International Festival 2011). Other creations include *Freedom on the Tyne*, an epic city-wide work of mass collaboration performed on Newcastle-Gateshead's iconic Tyne Bridge and *The Tempest* in Mandarin, for Beijing's National Centre for Performing Arts. He is currently directing Schiller's *Dimitry* for the new Marylebone Theatre. www.suppleproductions.com

Vayu Naidu, Writer

A distinguished novelist, teacher, storyteller and academic, Vayu is Royal Literary Fund Fellow at History, RHUL, and Honorary Research Associate in SOAS Centre for Circulation of Language and Literatures and Post-Colonial Studies which inspired *The Shakespeare Girl* awaiting publication. She has written several drama broadcasts for BBC4, stage plays and for Contemporary music which have toured internationally. Her novel, *The Sari of Surya Vilas* (Speaking Tiger, Affirm Press: 2017) on the freedom struggle, was featured on ABC's (Australia book of the week); *Sita's Ascent* (Penguin: 2013) was nominated for the Commonwealth Book Award. www.vayunaidu.com

Debbie Fionn Barr, director of choreography

Derry girl, Doctor, Dance and movement practitioner.

Debbie collaborates with diverse communities, working across disciplines to animate the real and imagined through the body. Commissions and collaborations include: The Queens Gurkha Regiment, The Grange Festival, C-Scape dance company, ReRooted Dance Collective, Mathmos lighting company, Oxfordshire Touring Theatre Company, Sankalpam, The Natya Project, Sixth Sense Theatre

company and Drishti Dance. Artist collaborations have included award winning filmmaker, Joe Tunmer, director, Tim Supple, performers, Vidya Thirunarayan, Niki McCretton and f.a. b. - The Detonators, award winning writers, John Foster and Aoife Inman. Debbie was awarded a doctorate from Coventry University in 2020, for her research on Sankalpam dance company and the Bharata Natyam form. Debbie collaborated on Vidya's first exploration into dance and clay, *Voices from the Kiln*, in 2020. <https://www.vidyathirunarayan.com/voices-from-the-kiln>

Julie Landau, designer

Julie Landau works across a range of disciplines from commercials and television through to work with clients such as Selfridges and Amazon. Her work always remains rooted in her training and passion for theatre. As a set designer she's worked extensively with Punchdrunk with one show, *Silverpoint* winning a *Breakthrough in Storytelling* award and another, *Lost & Found* being nominated for the *Best Production in English* at the Wales Theatre Awards. Other work includes *Lost Origin* for the Almeida, *Somnai* an immersive show combining real world sets with VR technology and shows for Les Enfants Terribles and at The Saatchi Gallery.

www.juliebelindalandaudesign.co.uk

Barry Ganberg, composer

Head of Music at Ramberg, Barry has a long association with composing for dance and theatre including London Contemporary Dance Theatre, Scottish Dance Theatre, Ballet de San Marcos and Moving Visions, for whom he was Music Director for 20 years. Highlights include the composition and performance of Robert Cohan's iconic choreography *Class* (2014), the vocal translation, realization, teaching and coaching of Christopher Bruce's *Some Sort of Island Dance* (2015). He composited and performed for the award-winning documentary film *The Gospel of Ross McKim* (Raindance, Hollywood and Nice Film Festivals). He was the Choreographic Production Manager for Marc Almond's *Embers* Official Video released December (2017). He was Composer, Musical Director and Performer for *The Tempest* in Beijing, directed by Tim Supple.

Sound Design by Alan Burgess

Tour and Stage Manager Anna Weatherston

Producer Lisa Wolfe

Lives of Clay (2022) is supported by Without Walls, commissioned by Brighton Festival, Certain Blacks and 101 Outdoor Arts, with additional support from Arts Asia and funding from Arts Council England. Supported by and produced at 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space. With thanks to University of Chichester, Rudolf Steiner House and Farnham Maltings.

2022 tour dates:

Brighton Festival (14 & 15 May)
Norfolk and Norwich Festival (21 & 22 May)
Salisbury Festival (29 May)
Timber Festival (1 July)
Winchester Hat Fair (3 July)
Southampton Mela (16 July)
Ensemble Festival London (23 July)
Kensington and Chelsea Festival (24 July)
Stockton on Tees (5, 6 August)
Shaw House, Newbury (18 September)

Touring Information



Key Points

Running Time: 45 mins (no interval) max 2 performances in one day

Audience capacity: c200 depending on site

Crew: 1 x performer, 3 x crew on road

Site requirements: minimum performance 7m x 7m space. Hard ground or flat, firm grass, or a low stage platform

Get-in: c8hrs, **Get-Out:** c4hrs; 2 x crew to be available, please note we are working to reduce these requirements

Essential needs: access to nearby water and power supply, gazebo for control position, dressing room or gazebo with sides, sandbags, access for van parking close to site

Full production pack available on request. Further images can be seen [here](#)

Lives of Clay is available for touring Spring-Autumn 2023 at outdoor festivals and events, or for studio theatres, galleries or other spaces

UK Performance fee: £3,000 plus travel, accommodation and per diems (or catering) for four people based on a maximum of two performances in one day. Negotiable for longer runs or workshop/residency package.

Read more at:

<https://www.vidyathirunarayan.com/livesofclay>

<https://www.facebook.com/vidya.thirunarayan>

@vidyathiru

#LivesOfClay

For booking enquiries or any further information please contact producer **Lisa Wolfe**

wolfework2@gmail.com tel +44 (0) 7761 453 584

Photographs by Peter Chrisp, Zoe Manders, Anna Weatherston and Kormbat. Video by Zoe Manders.