

Visual feast in the woods this autumn

Visual theatre company, Vision Mechanics, is taking its new production, Embrace, to a range of woodland areas around Scotland this autumn. As well as being staged in ambitious outdoor settings, the piece features an eclectic blend of artforms, including aerial performance, traditional Indian dance, sound installations and shadow puppetry.

Embrace, which looks at how we, as individuals, can effect change, was inspired by women in India who have played a vital role in the campaign to protect and preserve the environment. Their struggle dates back to 1730 when the Maharaja of Jodhpur wanted to build a new palace in Rajasthan, in India's Himalayan foothills. Original "tree hugger" Amrita Devi gave her life trying to protect the trees near her village from being felled by the Maharaja's men.

Later, in the 1970s, women in India formed the Chipko Movement ("chipko" meaning "embrace"). The Movement was set up as an act of defiance against the state government which had given a commercial company permission to log trees. Women in the villages resisted, embracing trees to prevent their felling, in order to safeguard their lifestyles which were dependent on the forests. The Chipko Movement went on to play a significant role in influencing the government's forestry policy.

"With Embrace I was inspired by the environmental movements in India, but I also wanted to look at current issues and how we voice our dissatisfaction." says Director, Kim Bergsagel. During the production's development, Vision Mechanics invited local Scottish groups to contribute their thoughts and tell how they have taken action on issues affecting them.

"I want the production to be positive" adds Kim "and for it to

encourage those who see it to feel that as individuals, they can take action to make changes.”

Embrace opens at Calgary Arts in Nature, Isle of Mull on 19 & 20 September, starting off the Scottish tour and will come to Edinburgh with performances in Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on Wed 8, Thur 9, Fri 10, Sat 11 Oct at 7.30pm, 8pm, 8.45pm For more information go to <http://www.visionmechanics.org>

Submitted by [Anne Fleming](#)

