

press quotes
on
Mothers of Time

"...And two inscrutable witches took herbs from a caldron in an excerpt from Marilyn Arsem's "Mothers of Time," rubbed them in their hands and gave them to audience members standing around, whispering messages about herbs and life processes to each recipient. An elderly woman in a paper sunhat more fanciful than any of the props or costumes leaned close to one of the witches, eager, it seemed, to learn her future. The event ended on a satisfyingly mysterious note as the women, dressed in long, coarsely woven black dresses, brushed leaves and cobwebs of bright threads out into the mint-scented air and eventually disappeared."

- Jennifer Dunning, **The New York Times**

"The text of both pieces ["Stirring, Spinning, Sweeping" and "Mothers of Time"] trace similar arcs that move from mundane, domestic actions to uncanny, mythic images. Arsem uses text transformatively, sliding it from the level of ordinary conversation to incantation and augury and ultimately to pure, silent image. Also, Arsem is committed in this work to converting real, durational time to mythic time, to letting the images she creates take shape very slowly and incrementally, inducing altered states of consciousness in both the performers and the audience, who must participate in shaping their experience of the work. The performers in the Spinning Tales series function for their audiences as shamans, ecstatic role-players invoking, as Richard Schechner explains, "communication and transformation among several kinds of experience including the reintegration of the past and present, conscious and unconscious, dead and living, dream and waking, individual and group." Temporally and textually, Arsem's pieces blur the boundaries between life, art, ritual, and myth."

- John D. Anderson, **Text and Performance Quarterly**