



diary

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EXHIBITIONS

A Colour Palette

Aurora Borealis: Paintings by Sandeep Jigdung

May 14–22

Delhi was recently witness to a fascinating display of nature. The Aurora Borealis—a natural light display in the sky, particularly in the high regions, caused by the collision of energetic charged particles with atoms in high altitude atmosphere. But we were lucky to catch it here in Delhi, at the India International Centre. Only, instead of energetic charged particles with atoms, we saw an energetically charged colour palette with an unbelievable composition of foliage and nature.

Obviously inspired by the environment Sandeep Jigdung



grew up in... surrounded by the lush tropical forests of Assam... it is almost surreal to a first time viewer. Monkeys peering from behind banana trees, parakeets cooing to each other, magenta flowers and orange fruits and many other exotic delights of nature, in abundance! So fresh as if just washed with rain which you can smell... You can hear the sounds of the animals and birds, you can hear the rustle of the leaves, you can hear the crunching of the roots.

The colours are translucent almost neon in quality...

each canvas is infused with so much detail that the viewer could actually get lost in the wonder of the forests and nature that Sandeep has painted and never want to get out.

■ POONAM BEVLI SAHI

Brazil and India

Anattā: Paintings by Renata Egreja from Brazil

Collaboration: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil
June 15–21

The title of the exhibition, *Anattā*, is a reference to the Buddhist concept of non-existence of the self', explains the artist, Renata Egreja. 'According to Buddhism, all components or conditioned things are impermanent and in a constant state of flux and change. The paintings I did during the period I spent in India are part of my process of transformation. The works you see are not the beginning nor the end of anything. They are reports of a daily change process.'

What I found interesting about this show was that all the works looked like pages from a carefully kept daily diary. There were four canvases representing, perhaps,

scenes from the corner of a verandah looking out into a small garden in a profusion of colours, and a series of smaller works on paper, light jottings with a brush of the details of leaves, flowers and drops of water. Studying them closely, the artist had bunched them playfully into childlike patterns with interchanging graphic forms, recognising at some level the similarity of hues in Indian and Brazilian palettes as well as shapes in nature. The body of work however seemed too sketchy and brief for the large beautiful Art Gallery and one hopes to see a longer residency period or more artists in such a project to make efficient use of fast depleting gallery space in Central Delhi.



■ SABA HASAN

Iron Age Burial Traditions

TALK: Your Sites, Our Homes – Iron Age Burial Sites Around Chennai

Speaker: Dr. Satyabhama Badreenath

Collaboration: National Monument

Authority of India, June 18

Satyabhama's illustrated talk gave the background leading to the development from the palaeolithic or the stone age to the megalithic culture which is marked by social and economic changes consequent upon a settled lifestyle and organised agriculture in peninsular India, particularly in Tamil Nadu.

The chronological horizon of the megaliths in Tamil Nadu is between the 5th century BCE and the 3rd century CE. Notwithstanding the fact that megaliths are found in large numbers, in the absence of habitation sites, burials or the funerary remains are the only source for the study of social and cultural patterns.

Referring to the intensive survey of megalithic remains carried out by V.D. Krishnaswami of the Archaeological Survey of India in the forties of the last century in

what was then the composite Chingleput district where he was able to identify more than 350 sites, Satyabhama said that the megalithic sites are located on the slopes of rocky outcrops and in association with large irrigation tanks. Megalithic types are also spatially diverse.

Satyabhama also spoke about her excavations at Siruthavur, located about 45 km to the south of Chennai and close to Mahabalipuram. Excavation was taken up to understand spatial patterns and to date the remains. During the course of this work, she excavated eight burials and noticed different interment types such as urn burials, pits with sarcophagus, dolmenoid cist, cairn burials, etc. According to her, dolmens are the earliest while cists are the latest.

Satyabhama referred to the local tradition wherein the megalithic remains are called variously as *Pandava-Kuzhi* or pits of the Pandavas, *Mandhar-Kuzhi* or pits of the dead, monkey's workshop, buried pots of the aged people, etc. Sangam literature mentions burial customs and the *Manimekalai* enumerates different modes of disposal of the dead. No less important is the problem of maintaining and preserving these large sites.

■ **B.M. PANDE**

A Tibetan Perspective

TALK: Diaspora – A Tibetan Perspective.

60 Seconds Ideas to Improve the Tibetan Diaspora

Speaker: Thupten Kelsang Dakpa

Moderator: Thupten Tsewang

Collaboration: Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; and Empowering the Vision, May 12

In his talk, Thupten Kelsang Dakpa said that the narratives about Tibet revolve around the three dimensions of political, spiritual and cultural identity. However, the notions of the past often tend to become unidimensional in the diaspora and Tibetans are no exception. Hence, there is a need to evolve more nuanced interpretations of the past.

Indeed, Tibet itself is not monolithic and homogeneous. It is divided into three regions, namely *Amdo*, *Kham* and *U-tsang*, and each has its own cultural distinctiveness. Religion-wise too, there are four main traditions of Buddhism that are practised in Tibet:

Nyingma, *Kagyu*, *Sakya* and *Gelug*. These diversities often tend to get obliterated in common perception. Thus, what is required is a more dynamic understanding of Tibetan identity. He also emphasised that the onus for preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Tibetans and to take it forward lies with the young Tibetans.

The talk was followed by a stimulating discussion on issues such as the marginalised Tibetan Art forms, the true essence of what constitutes Tibetanness, the generation gap between the first generation Tibetan refugees and Generation X, the creation of an inclusive global network of Tibetans in diaspora, and the role of the internet and social media in forging these networks.

Having left behind the struggles and hardships of the previous generation, clearly young Tibetans have embarked on a self-reflexive and confident journey to move beyond despair and anguish to a realm of hope and possibility. They have taken upon themselves the mantle to create the right blend of past and present, in all its dynamism, and also to make their voices heard on the world stage.

■ **LAKSHMI BHATIA**

Doctors without Borders

TALK: The Changing Dynamics of International Action – Challenges in India and in the South Asia Region

Speaker: Dr. Unni Karunakara

Collaboration: Medecins Sans Frontieres or Doctors without Borders, India, May 10

Mr. Martin Sloot, General Director of the Medicine Sans Frontieres (India Office) expressed the hope that this debate would lead to more such public events, highlighting the challenges faced by humanitarian organisations working in different fields, and how they address these. The keynote speaker, Dr. Karunakara was then invited to deliver his address.

He began by explaining that humanitarian action is about delivering assistance to people in crisis, based on need. Humanitarian response is based on the premise that everybody is equal and there is an imperative for those in precarious conditions to receive help. Humanitarianism is founded on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and

independence. Without these, it is impossible to provide need-based assistance.

There are emerging health actors on the world scene today—the World Bank, the Gates Foundation and others have contributed almost eight billion dollars in 2011 alone. The mobilisation of resources has brought results. There has been a 41 per cent decline in child mortality over 20 years; 33 per cent decline in mortality from malaria in Africa since 2000; nearly eight million HIV/AIDS affected people have accessed life saving anti-retroviral treatment in recent years.

Some of the challenges to humanitarian medical action are: Tuberculosis and Drug Resistant (DR) TB is a humanitarian emergency and India bears the highest burden of TB in the world; sleeping sickness, Kalazar, are examples of parasitic diseases for which cost of treatment is high; basic vaccines are not adequately accessible; lack of acceptability of activities of organisations and lack of security of international staff in crisis situations; and inadequate preparedness of the community for disasters.

■ ANURADHA BANERJI

Bhubaneshwar's Heritage

TALK: From the Shadow of a Capital City to a Cultural Capital – Rediscovering Old Bhubaneshwar

Speaker: Dr. Sanghamitra Basu

Collaboration: National Monument Authority of India, May 21

In this illustrated talk, the speaker focused on the rich heritage of Bhubaneshwar, and its significance for the future of the city. Bhubaneshwar has a history going back more than two millennia. Its earliest history has strong connections to Buddhism—nearby Dhauligiri being the site where the battle of Kalinga was fought, which led Emperor Ashoka to convert to Buddhism. In later centuries, Bhubaneshwar became a centre of important Shiva temples, most of which are living places of worship.

After independence, Bhubaneshwar became the state capital of Odisha, and a new town designed by the planner, Otto Koenigsberger, came up. Meanwhile, over the decades, the old town has developed more or less along informal and unregulated lines.

The challenge today is to preserve the important relics of the cultural past, while providing for the needs of the present. The latter include spiritual needs—associated with current-day worship at these temples; as well as developmental needs—to provide housing, recreation, etc. for the growing population of the city.

Creative strategies have been employed to formulate a plan for the integration of conservation with development. While traffic plans seek to smooth vehicular congestion, they also try to link up with heritage circuits and trails to ease the movement of pilgrims and tourists to the important heritage sites of the city. The plan lays special emphasis on creating a cultural hub in eastern Bhubaneshwar. It also takes into account the rich intangible heritage which extends beyond the temples—for instance the several *mutts* which have a long history as spiritual centres. The need to preserve green spaces such as Nandan Kanan zoological park, and water bodies such as Bindu Sagar lake, has also been kept in mind.

■ SWAPNA LIDDLE

Theory of Evolution

TALK: Galapagos Islands

Speaker: Sudha Mahalingam

Chair: Ravi Singh

June 6

This illustrated lecture by Sudha Mahalingam, travel writer, photographer and energy economist reconciled Charles Darwin's *The Theory of Evolution*, published almost 150 years ago, and her recent visit to the unique Galapagos Islands which led to the start of Darwin's *The Theory of Evolution*.

Galapagos in Spanish literally means 'tortoise'. The Galapagos were first discovered by accident in 1535, when Tomas de Berlanga, Bishop of Panama, drifted off course from Panama to Peru. The Bishop reported his discovery to King Charles V of Spain and described in his report the giant Galapago (tortoise), from which the islands received their name. Ms. Mahalingam stressed the fact that the Galapagos

is one of the few places in the world without an indigenous population.

She enlightened the audience on Charles Darwin's keen observations and explained how the Galapagos Islands shaped Darwin's *The Theory of Evolution*. She said that Darwin, a British naturalist, embarked on his survey voyage on HMS Beagle and in 1835, first landed on the Galapagos Islands. Interestingly, Darwin was eternally sea-sick but still managed to spend five years on these islands. There he found a remarkable population of plants, birds and reptiles that had flourished in isolation from the mainland and had developed different characteristics in accordance with the demands of the environment. This led him to the conclusion that if something could adapt to its surroundings, over time it could develop into a completely different creature, leading to the evolution process.

Soon after his return to England in 1836, he derived the principle of 'natural selection' as a mechanism for the creation of new species; i.e. evolution.

■ **ONAM VAID GROVER**

History and Religion

LECTURE: Sahita – A Lecture Series on the Arts,

Cultures and Histories of India

Literature and the Writing of the Past – Revisiting Early Twentieth Century Kerala

Speaker: Professor Udaya Kumar

Chair: Dr. G. Arunima

Collaboration: Sahapedia, May 6

No general theory of literature can account for a particular society; so early twentieth century writing in Kerala requires an independent academic approach to grasp its specifics. Also, learning the general history of a region is only one of the ways to know its past.

Early twentieth century Kerala was marked by twin socio-cultural developments. One, the emergence of the print culture (courtesy founder editors such as Kandathil Varghese Mappila (*Malayala Manorama* in 1988) and K Ramakrishna Pillai (*Swadeshabhimani*, 1905) resulting in deepening political awareness. Two, the rise of community organisations (such as the *Sree Narayana Dhama Parapalana Yogam Nair Samajam*,

Sadhu Jana Paripalana Yogam and the Yogakshema Sabha).

If social reformer Narayana Guru (1856-1928) did not tag historicity to his argumentation, his disciple, Dr. P. Palpu (1863-1950), took forward the movement that preached 'one caste, one religion, one god' by drawing ideas from Buddhism.

Amidst these came a set of historical novels by C. V. Raman Pillai (1858-1922), who developed a fictional apparatus propped by distinct use of linguistic registers, character typologies, presentation modes and perceptual organisation.

C.V. consciously chose a bombastic writing that teems with unfamiliar words, besides outlandish prefixes, suffixes and usages. He used a two-pronged linguistic apparatus that deviated from Sansritised Malayalam and embraced local dialects.

All the three major novels of C.V. conclude with passages that read like some repetitive sacred ritual. Each work permits the reader to mourn for or pay homage to something lost irretrievably.

■ **T.K. SREEVALSAN**

The Major Schools of Indian Philosophy

TALK: *Advaita Vedanta*

Speaker: Swami Atmapriyananda

Collaboration: Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

June 13

This lecture was part of the initiative to revisit Indian philosophical traditions through the series, 'The Major Schools of Indian Philosophy'. Swami Atmapriyananda, Vice Chancellor of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, spoke on *Advaita Vedanta*.

Raising a basic question as to what is the relevance of Vedantic study, Swamiji said that Vedanta is not just a system of philosophy or a kind of intellectual gymnastics, nor is it a spiritual path which monks and ascetics practice in deep forests and caves, but is an enquiry into the highest truth of our existence and its reality. He pointed out that it is a compendium of apparently simple sounding questions, the answers to which are very profound and deal with our everyday experience.

Advaita Vedanta according to him, is a living and vibrant practical way of life which can be and should be practised by one and all and applied to in their daily lives.

Since one's own self is dearest to oneself, enquiry into its real nature and discovery about its truth is the most rewarding, liberating and delightful experience. One question that often confronts us is, Who am I? *Ko aham*. If one takes the Bhakti path in the enquiry of *Ko aham*, then one ends up as *na aham*, where the ego is totally vanquished. *Ko aham* on the other hand reaches *so aham* when it takes the *jnana* path. This, in one sense, explains the whole of Vedanta, added the speaker.

Walking on the path of Vedanta, one's thoughts are elevated, bringing in transformation in one's consciousness. *Advaita Vedanta* raises the awareness of humankind to the highest level of the Oneness of Existence and Divinity of all beings, not through philosophical reasoning or by metaphysical enquiry, but by opening up the unknown chambers in one's own heart, by revealing the Ultimate Truth about our own inner Self.

■ RAJI RAMANAN

Religion and Ecology

MEET THE AUTHOR: *Dharma and Ecology*

of Hindu Communities – Sustenance and Sustainability by Pankaj Jain

Surrey: Ashgate, 2011

Discussants: Professor Servchetan Katoch and Dr. Sudhirendar Sharma

Chair: Professor Bharat Gupt, June 26

The Dharma Academy of North America's (DANAM) award-winning book by Pankaj Jain is a major contribution to the influence of religious belief on the ecology and environment in India.

The author makes a detailed study of three different groups—the Bishnoi, Bhil of Rajasthan, and Swadhyaya Movement in Gujarat, to understand the way the religious activities and beliefs of some communities contribute to environmental protection without ever calling it that. It further takes into

account the number of rituals and myths that exist among different religious communities and how ecology and environment are respected. It also delves into the gravity of shrinking natural resources in India due to the developing economy and population explosion. The author has very sensitively explored the relationship between the tribal communities of India and their neighbourhood, and tried to evaluate them in light of the contemporary context.

Gene Anderson of the University of California has said that 'Pankaj Jain describes the spiritual movements in India, the Swadhyaya of Gujarat and Maharashtra and the Bishnoi of Rajasthan, that have environmentally friendly teachings....Over 300 Bishnoi women were martyred trying to protect trees in the 18th century. Dr. Jain has done serious studies of these two groups and reports insightfully and in detail on their lives and theologies. He provides an extremely important new account of groups whose religious beliefs need to be considered very seriously in today's environmentally-challenged world.'

Experimentation and Improvisation

PLAY: *Romeo, Juliet and 7 Clowns*

Director: Sukhmani Kohli

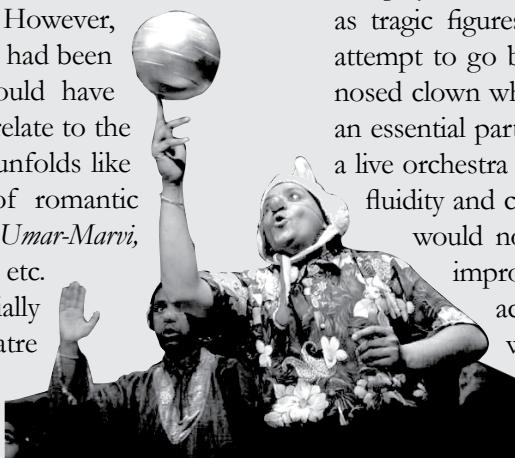
Presented by Purple Mangoes, Chandigarh

Collaboration: Centre for Education and

Voluntary Action (CEVA), May 29

The only thing this play had in common with Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' is the story line on which the spoof is based. However, the names of the characters had been retained, otherwise one would have been at a loss as to how to relate to the title of the play. The story unfolds like folk lore in the tradition of romantic tales such as those about *Umar-Marvi*, *Reshma-Shera*, *Sasi Punoh*, etc.

Purple Mangoes is essentially part of CEVA, a street theatre group, and it was therefore far more challenging for them to put up such an



abstract, but artistic, rendition of the theme. Yet, they managed to pull it off as a stand-alone theatre piece.

The director of the play is a woman, yet there were no women in the play. Even the role of Juliet was essayed by a male actor who, however, never made us feel the absence of a female cast. The choice of Bulleh Shah's Sufi poetry would ordinarily have been considered bizarre; yet again, they carried it off, perhaps because the group, which performs largely in rural Punjab, preferred drawing from its own roots.

Experimentation had been unleashed with aplomb in this play. The most significant being the use of clowns as tragic figures. According to Kohli, the play is an attempt to go beyond the traditional idea of the red-nosed clown who makes people laugh, and see him as an essential part of a human soul. There was jugglery, a live orchestra and choreographed blocking. So much fluidity and coordination of movements with music would not have been possible without intense improvisational routines. It seems that the actors went through a month-long workshop that helped them discover how to portray their 'own inner clown'.

■ MANOHAR KHUSHALANI

A Festival of Varnams

FESTIVAL: *Margam – A Festival of Varnams*

May 9–10

This festival was organised by Poornima Gururaj's Bangalore-based Kalasindhu Academy, cultural activist Usha R.K and the IIC. *Varnam*, the most important number in a traditional Bharatanatyam *Margam* format has seen many changes over the years, the duration often reduced to thirty minutes. *Varnams* offer insights into the structure of a dance number which alternates between pure dance and expressional dance, with enough scope for *sanchari bharas*, associate expressions that enhance the enjoyment of connoisseurs.

To revive the traditional *Varnams*, Kalasindhu included among their performers three up-coming young dancers, Deepthi, Swathi and Priyanka, who performed *Mohamana Varnam* in *Bhairavi raga* and *Rupak tala*, demonstrating the benefit of their master classes with Yamini Krishnamurthy.

Radha Sridhar's disciple Ashwariya Nityananda, chose Tanjore Quartet Ponnaiah Pillai's *Huseini Swarajati* in

Rupaka tala, doing justice to the theme, employing *sanchari bharas* in a telling manner, beseeching the King not to ignore her devotion for him. Her mobile visage expressed the emotions beautifully and she danced with joyous abandon.

Delhi-based Priya Venkataraman, currently studying under A. Lakshman and Brigha Bissel, performed Lalgudi Jayaraman's *Charukeshi Varnam* dwelling upon the *nayika* rapturously in love with Krishna. The interplay of love symbolically suggested through the song found felicitous expression in her *abhinaya*.

Trained by Guru Narmada, a disciple of Kitappa Pillai, Poornima Gururaj has also studied under Indira Rajan, whose inimitable *nattuvangam* is a challenge for any dancer. Selecting a rare *Varnam*, which unfolds the story of Lord Subrahmanyam admonishing Brahma for not revealing the secret OM mantra, and which he later teaches Lord Shiva, Poornima delineated the *bharas* appropriately. Indira Rajan with her fire-brand *nattuvangam* was in great form and regaled the audience with her recitation of *sollus*, mnemonic syllables. Kalasindhu's attempt to revive *Varnams* was laudable.

■ SUNIL KOTHARI

SUMMER FESTIVAL : JUNE 25-26

The focal setting of the IIC Summer Festival was its opening concert of classical music. The introductory vocal recital of Deborshee Bhattacharjee of the Sangeet Research Institute of Kolkata left listeners mesmerised. Choosing the raga *Multani* provided a melodic signature to the timing of the concert at dusk. Blessed with a vocal timbre with baritonal strengths belying his sprightly physique, he regaled audiences with a plethora of *taan* patterns incorporating the technique of *palta* within a format of *chhand*. Beginning on a steady note, stressing the core notes of the raga which were exonerated artistically, the artist infused microtones of 'ga' and 're', enhancing the raga's emotional flavour.

In the *thumri* number thereafter, 'Yaad piya ki aayi', a Patiala recall, this young performer displayed complete command over *thumri*'s grammar. The *bol baat* was

Musical Medley



not only intuitive and stylised but exemplified the intricacies of *Khamaj raga*, while steering clear of unnecessary repetitions.

The follow-through instrumental rendition by Pandit Ram Krishna on the clarinet and Priyank Krishna on the flute, displayed a restive and calming maturity. Though it lacked a resonating backdrop, sans *tanpura*, the complementary style of the two artists presented a mellifluousness of rendition. To this, the clarinet infused a rhythmic liveliness by Panditji's clipped playing style and a plethora of *tihais* providing the right catalyst. Their concluding *pahadi dhun* carried an alluring folkloric flair. Though its centre spread remained classical, the harmonising character of the playing brought the concert to a satisfying end.

■ SUBHRA MAZUMDAR

Revisited Varnam



It was a fine effort by the presently Chennai-based Bharatanatyam dancer Kiran Rajagopalan, on the second day of the two day music/dance festival, in the revisited *varnam* centrepiece. Set in the not very common *Nalinakanti Ragam*, this old composition by Seshadri with score by wife Meera Seshadri, as homage to Kapaleswara Shiva takes on a rare male perspective tone, built round the *Doota* or *sakha* (friend, in this case of Lord Shiva) addressing the imagined *Dootika* or *sakhi*, Parvati's companion. 'Why this indifference

and anger. Has your mistress forgotten how she as peahen unable to bear separation from the *Mayurapurivasa* (as peacock) looked for him everywhere?' Guru A.Lakshman's evocative choreography in the *charanam* half, extolling the Lord's greatness – showed Shiva subduing Ravana's arrogance and testing Arjuna before bestowing the boon of the *Pashupata astra*. The *tisra nadai teermanams* (Vijayaraghavan's creation), were rendered with immaculate lines, with convincing *abhinaya*, (bound to evolve in nuanced elaboration with more experience), showing an evolving dancer. The fleeting *nritta* flourishes ('*arudis*') needed more punch in rendition. Venkateswaran's excellent singing, Vasudevan's *nattuvangam*, V.Shamsunder's *mridangam* and a very promising young Raghavendra Prasad as violinist comprised the musical accompaniment.

Baisal Sarkar's Manipuri group was a damp squib after this. Inept dancers could not bring out the lyricism of Manipuri and if *Dasavatar* from *Geeta Govindam* was tame, the *lasya/tandava* contrast in *Prabandha Nritta* did not go beyond one dancer in dhoti and the other in female costume. *Ras Lila*, with inner skirt peeping below the ill-draped stiff skirt, performing *Abhir Khel* from *Vasant Ras*, did not help.

■ LEELA VENKATARAMAN

Faces of Arjuna

PERFORMANCE: *Texts and Textures – Navarasas in Mahabharata Through Songs and Stories*

Presented by V.R. Devika and Suma Sumashekharan

Collaboration: Aalaap, June 7

Conceived by Chennai's V.R. Devika, the performance blended her considerable ability as raconteur, with Carnatic raga singing, evoking different moods, woven around the epic hero Arjuna. Vocalist Suma Sumashekharan, with just a percussionist, Akshay Anantapadmanabhan, accompanying on *mridangam* and *khanjira*, more than substantiated the mood buildup. Arjuna as a *sringar* hero, much like Krishna, was evoked soulfully through an *Ashtapadi* in *Suddha Sarang*. Chivalrous Arjuna who even helped his inimical cousin Duryodhana escape the wrath of Chitrasena, was caught in raga *Shivashakti*, the Bharatiyar song 'Daga, Daga, Daga venradumo', suggesting a martial tone in the staccato rhythm and onomatopoeic sounds. Bestowed the *Pashupata Astra* after being tested by Shiva disguised as a hunter, Arjuna is amazed at the effulgence of the Lord's presence, the mood of wonder caught in solfa passages set to *Gambira Nattai* strung to a Jaya Chamarajendra lyric, 'Sri Jaalandaramaashayaam'.

How the Tyagaraja Kriti 'Bagaye naiyya nee mayalento' in Chandrajyoti evoked the mood of *Bibhatsam* (revulsion) was clear only to the participants. The lyric as sung hardly suggested disgust caused by Arjuna's malevolent act of making a canopy of arrows, enabling Agni to devour the whole forest of Kandva through his flames with all its creatures, the canopy preventing Indra's torrential rain from dousing the fire. The odour of writhing, burning flesh created utter distaste. Pure *alap* in *Shahana*, on the other hand, epitomised the compassionate Arjuna who saved Maya. The 'haya' episode, most regaling in Devika's narration of Duryodhana's ungainly escapades in the Pandava Palace, with onlookers Draupadi and Arjuna full of mocking mirth, had excellent musical interpretation in intervening snatches of *Shankarabharanam swara* passages. Krishna's epithets in *Ahir Bhairav* raga, fully underlined the fear assailing Arjuna as he gazed from his chariot at the Kaurava army comprising relatives, elders and playmates he had to fight against. Arjuna's smouldering rage at the mutilated remains of his son Abhimanyu, with a vow to kill Jayadratha by sunset, found the right tone in a *Revati tanam* sequence. And for Arjuna's *Sanyasam* embraced on hearing of Krishna's death and feeling the weakening signs of age, raga *Desh* was the right choice.

■ LEELA VENKATARAMAN

An Ascension to the Sky

PERFORMANCE: *Concert*

Presented by Aroha Choir

Conductor and Pianist: Pauline Warjri, June 27



Soft and gentle, peaceful and serene were the mellifluous and meticulously harmonised voices of the unassuming but immensely talented singers of the amazing Aroha Choir from Shillong.

Comprising of music lovers from Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur and Nagaland, the members of the Aroha Choir come from diverse backgrounds, denominations and faiths. Most of them are soloists too in their own right, performers of an eclectic variety of musical genres – western classical, opera, Gospel, jazz, Indian classical, traditional folk, popular and blues – and yet what binds them is a deep love for music and harmony. Through their art and talent, the choir has made a conscious decision to contribute to the building of a healthy society and have participated in several fund raisers for good and meaningful causes.

Ably directed by the calm and composed Pauline Warjri, the choir dedicated the entire concert to the victims of the Uttarakhand tragedy. They performed intricate and sensitive vocal arrangements of jazz standards such as 'Spain,' and 'Flight of the Bumblebee' to name a few. Among the highlights of the evening was their emotionally-charged rendition of 'For Every Mountain,' dedicated to Dr. Nelson Mandela with an ardent wish for his speedy recovery.

■ DEEPAK CASTELINO

Remembering Shamshad Begum

PERFORMANCE: *In Memory of Shamshad Begum*

Speaker: Pran Nevile

Concert: Simrat Chhabra, June 28

When Shamshad Begum died in April this year at the age of 94, she had already become part of the film folklore as a true phenomenon. She had not sung for nearly four decades but hardly a day passed when her songs were not broadcast from one or the other station of the All India Radio or were not being played at music lovers' houses. She may have receded from the limelight but her songs did not.

Film scholar Pran Nevile showed clips of Shamshad Begum's songs from films of the bygone era and spoke about her art as well as her phenomenal popularity. He recalled that much before she made a name in the world of Punjabi and Hindi films, Shamshad Begum had become a sensation after her song 'Ek baar phir kaho zara' was broadcast from the Lahore station of AIR, and HMV had to come

down from Calcutta to Lahore to record it on both sides of the disc.

Endowed with a strong and resonant voice, Simrat Chhabra was an appropriate choice to sing Shamshad Begum's songs. She opened her recital with the same *nagma* that Pran Nevile had spoken about and attributed her success to staying as close to the original as was possible. She went to sing seventeen more songs that included such immortal songs as 'Kahe koyal shor machaye re' (*Aag*, 1947), 'Chaman mein rab ke virana' (*Deedar*, 1951), 'Milte hi ankhe dil huad' (*Babul*, 1950), 'Saiyan dil mein aanaa re' (*Bahar*, 1951), 'Boojh mere kya naam re' and 'Kahin pe nigahen' (*CID*, 1956), 'Kabhi aar kabhi paar' (*Aar Paar*, 1954), 'Mere piya gaye Rangoon' (*Patanga*, 1949), 'Reshami salwar kurti jaali kaa' (duet with Asha Bhosle in *Naya Daur*, 1957), 'Teri mehfil mein kismat aazma kar' (duet with Lata Mangeshkar in *Mughal-e-Azam*) and 'Kajra Mohabbat wala' (*Kismat*, 1967). Simrat Chhabra showed her musical ability as she was able to faithfully reproduce the characteristic *harkats* (vocal effects) introduced in the songs by such diverse music directors as Ram Ganguly, S. D. Burman, C. Ramachandra, Naushad and O.P. Nayyar. It was a most enjoyable evening.

■ KULDEEP KUMAR

Psychoanalytic Methodology

DISCUSSION: *Ashis Nandy and the Cultural Politics of Selfhood*

by Christine Deftereos (New Delhi: Sage, 2013)

Discussants: Ashok Vajpeyi, Dr. Aditya Nigam, Dr. V. Sujatha, Dr. Alok Sarin

Chair: Professor T.N. Madan, May 22

Ashis Nandy and the Cultural Politics of Selfhood gives the reader an insight into a novel aspect of Nandy. While introducing the book, the author stressed that Ashis Nandy is not merely a self-described political psychologist; he is also an intellectual street fighter who comes face-to-face with the psychology of politics and the politics of psychology.

The main features of the book, according to the speakers, are its original reading and authentic use of psychoanalytic theory to characterise and demonstrate

the importance of psychoanalysis in Nandy's work. The author detailed the way Nandy confronts his own postcolonial identity and the complexities of the cultural politics of selfhood as a feature of his approach.

The book fills a significant lacuna in the published criticism of Nandy's work and in deepening our understanding of the importance of such a thinker. In doing so it explores the importance of psychoanalysis in Nandy's work. The book was lauded as a completely refreshing and original piece of work where the author establishes that a critical analytic mode underpins Nandy's capacity to generate social and political criticism, which defies disciplinary classification. In detailing and exploring this mode, the author presents a compelling reading of the critical analytic tools of the postcolonial critic. The participants also explored the reception of Nandy's arguments and ideas, his representation, and the relationship between ideas and methods in the work of this important contemporary social and political commentator.

Bob Dylan's 72nd birthday on 24 May 2013 was celebrated with an illustrated lecture by journalist Indrajit Hazra, 'Love Minus Zero/No Limit.' Aditya Sinha, the chair, recalled his own experiences around Dylan's songs as an introduction.

Much has been written about Dylan, so Hazra chose to talk about why Dylan is special. Dylan destroyed poetry by bringing poetics into mainstream music and youth culture. Hazra read from Robert Shelton's review of the 20-year-old Dylan and chose phrases that mark why we find pleasure in Dylan's music: 'bright new face in folk music', 'distinctive stylist', 'Manhattan cabaret'.

Dylan changed the way we understand and react to textual poetry in English. Poetry during the days of poets whom Dylan also read meant taking pleasure in reading. With Dylan, a certain kind of popular music became poetry plus—poetry plus music. Hazra read from 'Never say goodbye' and then played the song; two different experiences.

Hazra spoke about Dylan's various influences which went beyond just the words. When he got straitjacketed

Poetry Plus Music

MUSIC APPRECIATION

PROMOTION: *Love Minus Zero/No limit*
Speaker: Indrajit Hazra, May 24



as a folk musician, Dylan went the extra mile to say he was a rock and roller—he wanted its swagger in pop music. Hazra read from *Chronicles II* at this point. Dylan was one of the early punk rockers who did whatever he felt like doing as long as he was true to his art. He played 'Positively Fourth Street' to show the change from a certain languidness of earlier times to what we now call rock music.

Hazra wrapped up Dylan the artiste as the lyricist who took words seriously and then strung them on a musical carriage; as the tune maker who fitted a tune to words, a tune that shepherds the mood; and the performer, the weakest of the three but still his prerogative. Dylan brought a new force into popular music in all three art forms—word writing, song writing, and voice throwing.

The lecture ended with a short discussion between Aditya Sinha and Indrajit Hazra and a question and answer round with the audience.

■ VINEETA RAI

Remembering Ustad Ali Akbar Khan

MUSIC APPRECIATION PROMOTION:

*Swarasamrat Ali Akbar Khan –
The Greatest Musical Genius*

Personal Reminiscences by Anindya Banerjee
June 21

Anindya Bandhyopadhyay paid tribute to his illustrious teacher Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, possibly the most gifted of all instrumentalists in Hindustani music. Khan Sahib was a sarod player of astonishing ability who could, when the mood seized him, play with unmatched *sureelapan* or tunefulness. His pupil played excerpts of recordings made by him over five decades. Exemplary recordings by Ali Akbar Khan of standard ragas like *Bilas Khani Todi*, *Jaijawanti*, *Behag*, *Darbari*, *Desh* in which *Dhrupad*, *Dhamar* and *Khayal* are sung, were inexplicably ignored by his pupil who chose to play

'Airs' like *Chandranandan*, *Gauri Manjari* and *Alamgiri* composed by his Guru; they do not qualify as ragas despite their undeniable beauty, as there are no vocal *Dhrupad*, *Dhamar* or *Khayal* compositions in them. A 1973 recording in *Marwa* was, however, played. The quality of the recordings played through the presenter's laptop computer left something to be desired.

Bandhyopadhyay went to great lengths to prove his teacher's versatility by playing compositions from Ali Akbar Khan's film scores, but chose to ignore his best work in Ritwik Ghatak's *Ajantrik* and his deeply affecting sarod solo inspired by the Bengali *Kirtan* tradition in Satyajit Ray's *Devi*. His recording with the gifted Hindi film singer Asha Bhonsle, made when both were old and past their prime, need not have been played. It is indeed strange that the presenter who learnt for thirty years or more from the master should make such a lackadaisical presentation. Ustad Ali Akbar Khan had been well served earlier by Bandhyopadhyay's book on him in Bengali.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

Celebrating Poetry

POETRY: Remembering the Poet Sunil Gangopadhyay

Speakers: Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee, Prabal Kumar Basu, Santanu Gangopadhyay, Himadri Datta, Rumki Basu, Mandira Ghosh

Chair: Sheila Sengupta, May 17

Urdu Nazm-o-Ghazal. Poetry Readings by Chander Bhan Khayal and Janab Zahir Ahmed Burney

Chair: Professor Ibne Kanwal

Collaboration: The Poetry Society, India
June 14

A special programme was organised in memory of Sunil Gangopadhyay, a prolific poet and author with over 200 books to his credit. Several speakers presented the poet's volume of poetic works from distinct angles and perspectives. The Chair highlighted the fact that since Sunil Gangopadhyay didn't believe in rigid structures, the reading session too would be informal, or like a Bengali *adda*. The session also celebrated the life of the poet.

Sunil Gangopadhyay had repeatedly said that his first love was poetry and he had taken to fiction for financial reasons. His poetry, according to Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee, had the intimacy of everyday Bengali speech and of the Bengali milieu. He also said that he was not only a remarkable poet, but a leader of poets. He liberated Bengali poetry from the Tagorean call of *Satyam, Shivam* and *Sundaram*.

Prabal Kumar Basu gave some interesting anecdotes of the poet's life. He described Sunil's early poetry as lyrical, and said that when he returned from Iowa, he brought the international language into Bengali literature. His love for Kolkata was evident in several poems. Himadri and Rumki recited poems about his love for his city. Neera was the poet's muse, his inspiration, and Mandira Ghosh read two beautiful poems from the *Neera Series: Suddenly for Neera* and *Neera's Illness*. She said that through his poems on Neera, the poet had described his love for nature, his love for his city, his vision and philosophy of life. As the session was to celebrate his life, it ended on an optimistic note with a promise to meet

again, reflecting the poet's words in Rumki's voice, 'Will meet again.' Santanu Gangopadhyay's voice echoed the poet's words, 'For poetry alone, I have shunned immortality.'

Noted Urdu poets Shri Chander Bhan Khayal and Janab Zahir Ahmed Burney read some soul-stirring *Nazms* and Ghazals. Professor Ibne Kanwal referred to the poet of Delhi, Amir Khusro, whose grave according to him was very close to the venue where the poetry session was held. Chander Bhan Khayal and Zahir Ahmed Burney recited their lively as well as solitary verses to great applause. Urdu, according to the poets, is the language of Hindustan and their poetry touched the heart of the listeners. These poets, with their secular outlook, received the appreciation of the readers and the audience. Some poems by Zahir Ahmed Burney are of celebration and romance, but above all there is an undercurrent of fear. 'There is *sannata* (fear-psychosis) and the people are afraid even in homes'; Wherever I go, *sannata* accompanies me'.

Hindu poet Chander Bhan Khayal's long panegyric on Prophet Mohammed earned him the Sahitya Akademi Award. Khayal's *Laulak* is regarded as a masterpiece that has blazed a new trail in devotional poetry. A non-Muslim's deep devotion to Urdu is amazing. Chander Bhan Khayal read some wonderful poetry such as 'Khajuraho' where he referred to the Upanishadic saying of *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*. According to the poets, Urdu symbolises our composite culture.

Both poetry programmes arrived at the same conclusion: that languages may differ, religions may differ, but all roads lead to the same Universal spirit. Sunil Gangopadhyay wrote in Bengali, but according to Sheila Sengupta, his spirit was universal. As long as there are secularists and talented poets and authors like Sunil Gangopadhyay, Chander Bhan Khayal and Zahir Ahmed Burney, Professor Ibne Kanwal said, India's famed composite culture will forever remain intact. Finally, in the words of Zahir Burney, 'Khatam ho jayegi meri kabani ekdin' 'My story will come to an end, one day.' These could be the final words from the poets with their love for humanity and remarkable vision.

World Environment Day 2013

DISCUSSION: *Dialogue to Develop a Vision of the Environment of Delhi 2025*

Panelists: Mahesh N. Buch; C.R. Babu; G.S. Patnaik; Sanjiv Kumar; Manoj Kumar Misra; Rajendra Ravi; and Amita Baviskar

Moderator: Suhas Borker

Collaboration: Green Circle of Delhi

June 5

This excellent panel considered what World Environment Day meant for Delhi. Urban legend Dr. M. N. Buch highlighted the absence of sound land use planning, the spatial and functional consequences of the city's 'siege mentality' with respect to migrant inflows, the problematic notion of an NCR, and the disastrous potential of building on the Yamuna's flood plain. He called for more trees and better land

use. C. R. Babu, Emeritus Professor at the Centre for Environmental Management of Degraded Ecosystems, said that human pressure on the city's green spaces had reduced their ability to provide ecological services. Lamenting the loss of hundreds of indigenous green species to invasive plants in places such as the Ridge, he warned that changing land use patterns was not easy and presented such options as vertical greening, rooftop gardens and the enrichment of avenues. He also highlighted some achievements of the Aravalli and Yamuna Biodiversity Parks. Manoj Mishra of the Yamuna Jiye Abhiyan asked, 'Who weeps for the river?', while Rajendra Ravi made a nuanced case for the beleaguered Bus Rapid Transit System. Speaking of the poor, Amita Baviskar asked us to consider just whose city it was anyway. G. S. Patnaik of the DDA spoke up for the often maligned agency. Closing remarks on the need for holistic management were made by Sanjiv Kumar, IAS, Secretary, Environment and Forests, Government of NCT Delhi.

■ MAHADEVAN RAMASWAMY

Naya Nepal

DISCUSSION: *IPCS – IIC Young Scholar's Programme. Naya Nepal – Economy, Society, Culture, Governance, Democracy and Politics – Contemporary Issues, Young Voices*

Collaboration: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, May 7

Contemporary Issues: Today, Nepal is going through a historical transition. The dream of a 'Naya Nepal' has been a buzzword in the political discourse, especially since 2006. Though there have been numerous changes and developments in recent years, there are serious challenges in institutionalising them. The crisis in institutions, political differences and lack of consensus further complicate the process at the national level. In the midst of this, the workshop intended to understand the newness in 'Naya Nepal' from young Nepalese scholars.

Young Voices: Various issues and challenges were analysed and debated for understanding the essence of 'Naya Nepal'. In this context, the participants enthusiastically put forward the new dialogues,

discourses and debates that could open up avenues for understanding the ongoing political transition, while simultaneously taking into account various other questions that do not often come to attention. The workshop was divided into four broad themes. 'Governance, Democracy and Politics'—the politics of constitution writing by A. B. Ayadi; politics and democracy: contemporary issues by S. Thakur; the Nepalese nation and its languages by D. Kafle. 'Society and Economy'—foreign employment and remittance by S. K. Chaudhary; taxation policy and federalism by P. Karn; the economics of NGOs by S. Khanal; foreign aid dependence by P. Gautam. 'Education and Environment'—school education: a case study of Sharlahi by R. R. Baral; higher education and research: a lost vision by Sohan P. Sha; community based water management by M. Bashistha. 'Media and Foreign Relations'—Nepalese media in foreign policy formulation by Akanshya Shah; India-China confrontation in Nepal by Pramod Jaiswal; geopolitical reality by A. Bhattarai; modern Indo-Nepal bilateral relations by B. K. Thapa. These four panel sessions initiated a dialogue to learn and relearn the essence of 'Naya Nepal'.

■ SOHAN P. SHA

Northeast Histories

SEMINAR: *Weaving Histories of Northeast India*
Conclave 3 – Including History of Northeast India in National Curriculum

Introduction: Binalakshmi Nepram

Keynote address: B. G. Verghese

Chair: Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, May 3

It was shocking to learn that the Northeast has been kept excluded from our country's curriculum for over 65 years. This region is home to 45 million people, 272 ethnic groups and communities, living in eight states. According to Binalakshmi Nepram, Founder of the Manipur Women Gun Survivor Network, this has led to misconceptions and ignorance about this region and its people.

The Northeast is a fascinating region and this lack of knowledge is a shame and a disgrace and must be ended as soon as possible, B.G. Verghese said, stating the importance of history and its relation to identity. He cited the history of several ancient kings from Manipur, Assam and Tripura, as well as the corporate historical documents of companies that traded in

the region to show how they can be used to create inter-connected history. He added that the history of the Northeast cannot be divorced from the larger surroundings of Southern China, South East Asia, and large parts of India.

The unfortunate absence of the regional historical narratives in India's text books was seconded by Professor P. Sinclair, Director, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT); Vineet Joshi, Chairman of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), who proposed that the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) include more material on the Northeast; and M.A. Sikandar, Director, National Book Trust (NBT), who spoke about his organisation's initiatives in the production and distribution of books in the region.

The programme ended with a proposal to continually work on the issue of inclusion of Northeast India's history in the National Curriculum by forming a Resource Group comprising experts, including historians, educationists and scholars.

■ DAISY DEKA

Women and Violence

ROUNDTABLE: *Political Economy of Gender Based Violence – Implications for Feminist Action, May 8*

This was the second Roundtable initiated by Devaki Jain and the IIC. It is an ambitious project to foreground feminist activities as well as forge guidelines for future action. Importantly, this forum offers hope for a comprehensive 'Document on Feminist Thought'.

The paper presented this time was prepared by Nandini Rao, Subhalakshmi Nandi and Harsharan Singh. Called 'Political Economy of Gender Based Violence', it sought to examine reasons for the rising numbers and changing nature of kidnapping, rape and molestation of children and women. The salient points that emerged were: progressive laws remain unimplemented; there is a vacuum in critique and analysis of macroeconomic influences; undervaluing women's work renders them powerless, and is a form of violence; patriarchal tendencies within families and

societies further diminish women's political standing; power is derived from multiple sources such as caste, class, religion and gender; and recognition and analysis of divides such as urban vs rural, us vs them, media hype vs grassroots facts, etc.

After the presentation, respondents Renu Adlakha, Kavita Srivastava, Ranjana Padhi and Aditi Malhotra offered insights based on their experiences: ways in which India has differed from global trends; ways in which daughter aversion and changed demographics are creating new distortions in various areas; and other aspects that need inclusion such as self-help groups, rural forms of protest, long-term study of trauma, reproductive rights, effect of pornography and television soaps. Amitabh Kundu offered another approach: making sense of secondary data, reading numbers to deepen understanding and analyse trends.

Vrinda Grover ably chaired the session, and suggested the way forward through forging linkages between communities, state powers and other sectors of society.

■ BHARTI MIRCHANDANI

Challenging Tradition

DISCUSSION: *Dalit Aesthetics – Contesting Modernities*

Panelists: Dr. Y. S. Alone, Dr. Milind Awad, Dr. S. Santhosh, Dr. Rahul Dev

Moderator: Suhas Borker

Collaboration: Maharashtra Sanskritik ani Rananiti Adhyayan Samiti, May 1

In the context of Dalit aesthetics, the formalistic notion of language was first challenged by Marathi Dalit writers. In the case of the visual arts, it never emerged as an organised movement, but a few individuals did dare to question the modernist. How could visual practice be considered modern when it did not reject traditional values? The issue of liberty of expression and its practice was very seriously interrogated by the Dalit group of painters who dared to paint the hegemonic Brahmanical Indian society. Instead of going by the celebratory mode as initiated by the Brahmanical cultural nationalism, Dalit painters preferred to use formalistic modernity to challenge religious and social authority as a mark of difference. Dr. Alone graphically showed how painters like Savi Sawarkar, J. Nandakumar, Jaya Daronde, Rajaneesh

and Navaneet dared to think different pictorially and addressed the issues of not only ignorance but also protected ignorance. Their endeavour was not limited to mere responsibility of articulation but to challenge the powers of articulation itself. Similarly, large numbers of statues of Dr. Ambedkar and Mahatma Phule and the construction of the modern Buddha viharas are all part of the adherence to modern democratic values rather than adherence to the traditional hierarchical anti-constitutional values.

Dr. Awad stressed that Dalit expression needs to be located in popular images and imagery, particularly where they too need space. Dalits by and large are pictured not in positive images but in negative reality. Dr. Santhosh observed that while the so-called mainstream avant-garde favours modernist puritanical concepts like 'truth', 'goodness', 'harmony', Dalit and subaltern art favours an aesthetics of mistakes; what Rabelais called the *gramatica jocosa* ('laughing grammar') wherein artistic language is liberated from the stifling norms of correctedness. What then was the big question that emerged from this discussion? It was this: Does one get subsumed and tolerate the subversion of the ideology of the Indian constitution, or does one stand apart and become part of the struggle to create a new society based on equity.

■ SUHAS BORKER

Launch of IIC Quarterly

BOOK RELEASE: *Interrogating Women's*

Leadership and Empowerment

Launched by Dr. Karan Singh

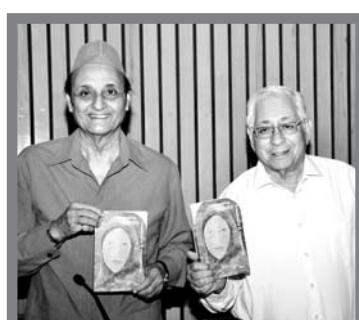
Panel Discussion: Arpana Cour, Shiv

Vishwanathan, Rashmi Singh

Chair: Soli J. Sorabjee, May 22

As the reality of the blatant denial of equality and opportunity is uncovered everyday through new research and means of communication and technology, so does it increase the intensity of interrogation of the disempowerment of women.

The occasion for the launch of the latest issue of the *IIC Quarterly* sought to take this forward by bringing together a panel of speakers from different walks of life.



While Dr. Karan Singh recalled India's long history of a cultural past where women are depicted both as Shakti and a feminine identity associated with the male deity as consorts, Arpana Cour invoked folk art forms to see how women were depicted in the social canvas in their myriad roles and everyday lifestyles in different ways. Shiv Vishwanathan sought to emphasise what he presented as a totally different take on how gossip could be a potent tool of both information and assertion of alternate views on social reality and prescribed roles. Rashmi Singh focused not on the high ground of feminist theoretical perspectives, but instead on

modest, low-profile initiatives on the ground which are usually invisible in discussions on empowerment, but which make a difference in the lives of those most affected. With Soli Sorabjee in the Chair, the discussion included notions of rights, justice and justiciability.

■ INDU AGNIHOTRI

An Artist's Journey

FILM: *The Open Frame*

Director: Chetan Shah

June 3

The film was screened to a packed auditorium. Based on the artistic and personal journey of renowned Indian artist S.G. Vasudev, the film brought together art and the artist within the same frame in a seamless narrative.

The conception of a painting and its execution in form and colour follows the film narrative. While Vasudev scrapes and adds layers and textures to a blank canvas, one is transported through multiple texts and stories. Amongst these are stories of Vasudev's life, art and his inspirations, as well as the post-independence art scene in India.

Amongst one of the early pioneers in contemporary art in south India, S.G. Vasudev was part of the artists' collective that helped set-up the Cholamandal Artists' Village in Chennai. The first of its kind cooperative,

the Village is chronicled in the film as a source of both inspiration and livelihood for a whole generation of artists who were influenced by the iconic K.C.S. Panicker, who also founded the Progressive Painters' Association in Madras in 1944. Vasudev's creative trajectory was to a large extent influenced by his involvement with the community.

His art itself changes from the way it develops in his early interactions in the 1960s to his current experiments. The artist and the artisan blend and work together in harmony—creating space for symbiosis rather than difference. In a beautifully shot scene, the artist is seen at work with the artisan—and the boundaries are effectively blurred. In creating an artwork in bronze, Vasudev seeks the aid of blacksmiths and artisans who bring his etchings on metal to life. As do weavers who recreate his paintings on cloth.

As Vasudev himself notes, for him art is very much part of his life. He does not and can not view it as 'work'—as is evident in the film's focus.

■ ANINDITA MAJUMDAR

Animal tales

FILM: *The Jungle Gang*

Director: Krishnendu Bose

June 15

The four films were a treat not only for lovers of wild life, but also for educators and people with a passion for good teaching and learning material for young minds. In terms of content and presentation, the matter was most age-appropriate for children and equally attractive for adults. The factual richness and variety woven in the narrative, such as 'rhinos can be 2,000 kilos', or the fact that elephants are very high on emotions and family values, kept the audience in rapt attention for the almost hour-long screening. What was most appealing to the kids (there were many) was the gang of three flying off in different directions,

defining their tasks, setting their course of action and feeling rewarded by their discoveries.

The choice of animated characters made the film appealing to children as the unreal, imagined fulfils the childhood need for fantasy. Three animated animal characters—Bo the Bar-headed geese, Kuttu—the Slender Loris, and Bhoora, the Black Buck as friends traveling together to different parts of the country seeking out endangered animals to tell their stories is perfect for the imagination of the 8 to 15 year-old child's search for independence and adventure. The drawing, presumably by the Bose children, adds to the 'made for children' quality.

The films allowed nature to emerge as a bountiful space for children's comprehension. I would recommend wide dissemination of the films since they are very culturally nuanced.

■ ASHA SINGH

The Dog Days of May

FILM FESTIVAL: Award-winning Films from Korea, May 15, 22, 24, 27 and 28

The dog days of May, watching Korean films at the IIC.

Technically 'dog days' are not in May but it was blazing hot and few ventured to the IIC's beautifully cool auditorium. These films, all made since 1998, introduced us to a modern Korea.

The last one first: *Breathless* by Ik-Joon Yang is a hard film to watch. The violence is brutal and the verbal abuse rampant. Sang-hoon, a debt collector who brutalises almost everyone he comes in contact with, is nevertheless changed by his encounter with Yeon-hue, a high school teenager who spits back at him even as she recovers from a hard blow. The encounter soon turns to an unlikely friendship. Violence is an unending cycle with little chance of escape is what this film shows us. Powerful and disturbing yet we start to empathise with Sang-Hoon, played by the writer and director.

Dog lovers may wish to close their eyes in Joon-ho Bong's *Barking Dogs Never Bite* and you might feel terrible for laughing at times. An out-of-work university lecturer wants to become a professor. Bribery is the only way. As he ponders his fate, a barking dog annoys him, leading to more than one dog murder. A kind-hearted office maintenance girl, a dog-meat eating guard, a homeless man and a pregnant wife who buys a dog of her own are just some of the characters in this dark and twisted comedy.

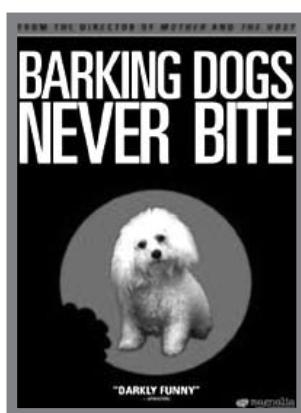
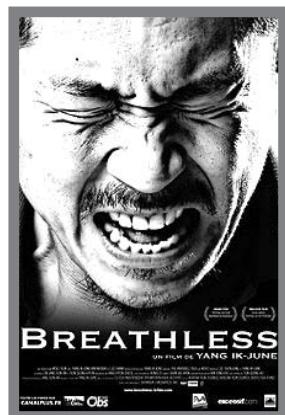
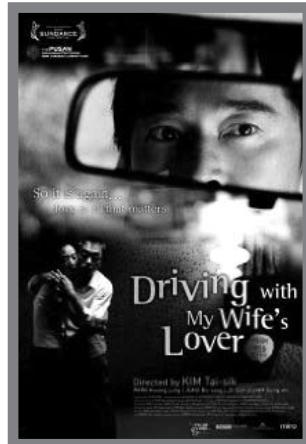
In Chang-dong Lee's *Secret Sunshine*, a young widow, Shin-ae, moves with her small son from Seoul to the

town where her husband was born to start a new life. She tries to create new relationships when her son is kidnapped and murdered. Grief can destroy you. Religion, sex and suicide are not answers in such a lonely hell. No one and nothing can help, but when we hit rock bottom, finding the way back to ourselves, might be through the loyalty of a taken for granted friend.

Not much happens in Tai-sik Kim's *Driving with my Wife's Lover*. Tae-han decides to confront his wife's lover, taxi driver Joon-sik, but loses courage and ends up on a long road trip home driven by him. Seeing his wife with her lover, Tae-han steals the taxi and goes to see Joon-sik's wife. He is caught asleep in the nude with the driver's wife but the philandering driver cannot bear the thought that his wife may have been unfaithful.

Christmas in August by Jin-ho Hur is a sensitive, poignant film of a photographer, Jung-won, who does not reveal to his friends that he is terminally ill. He is befriended by a meter maid who is attracted to him, but does not understand what she comes to mean to him until after his death.

These are bold films with engaging characters, wonderful acting, music and cinematography. But most of all I wondered if in this same period India produced any films that might compare. Perhaps not!



Exhibitions



June 1-6, Arte-Kettle Garden. An exhibition of painted kettles by eminent senior artists; and paintings and sculptures around the theme of child labour and Right to Education. (Collaboration: Kala-care Group; and Udayan Care)



June 21-26, Colours of Nature. An exhibition of paintings by Madhu Jain

Annual Subscription

As per Rule 9 of the Memorandum of Association and Rules and Regulations of the IIC, it shall be the responsibility of the members to ensure due and timely payment of subscription.

Members were required to pay their Annual Subscription by 31st May 2013. In case Members have not paid the Annual Subscription, they are requested to pay the same, latest by 31st July 2013. The names of Members whose subscription falls in arrears shall be suspended from the rolls and shall be liable for the prescribed penalty in order to restore the membership.

Obituary

A-0677	Shri J.R. Hiremath	M-1628	Shri V.M. Nair
A-2627	Miss Jai Chandiram	M-1730	Shri Vidya Charan Shukla
A-2823	Admiral M.K. Roy	M-2177	Justice Arun Kumar
AT-087	Shri Ashok Chaturvedi	M-2318	Smt. Sheila Loomba
AT-222	Shri O.P. Sabherwal	M-2362	Shri Sudarshan Lal Mehta
M-0629	Dr. Jagjit Singh	M-2814	Shri K. Bikram Singh
M-0646	Shri V.N. Kamte	M-3172	Shri M.M.S. Srivastava
M-0976	Dr. S.D. Gokhale	M-3296	Shri Ajoy K. Paitandy
M-1370	Shri Vijay S.T. Shankardass		

Highlights for July-August 2013

LECTURES

22 July 2013 at 6:30 pm in Conference Room - I

Heritage Impact Assessment on Outstanding Universal Value of Khajuraho World Heritage Site

Illustrated lecture by Prof. Ajay Khare, Director, School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal

(Collaboration: National Monuments Authority of India)

26 July 2013 at 6:30 pm in Conference Room – II

Frontiers of History

Towards a New Medina: Jinnah, Deobandi Ulama, and the Quest for Pakistan in Late Colonial India

Speaker: Prof. Venkat Dhulipala, Assistant Professor of History, University of North Carolina, Wilmington. He is the author of *Creating a New Medina: State Power, Islam and the Quest for Pakistan in Late Colonial North India*, forthcoming with Cambridge University Press in 2014

Chair: Dr. Dilip Simeon

The talk explains how the idea of Pakistan was articulated and debated in the public sphere and how popular Muslim enthusiasm was generated for this idea, especially in the crucial United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (now Uttar Pradesh) whose Muslim elites played a critical role in Pakistan's creation

28 July 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Auditorium

Rosalind Wilson Memorial Lecture 2013

The Untamed Language of Dissent

Speaker: Dr. Ashis Nandy

(Organised by the Rosalind Wilson Memorial Trust)

2 August 2013 at 6:30 pm in Seminar Rooms II – III, Kamaladevi Block

The Science and Technology Series

Human Brain: Complexity Behind the Simplicity

Speaker: Dr. V. Ravindranath, Centre for Neuroscience, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore

The human brain is the interpreter of our senses, controller of movement and in fact responsible for all we embrace as civilization. It consists of about 100 billion nerve cells which are interconnected through a million billion connections

measuring up to 3.2 million kilometer of wiring. Apart from the interest in understanding how the brain performs cognitive functions and finding links between behaviour, brain and mind, there are serious health related issues

6 August 2013 at 6:30 pm in Seminar Rooms II – III, Kamaladevi Block

Finding Neema

Programme on autism with a discussion and screening of a film

Speaker: Juliet Reynolds, author of the book

Film: **I'm Special: My World is Different** (India)

Director: Deepak Parvatiyar

Recipient of the Primo Classificato Award, Autismovie Film Festival, Italy 2013

11 August 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Auditorium
Prem Bhatia Memorial Lecture 2013

To be delivered by Shri Shyam Saran, former Foreign Secretary

22 August 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Annexe Lecture Room – II

Music Appreciation Promotion

The Well-Tempered Guitar

Illustrated lecture by Yogi Ponappa

DISCUSSION

24 July 2013 at 6:30 pm in Conference Room I

Book Discussion Group

Feeding Gods and Mortals

A book discussion based on three books *Bhog: Temple Food of India* by Geeta Budhiraja and Arun Budhiraja (New Delhi: Krishna Prena Charitable Trust, 2012); *The Ultimate Army Cookbook: A Memsahib Cooks* by Kikky Sihota (New Delhi: Roli, 2013); and *Secrets from the Kitchen: Fifty Years of Culinary Experience at the India International Centre* compiled by Bhicoo Manekshaw and Vijay Thukral (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2013)

Discussants: Shri Rocky Mohan, Chairman, Redfeather Holding Co. Pvt. Ltd; Chef Manish Mehrotra, Indian Accent; Ms Maryam Reshi, Food Critic; and Shri Rahul Verma, The Hindu

Chair: Prof. Pushpesh Pant, Historian and Food Critic

PERFORMANCES

Monsoon Festival: 25 – 26 July 2013 at 6:00 pm in the Auditorium

Santoor Recital

By Bipul Kumar Roy from Kolkata, disciple of Pt. Bhajan Sopori

At 7:00 pm in the Auditorium

Hindustani Vocal Recital

By Kaushik Bhattacharjee from Howrah, West Bengal, disciple of Pt. Arun Bhaduri and Pt. Sunil Bose

26 July 2013

At 6:00 pm in the Auditorium

Sattriya Duet

By Mallika Kandali and Bhabananda Barbayan from Guwahati, disciples of the late Guru Harendra Nath Sarma; and Guru Naren Ch. Baruah

At 7:00 pm in the Auditorium

Bharatanatyam Recital

By Satyapriya Iyer and Christopher Guruswamy from Chennai, from Kalakshetra

2 August 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Auditorium

Aap ki Yaad Mein (In Fond Memory)

On the occasion of the 20th death anniversary of the renowned thumri singer, Smt Naina Delhi, her noted disciple, Dr. Suhasini Koratkar will devote the evening evoking her guru's style of rendering various *Thumris, Dadra, Hori, Chaity, Kajari* and *Jhoola* compositions

FILMS

24 July 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Auditorium

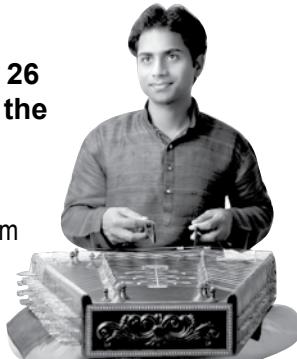
Celluloid Man

Director: Shivendra Singh Dungarpur who will introduce the film

Recipient of the 60th National Film Awards 2012 for Best Biographical Film; and for Best Editing

Screening will be followed by a discussion

The film explores the life and work of legendary Indian



archivist, P.K. Nair, founder of the National Film Archive of India, Pune



SHIVENDRA SINGH DUNGARPUR PRESENTS
CELLULOID MAN

A FILM ON P. K. NAIR

PRODUCED BY SHIVENDRA SINGH DUNGARPUR, WITH SHOBHITA SINGH, PRODUCED BY SHOBHITA SINGH, K. K. DUNGARPUR, FILM CORPORATION, P. K. NAIR, B. S. BHABANANDA, B. K. BARUAH,
VIVEK CHAKRABORTY, DEEPAK KUMAR, BIKASH PRASAD, CORPORATION, BIKASH KUMAR, BIKASH CHAKRABORTY, DEEPAK KUMAR

EXHIBITIONS

7 – 15 August 2013, 11:00 am to 7:00 pm, Annexe Art Gallery

A Community in Exile – A Vintage Album: Kashmiri Pandits – A Contribution to the Making of Modern India

An exhibition of archival photographs and prints that traces the contribution of Kashmiri Pandits to the making of modern India

Conceptualised and curated by Manju Kak

(Collaboration: ICCR)

The IIC Experience: A Festival of the Arts

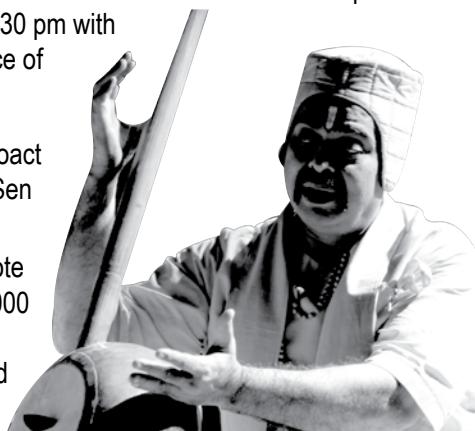
17 – 24 October 2013

The tenth edition of the Centre's annual festival 'The IIC Experience 2013' will be held from 17 – 24 October 2013 and will include performances; exhibitions; film festival; and food festival. The festival will be held in both indoor and outdoor spaces of the Centre matching the content with the physical environment. The festival will open on 17th October at 6:30 pm with a performance of

Soordas

Musical monoact by Shekhar Sen

The tale of a poet who wrote more than 1000 bhajans in praise of Lord Krishna



A Note from the Director

I wonder how many of us know that the Library holds the precious collection of Walter Sykes George. There are thirty two packets containing papers, correspondence, letters, photographs, artifacts and others.

Walter Sykes George (1881-1962) was an English architect who worked in India during the first half of the 20th century. He was part of the team of Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker who designed New Delhi, the new capital of India. In the 1930s he took on the job of designing the new campus of St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and is also credited with having created the original design for Miranda House. Walter George's design for the Tuberculosis Association Building in New Delhi shows him adapting the prevalent international styles.

Walter George and his colleagues helped establish the first training facility for architects in North India and the Department of Architecture came into existence as part of the Delhi Polytechnic at Kashmiri Gate in 1942. In 1932, he designed the first theatre 'Regal' at Connaught Place, New Delhi, which was built by Sir Sobha Singh. The two worked together on several projects including 'Sujan Singh Park', built in 1945, named after Shobha Singh's father and the nearby 'Ambassador Hotel'. Walter Sykes George died in Delhi on 7th January 1962.

The IIC Library in collaboration with IGNCA has undertaken the documentation work in three phases. In phase one, a Documentation System has been created on an Excel Sheet which contains high resolution images including thumb nail images and their description. This was preceded by the work of conservation and preservation as each photograph had to be cleaned before it could be digitised.

IGNCA has been able to complete the work of 30 packets that had 2356 objects.

In the second phase, the collection has to be kept in Archival Boxes that are made up of Acid-free Boxes. Interleaving of each document would be done using Acid-free Japanese paper. The effort is to prevent deterioration and mishandling. It also helps in preservation but the boxes themselves have to be monitored to ensure that these don't deteriorate, and are changed as and when required.

In the third phase, IIC will create the electronic surrogate by digitising the collection. While the first phase is almost completely done by IGNCA, the second phase is likely to start very soon followed by the digitisation in the third phase. The resources would then be accessible online within the premises of the IIC Library. I am sure that once the project is complete it would enrich the resources of the library and their access to the scholars and interested members.

■ **KAVITA A. SHARMA**

This issue of the *Diary* has been assembled and edited by Omita Goyal, Chief Editor; Rachna Joshi, Senior Asst. Editor; and Ritu Singh, Senior Asst. Editor. Published by Ravinder Datta, for the India International Centre, 40, Max Mueller Marg, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi-110 003, Ph: 24619431. Designed by Poonam Bevli Sahi at FACET Design, D-9, Defence Colony, New Delhi - 110 024, Ph: 24616720, 24624336 and printed by Mastan Singh at I.G. Printers, 104, DSIDC Shed, Okhla Phase-I, New Delhi - 110 020.