

## India and Iran

### EXHIBITION

*Qand-e-Farsi wa Tootiyan-e-Hind—of Persian Candy and Indian Parrots curated by Kamna Prasad*

*An Evening of Indo-Persian Poetry in Dastan-Goi Style*

**23 September to 1 October 2016**

This expertly curated exhibition was a timely attempt at showcasing the rich and culturally heterogenous nature of the Iranian and Indian civilisations that have been interacting with one another over centuries. It was a visual tour of the multiple intersections between Indian and Iranian art forms. The artwork, including photographs and prints of

various original folios, left one in awe and wonderment, and conveyed the extent of artistic borrowings and contributions on both sides. This was complemented with a poetry session that celebrated Indo-Persian poetry in *Dastan-Goi* style, and proved how Farsi, which has been part of the Indian lived reality for centuries, must not be forgotten if the diversity and complexity that Persian art forms have lent us has to be retained. The urgent need for the revival of the language was understood by all, and the larger plea to study it and sustain the literary exchange between Iran and India was whole-heartedly supported. Initiatives to create a more inclusive social and cultural space, such as this, are necessary in contemporary times, particularly in light of the political situation worldwide. The hope is to witness more of such politically pertinent 'confluence of cultures'.

- IPSHITA NATH

## The Unexplored Northeast

### FESTIVAL:

*Jashn-e-Aman 2016: Take a Step Towards an Inclusive City*

*In Focus: The Unexplored Paradise—North East India*

*The Unexplored Paradise: Improvising and*

*Dramatised Poetry and Folk Stories from North East India*

*Presented by Lunar Energy Theatre Group, directed by Jaya Iyer*

*Manipuri Folk Music by Rewben Mashangva*

**28 September 2016**



Conflict and violence have become synonymous with the Northeast. However, some appropriate melodious songs presented by Rewben Mashangva, famous folk musician and singer from the Northeast who is credited with reviving the musical traditions of the Tangkhul Nagas of Manipur and the use of traditional musical instruments, highlighted that the scars and wounds of the troubled zone can be healed with poetry, theatre and music. Exploring a new idea, STEP, an NGO, has taken commendable steps towards peace building, primarily in the country's troubled areas.

The Northeast is a paradise with which many of us are not familiar. Rewben's songs echoed the music of the endangered birds of Kaziranga, the blue mountains of the regions, yellow butterflies, shadows of the trees, harvest and cool autumn, and the vibrant pictures of children in the fields. This is the picturesque Northeast. He sang, 'We are here, we need peace together', and 'Let there be no more killing'.

Superbly directed by Jaya Iyer, the dramatised poetry and folk stories where the small girls Joya and Raina acted as fluttering butterflies was a treat indeed.

- MANDIRA GHOSH

## An Evening of *Nazrul Geeti*

### PERFORMANCE:

Love Songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam by Reba Som, accompanied by Ashim Das on tabla. Followed by interview by Pinak Chakravarty  
Followed by screening of a FILM, Kazi Nazrul Islam: The Rebel Poet

Reba Som's evening of *Nazrul Geeti* also marked the release of her CD by Times Music. Priding herself in being a disciple of the late Feroza Begum, the leading *Nazrul Geeti* exponent, Reba Som keeps alive the methodology of presentation that she has acquired from her late guru, with its emphasis on the articulation of the lyric instead of an overpowering beat formula, thereby bringing alive the inner soul of this music.

In a follow-up interview, Reba Som took on a variety of questions comparing the genres of *Rabindra Sangeet* and *Nazrul Geeti*, stating that Tagore's was an open, eclectic amalgam while through Nazrul's iconic masterpiece, *Bulbul neerob nargis boney...*, the character of Nazrul's rebellious mood, his earthy openness, the shocking nuances in his compositions, and the fascinating aspects of equity in his art was evident. It was this variety that had drawn that artist to this genre.

Besides the authenticity of her presentation that imbibed the characteristics of this music, it was also evident that Reba Som had taken care to choose numbers that mirrored the many-sided richness of Nazrul's art. Concluding the evening was a documentary film on Nazrul that traced the life and achievements of a genius.

- SUBHRA MAZUMDAR



DIRECTOR: Anjan Das  
SCRIPT AND RESEARCH: Reba Som  
COLLABORATION: Public Diplomacy Division,  
Ministry of External Affairs

3 September 2016

## Music of the Sax

### FILM

*The Sax in the City*

DIRECTOR: Praveen Kumar

15 September 2016

The name of the film is a take-off on the well-known American TV series 'Sex And The City'. In this case, however, 'sax' is the saxophone and the city is Mumbai. Director Praveen Kumar himself plays the saxophone and is quite evidently fascinated by it. The sax is a woodwind instrument that is predominantly used in jazz, pop music, martial music and, to a limited extent, in Western classical music. It was invented only in 1840 and thus missed out on the classic golden era of Western classical music; only a very few 20th/21st century composers have used it as a showpiece. Its status in jazz is, however, a totally different story and its influence and popularity is next only to the piano.

Praveen Kumar starts off with the observation that sax players are rare to find and locating a good teacher even more so. He then proceeds to highlight some modern day saxophonists in Mumbai and punctuates his narrative with interviews and performances featuring them. The film is a sort of freewheeling sketch that showcases musicians from the Bollywood film fraternity and, as expected, jazz ensembles.

It is an interesting journey through the sax scene in Mumbai and the pace does not slacken or drag. Some of the musicians featured are Rhys de Souza, Luke Poswaity, Anand Vaity, Raj Sodha, Shyamraj, Carl Clements and the group *Jazz Junkies*. The visuals and sound quality are good. The film is produced by the Films Division.



- S.CHIDAMBAR

# Refugee Crises

## EXHIBITION

Organised by Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan, the project *getting across* consisted of an exhibition, talks and a film programme. It examined an issue that had been percolating in Europe since the summer of 2015: the influx of refugees seeking shelter from murderous civil war, social and political injustice, oppression and atrocities executed in the name of religion.

Curated by Dr. Leonhard Emmerling and Kanika Kuthiala on the premise that borders are man-made delineations, the exhibition took place at three venues: India International Centre, Vadehra Art Gallery and Bikaner House from 1-15 September 2016 and featured the works of 22 artists including: Bani Abidi, Naman Ahuja, Halil Altindere, Francis Alÿs, Sumit Dayal, Shilpa Gupta, Amar Kanwar, Kimsooja, Eva Leitolf, Erik Levine, André Lützen, Adrian Paci, Kishor Parekh, Mike Parr, Raqs Media Collective, Tejal Shah, Santiago Sierra, Roman Signer, Javier Téllez, Jens Ullrich, Lin Yilin and Zarina.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a series of talks with local and international speakers addressed the implications of the influx of asylum seekers on internal politics, the idea of the nation state and its detriment. The final component of the project, a film programme curated by Farah Batool explored borders, dispossession and a yearning for home.

The response to *getting across* was extremely positive, with approximately 4,000 visitors for the exhibition, talks and film programme. The audience was engaged, had visceral reactions and contributed to thought-provoking discussions. In addition to an overwhelmingly positive feedback, there was intense interest from a variety of media outlets to engage with the issue, works and protagonists in an in-depth manner.

- SHWETA WAHI



## EXHIBITION

*getting across*

COLLABORATION: Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan

2 to 15 September 2016

## In a Foreign Land

### LECTURES

DISCUSSION: *The Migration Crisis in Europe*

Four talks by Mark Terkessidis; Aladin El-Mafaalani;

Vaiju Naravane

MODERATOR: Aman Sethi

COLLABORATION: Goethe-Institute/Max Mueller Bhavan

2-15 September 2016

Aladin El-Mafaalani was of the opinion that integration of minorities leads to more conflicts than before. He reiterated that it was unrealistic to expect migrants to assimilate completely, especially the first generation. Though the second generation was more in tune with near complete integration, it was still a huge dilemma for them.

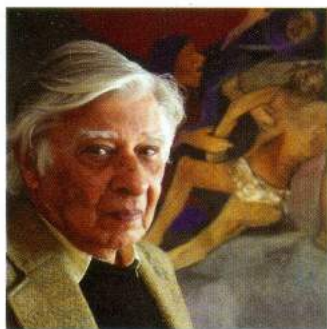
Both he and Vaiju flagged the issue of aging societies and low birth rates in the West and agreed that migration was necessary as aging societies tended to be defensive, conservative and resistant to change. However, the lack of vision in the political leadership was further compounding the problem.

Mark Terkessidis had yet another viewpoint and argued that the Judaeo-Christian angle had been overplayed by politicians and the media. He stressed on an unorthodox view that people migrate for pleasure too, and money is not always the sole aim. Sometimes a hunger for a new political perspective is a great motivation to move to Europe.

- GAURIKA KAPOOR

# Genesis of Ideas

## DIALOGUE



The first of the 'IIC Dialogues', a new initiative of a three-part series is a quest to explore the genesis of ideas through different mediums used by artists. Flagged off with a conversation between one of the masters of Indian art, Krishen Khanna and art historian Geeti Sen, it was a privilege to hear the artist who at 91 years was exceptionally articulate, often delving into his memory bank to bring out various interesting snippets about his works. We visited some of his works via a short visual presentation, which helped to introduce the audience to the variety in the subject that he paints.

There was a discussion on his paintings of Ramu's Dhaba, a recurrent theme in many of his paintings, as also on his Truck series. Krishen Khanna's many paintings on Christ often show his vulnerable moments and his 'Bandwallahs series depicts a group of Bandwallahs in red uniforms and blue caps, sipping chai at a roadside dhaba.' One of his major works is a mural

depicting Mauryan cameos for the ceiling of ITC Maurya in Delhi.

He told us that the early years of his work were largely experimental and that he was the first Indian artist to get the Rockefeller Fellowship, and was an artist-in-residence in Washington until 1964. He has been painting for over 70 years, and Geeti Sen called him 'an explorer of many mediums'.

A self-taught artist, Krishen Khanna gave up a successful career in banking after 14 years to pursue an equally successful career in art!

- POONAM SAHI



### TALK

*Ideas and Practice: Dialogues on Creative Experience  
Geeti Sen in conversation with Krishen Khanna*

**6 September 2016**

## Art Matters

### DIALOGUE

*IN CONVERSATION: Salima Hashmi and Sadanand Menon*

*On the Occasion of Salima Hashmi's exhibition at Gallery Threshold*

*COLLABORATION: The Raza Foundation*

**20 September 2016**



The conversation on the idea of beauty in art between Salima Hashmi and Sadanand Menon appeared to be from two far ends, yet so thought-provoking that it was a pleasure to follow till the ends met in agreement. The subjects encompassed music, visual arts, dance, poetry and even silence. Salima cited responses from different artists on their notion of beauty. I found one response, to build on the damaged as beautiful, sensitive and integral to our violent, strife-torn times. A strong sense of the aesthetic, a bond with nature, a search for something more humane were all interwoven in the responses, along with a recognition that it's not the Greek idea of perfection that is the ideal of beauty in our times.

Sadanand's emphasis was on the artist's role to challenge the traditional ideal of beauty because it becomes repressive; but his argument's biggest shortcoming was the insistence on seeing art and beauty through a narrow lens. To say that Ghalib was unduly obsessed by the cult of beauty is obviously not to have understood the poet's metaphysical expression, where beauty is certainly not an ideal but human frailty and tragedy. Way before the fractured imagery of postmodernism, artists and poets have grappled with and evolved the idea of beauty. Much like in the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, there are lies, there is ugliness and evil in the garden of Eden. One couldn't agree more however with what he said about politicising aesthetics as that is urgently needed in society today in the face of attacks and intolerance. Infusing thought with a political understanding of the world is important as always, but so is it to remember that art and beauty are much more in that they can create and sustain the values under attack.

- SABA HASAN

# Institution as Abhyas

## PANEL DISCUSSION

The trend of literary festivals round the year has inevitably triggered enthusiasm about literature and culture. This talk, part of the broad thematic structure 'Institution as Practice', brought together the creative innovation behind the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF): Namita Gokhale, Sanjoy K. Roy and William Dalrymple. The trio has not just opened a democratic space for a variety of writers in both local and foreign languages, but has laced the festival with their unique sense of artistic encouragement.

Sharing personal experiences about the festival and their tryst with academics and other institutes, the three speakers urged that one must build institutions that are culturally malleable and open to novel ideas. Namita Gokhale talked about the stifling atmosphere of academia, while tracing the journey of her graduation days. Sanjoy K. Roy fervently shared his personal experience at Teamwork and the JLF to say how cultural institutions have been repeatedly seen in conflict with the bureaucracy. William Dalrymple, who studied at Ampleforth and Trinity College, Cambridge, spoke about the importance of nurturing creativity and social sensitivity at an early age. Gauging the current times, where institutions are crumbling before the claustrophobic forces of the right and others, the speakers unanimously agreed on the need to re-imagine the making of institutions. Moving away from any conventional meaning of the institute, in any authoritarian form, the speakers focused on the art of looking at the history and historicity of events that shape an institute.

- DILPREET BHULLAR



## PANEL DISCUSSION

*Offstage: Festivals and Beyond*

**SPEAKERS:** Namita Gokhale, Sanjoy K. Roy and William Dalrymple.

**CHAIR:** Alka Pande

*Collaboration: Lila Foundation for Translocal Initiatives*

**7 October 2016**

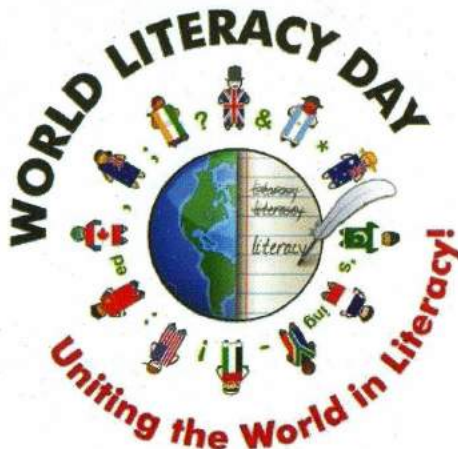
## Adult Literacy

### DISCUSSION:

*On the Occasion of World Literacy Day Adult Literacy—Facts and Fiction*

**COORDINATOR:** Jayashree Misra Tripathi

**8 September 2016**



A vibrant group of speakers from a wide professional and activist spectrum explored the status and social position of adult literacy to mark World Literacy Day. They focused on many ground realities embedded in social/cultural barriers in the progress of literate citizens, especially women.

The complexities attached to literacy in rural India were presented by those who work in the area by Captain Indraani Singh, Purnima Gupta, and Aapga Singh. They believe that financial literacy is an important goal; that patriarchal dominance and resistance to change are roadblocks repressing literacy functions; and in rural areas, the presence of village elders often disallows women to ask for a pen to sign on the ballot papers.

S.Y. Shah addressed the dichotomy between private, state and rural educators and the necessary innovations in their training for adult literacy. The dominant presence of technology has changed attitudes towards acquisition of literacy as well as the new possibilities of tools for training, such as the concept of karaoke machines and Bollywood songs.

Shalini Advani initiated the dialogue for awareness of differences in literacy training for adults and for teaching children. The vast experience of the adult learner needs to be the base for curricular transaction. Meeta Sengupta led the discussion about the global learning crisis, including the acute shortage of teachers at all levels according to a UNESCO report. She also highlighted the difficulties of implementing and sustaining adult literacy programmes for women with disabilities. Some factual triumphs were laced with a dire need to keep the energy for making India fully 'sakshar'.

- ASHA SINGH

# Myths in Motion

## FESTIVAL

The first Tribal Animation Film Festival to be held in India was the culmination of a day that began at the Jamia Millia Islamia with the inauguration of a photo exhibition and a national seminar focusing on the philosophy of the pioneering anthropologist Verrier Elwin.

Elwin, though trained to be a clergyman, abandoned his metier to pursue the life of a Gandhian and an anthropologist. So it was indeed ironical that the evening kicked-off with a short documentary made by Moji Riba, *Prayers for New Gods*, that portrayed the changing religious traditions of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and the efforts made by its indigenous religions to adapt and reinvent themselves, to compete with more established and organised ones.

Tara Douglas of the Adivasi Arts Trust introduced the audience to the concept of the Fourth Cinema, a term coined by Maori filmmaker Barry Barclay, to refer to indigenous cinema that gives a voice and image to aboriginal traditions, and under whose broad rubric the genre of tribal animation operates.

*Man Tiger Spirit*, based on the Angami folktale of Nagaland, describes the inter-relationship of man and his environment, and is inspired in its animation by traditional Naga woodcarving and textile traditions.



### FESTIVAL

Revisiting the Philosophy of Verrier Elwin:

Tribal Animation Festival

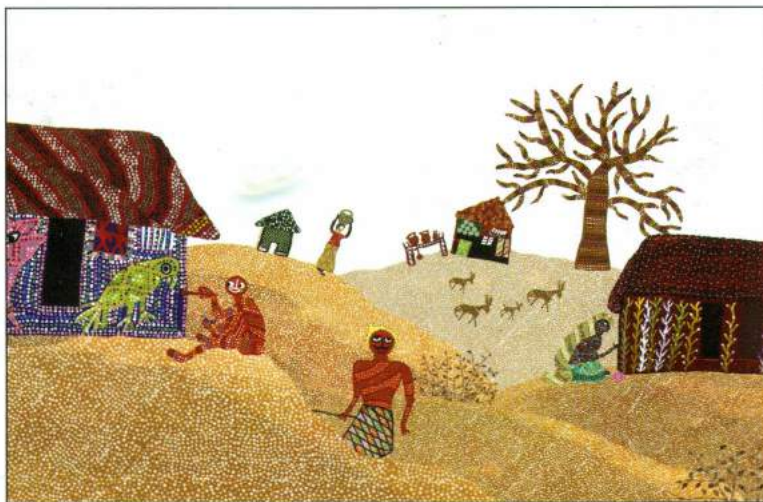
Coordinated by Tara Douglas

Collaboration: The Adivasi Arts Trust; and Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research, Jamia Millia Islamia

26 September 2016

*Abotani*, a film about two brothers of the Apatani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, was the result of an animation workshop held at the Rajiv Gandhi University in collaboration with students of NID Ahmedabad, and uses stop motion animation. It is the first animated folktale from the state and narrates the story of the mythical hero Abotani and his sibling Yapom, and addresses man's relationship with both the natural and the supernatural world.

Filmmaker Nina Sabnani along with indigenous artist Sher Singh Bhil worked on the animation film *Hum Chitra Banate Hain*, based on an origin myth of the Bhils of Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh. Illustrated by the artist in the Pithora style, the film is about the scarcity of water, a wise old woman's (Bhuri Bai) attempt to find a *badwa* or a priest to invoke a sacred *Pithora* that will bring down the waters. Narrated in a humorous style, it also underscores the function of painting not only as an art form, but also as a sacred prayer and offering to the gods.



The foreign section of the festival consisted of an episode from the famous CGI-animated Canadian television series *Raven Tales*, folktales voiced by the powerful deity, the raven, of the first peoples of Canada, and two shorts from the Mexican 68 Voices project that looked at two origin myths.

The festival ended with the hope that this would be the first in an annual edition and that similar festivals could be held in other parts of the country.

- AJAY JAISINGHANI

# An Esoteric and Practical Ruler

## TALK

King Serfoji II (1798–1832), a ruler of the Bhonsle dynasty of the Maratha principality of Thanjavur, built a remarkable European library in his domain. This talk was based on a thoroughly researched study of the Saraswati Mahal Library in Thanjavur.

King Serfoji was a true bibliophile, collector and conservationist, and acquired a personal library of around 4,300 books. Shipment after shipment arrived as he used his royal prerogative to get volumes on varied subjects such as medicine, geography, history, and languages such as English, French, Danish, Dutch and Latin. Many of the books contained his remarks in English alongside and each was autographed by him, cognisant that he had a rare collection. He was not a passive consumer but an active and eager participant constantly exploring the lives of the old books, publishing catalogues; there is also a handwritten one by King Serfoji himself.

The library also included treatises on Vedanta, grammar, music, dance, drama, architecture, astronomy, medicine, training of elephants and horses, etc. He sent pundits far and wide and collected a huge number of books and manuscripts such as the *Rigveda* from Kashi.

It was a pleasure to hear about a king in the Indian subcontinent who was not just obsessed with wars or alternatively other leisurely kingly activities of a dubious nature, but had an esoteric as well as a practical bent of mind—giving knowledge and access to it, prime importance.

- NILIMA CHITGOPEKAR



## TALK

*A European Library in Nineteenth-Century India: The Enlightenment World of King Serfoji II of Tanjore*

SPEAKER: Professor Indira Viswanathan Peterson

CHAIR: Professor Romila Thapar

18 October 2016

# On Bangladesh

## SEMINAR

SEMINAR: *Bangladesh Today*

SPEAKERS: Deb Mukharji, Tariq Karim, Leela

Ponappa, Shantanu Mukharji

CHAIR: Maj. Gen. Dipankar Banerji

17 September 2016



Bangladesh is on the edge of a precipice. The veneer of peace has been irrevocably eroded by a spate of killings of secular Muslims, intellectuals, members of religious minority groups, writers and bloggers, gay activists and foreigners, capped by a horrific attack on 20 people—mostly foreigners—at a cafe in an upmarket locality of Dhaka. The dreaded Islamic State claimed responsibility for the gruesome killings. Meanwhile, the Sheikh Hasina government continues to obdurately stick to its position that the terrorists were members of the home grown militant group Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh.

These debates are futile, said many speakers at this seminar. 'The two views are not mutually exclusive,' said Deb Mukharji. The fact, he said, was that elements of the Jamaat received encouragement from the IS that used them as 'footsoldiers' for a higher profile in Bangladesh. The same view was taken by Tariq Karim, who said the truth lay 'somewhere in between' the two positions.

The speakers also talked about the highs and lows of the India–Bangladesh relationship, be it the historic Land Boundary Agreement, common cultural heritage, positive socio-economic indicators in Bangladesh, or adverse political dynamics like the support of the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP) to the controversial Jamaat-e-Islami, a rudderless youth, a lacklustre roadmap for the future. Major General (retd.) Dipankar Banerjee concluded that 'the challenges are quite formidable. Bangladesh alone will have to solve the problem of terrorism. Indian support is not right as it will be seen in the wrong light.'

- KAVITA CHARANJI

# Tibet's Rivers

## SEMINAR

*Damming Crisis in Tibet: Threat to Water Security in Asia*

**CHIEF GUEST:** H.E. Karmapa Orgyen Trinley Dorjee

**COLLABORATION :** Students for a Free Tibet-India

(SFT-India) and Save Tibetan Rivers.org

**23 September 2016**

M.C. Sharma warned that dams on Tibet's rivers are causing the meltdown of glaciers, resulting in global warming, and can be used as a political tool against India, too. Hence, it is the right time for India to raise the Tibet issue internationally. While Tempa Gyaltzen, through examples of dam-induced disasters such as Sichuan (2008) and Ludian Earthquakes (2014), said similar catastrophes are waiting to happen in the fragile Tibetan Plateau, Tanasek Phosrikun from Thailand argued that the Mekong is not just a river but the essence of peoples' beliefs, identity, livelihood; the Pak Mun Dam poses a threat to these. Through picture-plates, Sahidul Alam provided a visual treat of the incredible terrain, people, flora and fauna. Jyotsana George highlighted that dams in the mineral-rich Tibetan Plateau are causing chemical poisoning of fish and shrinking of rivers; the situation being made worse by stifling resistance.

There is an urgent need to forge networks of civil society and environmental stakeholders with a clarion call to save Tibet 'the third pole'; and urge India to pressurise China for a Trans-Boundary Water Sharing Treaty.

**- LAKSHMI BHATIA**



## DISCUSSION

*The Food: Pesticides and Plastics in it*

**MODERATOR:** Naresh Gupta

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** A. K. Sharma

**PANELLISTS:** A. K. Sinha and Naresh Gupta

**14 September 2016**

# Food and Pesticides

## DISCUSSION

Pesticides and plastics in food cause more deaths than many serious diseases. In fact, they are one cause of many cancers and few people are aware of the cost of this on humans and the environment, which, as stated by all the speakers, is huge. There are food safety rules and standards for packaging and labelling by the Bureau of Indian standards, but these are sometimes not adhered to. Regulations regarding recycling and reprocessing of materials, and other guidelines on adopting precautionary measures for use of pesticides and plastics have been in place since 2011, but implementation is poor.

More awareness is needed, the speaker said, about the harmful impact of certain practices by the lay public, such as lack of knowledge about contact time with plastics, using plastic containers of inferior

quality to microwave food, and recycling plastics for food storage. Burning of plastics also results in the release of poisonous gases. The use of pesticides and insecticides beyond recommended levels and inappropriately can lead to acute and delayed health effects. The speaker provided recommendations for reducing harmful impacts: organic agriculture, promotion of bio-pesticides, integrated pest management programmes, and thorough washing and peeling of fruit and vegetables. The Insecticides Act 1968 should be enforced more effectively.



**- MALA KAPUR SHANKARDASS**



# 'Chaturvidh' Brings Traditions Alive

## PERFORMANCE

In Odisha, according to legend, the goddess Sambaleswari Devi imanifests in different forms to bless her devotees. During Dussehra, her various embodiments of *shakti* are celebrated through traditional dance performances in the Sambaleswari temple in western Odisha. This tradition came alive in *Chaturvidh*, a beautifully choreographed four-part expression of Odissi dance by danseuse Sharmila Biswas, disciple of the renowned Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, on the opening night of the annual festival of the arts.

In *Devi Bharani*, the first piece of this production, the transformation of goddess Sambaleswari in her avatars as Parvati, Katyayani, Kali and Sidhidatri, was creatively presented by Sharmila's students from her Kolkata-based Odishi Vision and Movement Centre. Using the shloka '*rupam dehi jayam dehi, yasho dehi dvisho jahi*' as the underlying refrain, Monami Nandy gracefully sculpted the many forms of the goddess with her talented male partner, Krishnendu Roy.

Sharmila's aesthetic choreographic inventiveness was seen in the scintillatingly conceptualised *Abartan-Bibartan*, the second



Using the shloka '*rupam dehi jayam dehi, yasho dehi dvisho jahi*' as the underlying refrain, Monami Nandy gracefully sculpted the many forms of the goddess with her talented male partner, Krishnendu Roy.



## PERFORMANCE

*Chaturvidh: Four Dances in the Odishi Marga*

COLLABORATION: Odishi Vision and Movement Centre, Kolkata

22 October 2016

piece in the repertoire. Imaginative intertwining of various *talas* with games was an enthralling and novel way to showcase a different folk tradition of Odisha. Sharmila has made creative use of inputs from famed Oriya rhythm gurus Dhaneswar Swain, Banamali Maharana and Harmohan Khuntia, to craft an original piece of pure dance.

*Abhinaya* is an integral part of an Odissi performance. Here, the key is the dancer's ability to emote an array of expressions while narrating a story. In *Yashoda's Story*, the third part of *Chaturvidh*, Sharmila showed just why she is such an accomplished dancer. Her excellent *abhinaya* skills came to the fore as a mother (Yashoda) trying to put her mischievous son (Krishna) to sleep and through her storytelling, accidentally discovering that her son was an incarnation of Vishnu. Whether articulating the playfulness of the young Krishna or the indulgence of his besotted mother, Sharmila kept the audience riveted.

Usually, a traditional classical Odissi recital concludes with *Moksha*, a dance signifying liberation of the soul. However, *Chaturvidh*, while being rooted in the Odissi *marga*, chose to close with *Murchhana*, a pure dance piece. Conceptualised and created by Sharmila following her research on the *Mrudanga*, a popular percussion instrument of Odisha, *Murchhana* is a powerful and creative reminder of the rich cultural heritage of the state.



- SWAPNA MAJUMDAR



## Tribute to M. S. Subbulakshmi PERFORMANCE

Gowri Ramnarayan, grand-niece of M. S. Subbulakshmi (MS), presented a musical-narrative tribute to the legend that reflected her adulation of this iconic artist and persona. Her story was interspersed with competent musical renditions by the team of Sushma Somasekharan and Vignesh Ishwar (vocals), Shreya Devnath (violin), B. Vijayagopal (flute) and K. Praveen Kumar (*mridangam*).

Gowri began with MS's humble yet musically rich upbringing in Madurai and went on to delineate the socio-political and cultural milieu that shaped her sensibilities as a person and musician. The early 20th century was ripe with the cultural renaissance, freedom movement, and reformist movements. MS imbibed all of these influences, and the element of *bhakti* added a special touch to her renditions. All of this, combined with an impeccable technique and voice, went into making her that once-in-a-generation artiste.

Gowri chose and arranged the musical compositions with much love and care; some of the MS favourites featured were *Jagaddodharana*, *Brochevarevarura*, *Ma Ramanan*, *Naam Japan kyun Chod Diya*, *Mallika Bone* (*Rabindra Sangeet*).

- RAHUL RAJAGOPALAN



### PERFORMANCE

*Born to Sing: A Shy Girl from Madurai*

Music Direction, Design and Storytelling: Gowri Ramnarayan

Produced by Just Us Repertory, Chennai

23 October 2016

## Women against War

### THEATRE

*Ghazab Teri Ada*

Directed by Waman Kendre

COLLABORATION: National School of  
Drama Repertory Company

23 October 2016



The National School of Drama presented *Ghazab Teri Ada*, an anti-war play adapted from Aristophane's Greek comedy, *Lysistrata*. The adaptation, music, design and direction was by Waman Kendre and the light design by Suresh Bharadwaj. The play was initially performed at NSD as a tribute to war victims around the centenary of World War I. However, with the prevailing war psychosis, the play has contemporary relevance too. Taking a cue from the Greek play, first performed in classical Athens in 411 BC, which was a comic account of one woman's extraordinary mission to end the Peloponnesian War, the protagonist of the Hindi play, Laya, convinces the wives of soldiers to withdraw sexual favours to their husbands until they agreed to desist from fighting the war-mongering king's battles. In the non-violent protest, even the queen is co-opted. In order to seal all alternatives for men, even the lady brothel-keeper is made a co-conspirator. The play ends with the soldiers laying down their arms.

The racy musical, with a folk flavour, was intricately designed by Kendre. The women's protest was unusually orchestrated with the strident ringing of hand-held temple bells in martial style. He avoided the obvious *Ghungroo*, realising that it was more a symbol of femininity than feminism.

- MANOHAR KHUSHALANI



## A Potpourri of Songs PERFORMANCE

On show at this concert was the Lyric Ensemble of Delhi, a new vocal ensemble founded by well-known singer and voice coach Situ Singh Buehler. The group featured Clayton Duggan as conductor, Denise Sanchez as choreographer and Situ as voice coach; Dinai Rentta provided piano accompaniment.

The concert showcased a potpourri of songs from musical theatre, opera and popular music from the Great American Songbook. The list of composers featured was impressive (musical theatre—Richard Rodgers, Stephen Sondheim, Leonard Bernstein, Andrew Lloyd Webber, John Kander, Kurt Weill and Jule Styne; classical/opera—Mozart, Verdi, Delibes, Gioachino Rossini, Offenbach and Lehar; popular music—*Come Fly With Me*, *Seal Lullaby* and *Hail Holy Queen*).

The performances were tight although they were hampered by relatively inadequate sound mixing. Dinai's accompaniment was good even though he was occasionally drowned out by the voices. All the singers did well and sopranos Ashwati Parameshwar and Sparsh Bajpai especially stood out. The blending was adequate although a couple more male voices would have immensely helped the overall balance.

On the evidence of this show, I would unequivocally (pun unintended) rate the Lyric Ensemble of Delhi as one of the best vocal groups around.

- S.CHIDAMBAR



### PERFORMANCE

Arias, Opera and Musical Theatre  
Launch of the Lyric Ensemble of Delhi

24 October 2016

## Mixed Fare

### HINDUSTANI VOCAL MUSIC

Jayateerth Mevundi

25 October 2016



gharaaye...', and Ud. Amir Khan's *Rubaidar Tarana* in the same raga. The melodious '*Bhajan Baje re muraliya baje...*' could have made a perfect finale after this long fare, but Jayateerth continued further with a Kannada *Abhang* before reaching the long awaited *Bharavi*. The *Bandishi Thumri* was again redundant before he switched over to '*Jo bhaje Hari ko sada...*', the concluding *Brahmananda Pada* immortalised by Pt. Bhimsen Joshi.

Mevundi's performance was like the festive Indian *thali* with '*Chhapan Vyanjan*' (multiple cuisines) which did appeal to normal music lovers, but discerning listeners who look for calm and composure were a little disappointed.



## Full Blackness Comes When You Can Kill Your Thoughts

### EXHIBITION

This exhibition comprised K.G. Subramanyan's ink drawings, gouache works, illustrations for children's books and extracts from his writings on art as well as his poetry.

Subramanyan never looked at art in segments of high art, craft or folk but as a holistic practice to which all of these could only add more vitality. He experimented with diverse materials like ceramics, terracotta, ink, making toys, reverse paintings on acrylic sheets.

Subramanyam wrote extensively— for instance, his seminal discourses published as essays in his well-known book, *The Moving Focus: Essays on Indian Art* and subsequent publications like *The Magic Of Making* and *The Living Tradition*. He always taught his students and younger artists to be independent thinkers, quoting from his poem: 'full blackness comes when you can kill your thoughts.'

His draughtsmanship was evident, especially in the pen and ink drawings of birds and animals and children's illustrations, as well as his mastery over emotive expression which, he wrote himself, was the main ingredient bringing vitality to art. Obviously, drawing for Subramanyan was always more than factual representation or mimicry; looking at his drawings in gouache imbued with the burlesque and the fantastic, we see not the figures he outlined but the mind's landscape, where shapes replace memories, colours enhance feelings and stories, crowd our understanding bursting with humour, imaginative reminiscences and scathing satire.

- SABA HASAN



### EXHIBITION

*K.G. Subramanyan: An Aesthetic Journey*

CURATOR: Vijay Kowshik

INAUGURATION: Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan

COLLABORATION: Rasaja Foundation; and the Seagull Foundation for the Arts

22 October to 4 November 2016

## The Youth Play it Right

### CONCERT

CONCERT: By Accordion State Youth Orchestra of Baden-Wuerttemberg

CONDUCTOR: Silke D'Inka

COLLABORATION: Landesmusikrat, Baden-Wuerttemberg; Goethe Institut

26 October 2016



This concert befittingly concluded a brilliantly orchestrated Festival of the Arts. The 30 accordion players, in the age group 16 to 25 years, kept us enthralled in the cool evening while playing in accordance with the conductor's directions. Silke D'Inka, the conductor, began with Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* and, like Mr. Sorabjee mentioned after the show, the audience looked for the 'hidden' clarinets and trombones. From the *lassan* to the end, this opening piece vetted our appetites for more.

The orchestra was expertly supported by percussionists, but apart from that they needed nothing else to produce magic with the personable virtuoso directing from the front. Each piece was received with applause by the enraptured audience including the two syncretic ones from famous Indian films.

The orchestra, comprising the best accordion players of Baden-Wuerttemberg, was founded in 1985 and plays an eclectic mix of music. From their repertoire, we heard some of their best classical, folkloristic and original pieces.

As the players rose, a vision in black and white, from their seats to acknowledge the applause, it was difficult to tell the artiste and the instrument apart as the instrument is worn on the body as an appendage.

The orchestra ended with the bracing *Radetzky March* by Johann Strauss Sr., that is traditionally played as a last piece. Apparently, when Austrian officers first heard the piece, they instinctively clapped along and this tradition was kept alive by the audience in the Fountain Lawn. The Festival thus ended on a high note.

- RIMA ZAHEER

# Asia Society Treasures



IIC EXPERIENCE: A FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

## EXHIBITION

*Time Past and Time Present: Treasures of Human Knowledge at the Asiatic Society, Kolkata*  
With additional photographs by Mala Mukherjee

exhibition offered an instructive tale of the history and the current activities of the Asiatic Society. From the beginning, publications were a high priority. The first book, *Gods of Greece, Italy and India*, 1788, was on view in a fine copy as well as the illustrated original of the *Ain-i-Akbari*. There were facsimile texts of palmleaf manuscripts, books, maps and letters in Sanskrit, Persian, Tibetan, English and other Indian and European languages, as well as samples of plant leaves and sketches of animals.

The activities of the Asia Society did not travel on a one-way track. Many British members donated books and even European paintings when returning home. The influence spread all over Europe: the Hungarian scholar Csoma de Koros was the first full-time librarian of the Asia Society. A translation of Kalidas' *Shakuntala* into English reached Goethe who composed a poem on the theme.

The Asia Society, after 232 years of its founding, is very active in organising symposia, furthering research and publishing. A film, *Rivers of Knowledge*, by Goutam Ghose added to the exhibits shown.

This exhibition opened up a world of intense interest in cross-cultural knowledge before the age of nation states set in.

- DAGMAR BERNSTORFF



## EXHIBITION

**INAUGURATION:** Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan  
**COLLABORATION:** The Asiatic Society, Kolkata; with the support of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India

**22 to 26 October 2016**

# The Diversity of Clay

## EXHIBITION

**EXHIBITION:** *In the Language of Clay*

**CURATOR:** Ritu Sethi

**COLLABORATION:** Crafts Museum and the Craft Revival Trust

**22 to 26 October 2016**



The most ancient of mediums known to man, clay has been creatively used in an unimaginable variety of applications since antiquity. *In the Language of Clay*, an exhibition painstakingly and thoughtfully curated by the Craft Revival Trust and Crafts Museum, displayed the rich vocabulary of many of these ancient skills by their present-day makers.

Represented here were the large horses of the *Ayannar* shrines from Tamil Nadu, crafted by M. Rangaswamy; the delicate paper-thin cut work lamps of Om Prakash Galav from Alwar, Rajasthan; the beautiful painted toys and plates from Kutch painted by Amana Ben; the sophisticated glazed pottery bowls made by Harkishen, master artisan of Delhi; the votive plaques of Molela crafted by Jamnalal and Prashant Kumhar of Rajasthan; the *nazarbattu* roof tiles of Odisha made by Manbodh Ram; clay utensils and toys for everyday use made by Devedeen Prajapati from Madhya Pradesh; and lastly, the wonderful white clay relief work using mirrors crafted by Basar Bhura from Kutch.

The curators ensured that detailed information on each of the practitioners and their craft was displayed on panels at the exhibition which lent itself beautifully to the open spaces of the Gandhi-King Plaza. One cannot help but marvel that a craft as old as this still survives in our midst as a living tradition.

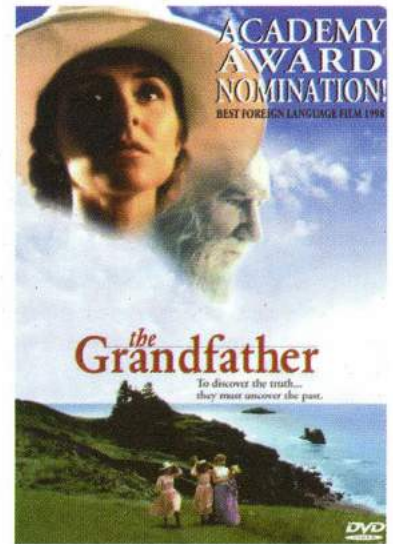
- PURNIMA RAI

# A Taste of the Mediterranean FILM FESTIVAL



IIC EXPERIENCE: A FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

'We are all prisoners of time', rued the *Grandfather* in this eponymous film. The hardships reflected in this regret run across the films, both Spanish and Italian. Whether an Italian film made in 1916 or Spanish ones from 1955 to 2011, personal, social and political suffering is the underlying theme. Franco's regime in Spain is shown to have cast a lot of misery on Spanish society. *The Beehive* highlights the poverty of poets, in contrast to those who made a fortune through illegal business. *Raise Ravens* portrays the struggle of three little sisters who, after seeing both parents die, try to retrieve what they were used to. *Viridiana*, in another eponymous film, is a nun who, upon coming into possession of half of a large estate after her uncle's death, decides to feed and house all the poor in the vicinity. That is when she encounters ungratefulness, drunken and coarse behaviour, which turns into a challenge for her. In *The Grandfather*, Rodrigo de Arista returns to Spain after a failed venture in the United States, only to find that his son has died and his daughter-in-law has two daughters, only one of whom is his grandchild. Through the story of his quest to figure out which one is born of an adulterous



## FILM FESTIVAL

Celebrating Six Decades of Spanish Cinema  
INTRODUCTION by Marta Salomon Moreno  
22 to 26 October 2016

relationship and which one the heir to his meagre property, Garci, the writer-cum-director of the film, shows us the lack of humanity in this world.' Kindness is a danger to society,' says Grandfather.

*The Secrets of the Heart* is a film made in 1997 depicting human suffering through the eyes of a 9-year-old boy. Silently, he tries to unravel the mystery of his father's suicide, the feelings of his alcoholic but romantic aunt, and the logic of the outbursts of his other aunt who is very lonely. In *Death of a Cyclist*, clandestine love between Maria-José, a married woman and Juan, her childhood beau, runs into rough weather when, out on a drive on a deserted road, they accidentally hit a cyclist. Fearing that their relationship would be exposed, instead of stopping to help the cyclist, they speed away. This however preys on the mind of Juan and leads him to unfairly fail a student in her exam. The response is a mass student revolt against him.



Film and performance combined together in the film *Cenere*. The performance consists of two parts : the music prologue to the film (20 minutes), and the live soundtrack (40 minutes). It is about a mother unable to look after her son once her lover abandons her. She leaves the infant with him and goes away, but they unite when he is an adult. The son's fiancée, however, does not want his mother to move in with them, so reluctantly the son goes back to his fiancée and the mother is left alone once again.

- SWATI DASGUPTA



# Three Shakespearean Films

## FILM FESTIVAL

Three masterly films based on William Shakespeare's plays were screened:

*Throne of Blood* (1957) is Akira Kurosawa's illuminating adaptation in Japanese of *Macbeth*. So convincing is the script and its presentation of medieval Japanese folklore and custom, and so astute is Kurosawa's direction, that the film becomes an original creation while retaining the core theme of the original, namely, vaulting ambition gone awry. Toshiro Mifune is memorable in the title role, so is Isuzu Yamada as Lady Macbeth's Japanese version. Hideo Oguni, Shinobu Hashimoto, Ryuzo Kikushima and Kurosawa have written the script. Asakazu Nakai's camera brings the film alive.



Grigori Kozintsev's Russian version of *Hamlet* (1964) is a memorable film. Adapted by Kozintsev and the prescient poet Boris Pasternak, the tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, betrayed by those closest to him comes through powerfully and poetically. Innokentiy Smoktunovskiy as Hamlet gives the performance of a lifetime. Dmitri Shostakovich's music and Jonas Gritsius's camera facilitate the articulation of the script greatly.

Orson Welles' *Othello* (1952) was three years in the making and was very largely funded by his acting jobs. Shot over locations in Morocco, Venice, Tuscany, Rome and the Scalera Studio, also in the city, it is a dynamic, elegant film. Othello is a Moor and the general of the Duke of Venice's army. He is a man of basic emotions who loves his wife Desdemona to distraction and is tricked by his villainous subordinate Iago into murdering her on grounds of alleged infidelity. The monumental tragedy is brought alive by Welles through excellent acting, photography and the most fruitful use of montage in creating emotion in cinema.

All the three films are in black and white and are examples of its beauty and expressiveness.

- PARTHA CHATTERJEE



### FILM FESTIVAL

*A Date with Shakespeare*

26 October 2016

## Encapsulating Intellectual Ferment

### LAUNCH

*IIC Quarterly Autumn 2016 Release*

Edited by Omita Goyal

Released by Mr. Soli J. Sorabjee, President IIC

25 October 2016



The *IIC Quarterly* was released in the presence of distinguished guests and Members. The Chief Editor, Omita Goyal, introduced the *Quarterly* as one of the intellectual arms of the Centre. Now in its 42nd year of publication, it continues to keep abreast of the times, with some articles uncannily prescient.

Following the brief release ceremony, Mr. Soli Sorabjee remarked on the range and diversity of subjects. The *Quarterly* is indeed the 'intellectual food of every member', with its thought-provoking and timely content.

Dr. Karan Singh, Chairperson of the IIC Editorial Board from its inception, expressed approval of the *Quarterly's* aesthetic production values and erudite content which remain consistent. He located the Journal in the context of the IIC as a 'Triveni' that fulfils intellectual, social and cultural needs. The *Quarterly* is an excellent solution to the modern age's turmoil and information overload.

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, Life Trustee and Chairperson, IIC International Research Division, observed that the articles are not restricted to a particular discipline or time-frame—some are topical while others would continue to remain relevant over time.

Air Marshal (Retd.) Naresh Verma, Director, IIC, concluded the evening by urging Members to support the *Quarterly* which 'encapsulates the intellectual discourse—the raison d'être—of the IIC synonymous with its intellectual excitement'.

- RITU SINGH



# Foodnotes to the IIC Experience

## CUISINE

CUISINE: Food Festival

22 to 26 October 2016

A typical leitmotif of a scholastic work is generally distinguished by noteworthy footnotes; the IIC Experience comes full circle with delectable foodnotes, thanks to well-curated dinners, which often matched the theme of the show, ending each day's range of activities and performances with heartening relish.

The lunch on Sunday afternoon was *Flavours of Coastal Kerala*, created by chef Prima Kurien, with the menu highlighting the impact of Dutch, Portuguese and Arabic influences in Kerala cuisine. This was preceded by a programme on M.S. Subbulakshmi. The dinners were initiated with the *Eastern Food of Bengal* by Chitra Ghose, a much-loved name at the Centre. Another noted chef was Atiya Zaidi, who, for the second time, offered us scrumptious *Flavours of the Doab*—highlighting Ganga Jamuni cuisine. And the grand finale was

marked with the *Taste of Germany* capturing the spirit of *leckeressen* which was fully endorsed by the German accordion artists of Baden-Wuerttemberg who consumed each dish with delectable relish. The credit for this treat goes to the German chef, Alexander Moser. Last, but not least, a big salute to the IIC chef, Vijay Thukral, for not only preparing two dinners (*Flavours from the European Continent* and *Barbeque*), but also for overseeing the extensive range of cooking for the entire festival.



Festival Lights at IIC. Photo credit: Achal Kumar

- INDRANI MAJUMDAR

## OBITUARY

- M-3709 Smt. Rohini Purang
- M-3555 Shri Promod K. Batra
- M-3216 Shri A.K. Budhiraja
- M-3211 Shri Anand Kumar Verma
- M-3071 Shri Mata Prasad
- M-1803 Shri S.V.S. Juneja
- M-1692 Shri V.B. Eswaran
- A-6605 Ms Anita Kaul
- A-4629 Smt. Mridula Baidwan
- A-2372 Shri A.L. Bajaj
- A-1664 Smt. Mohini Jagdish Bazaz

## NOTICE

The Election process to the two seats on the Board of Trustees (One from the Individual Members segment and the other from the Institutional Members segment) and four seats on the Executive Committee (Two seats from the Individual Members segment and two seats from the Institutional Members segment) is about to begin soon.

All Members, eligible to vote, may please update their contact details/postal addresses latest by 30th November, 2016.

This is required so that all communications, pertaining to the Elections, are sent at valid postal addresses.

*This issue of the Diary has been assembled and edited by Omita Goyal, Chief Editor; Ritu Singh, Deputy Editor; Rachna Joshi, Senior Asstt. Editor. Published by Ravinder Datta, for the India International Centre, 40, Max Mueller Marg, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi - 110003. Ph.: 24619431. Designed and printed by Shonali Majumdar, Design Art Workshop, B-43, Soami Nagar, Basement, Near Chirag Delhi Flyover, New Delhi - 110017; Phone: +91-11-9811212325*