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'Other' Stories

FILM FESTIVAL

The Open Frame Film Festival 2017

COLLABORATION: Doordarshan; and INPUT- International Public Television; Public Service Broadcasting Trust

13-19 Sept 2017



Krishna's Waiting room

The Open Frame Film Festival featured workshops, PSBT Films made during the last one year, and the best in Public TV.

There were two full-day workshops: 'Diving into Documentaries' by Anupama Srinivasan, and 'Cinema in the Time of Mobile Phone Cameras', a master-class by Ranjan Palit.

The festival presented Mini INPUT, a selection from the best TV Films and Programmes from around the world in partnership with Doordarshan and Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan.

PSBT showcased their documentary films of the year. The screenings were complemented with the filmmakers discussing their films with the audience in the Q& A sessions. In addition, special discussions on subjects and themes relevant to the films and lives enriched the proceedings.

Three extraordinary films stood out for their stories of the 'other' ... stories we need to hear in these extraordinary times:

In a Shadowless Town (Bin Savlyanchya Gavati) by Gouri Patwardhan, pays quiet tribute to the archivists who relentlessly and lovingly collect and safeguard the memory of social change agents Jothirao Phule, Savitribai Phule and the lesser known Fatima Sheikh while the city celebrates its popular and illustrious citizens.



In a Shadowless Town

Ek Inquilab Aur Aaya (Lucknow 1920–49) by Uma Chakravarti portrays the lives of two scholarly women, Sughra Fatima (the poet) and her niece, Khadija Ansari (the revolutionary), who find ways of retaining their selves during difficult and dramatic times.

I Am not Your Negro by Raoul Peck is an archival journey into Black history from the Civil Rights Movement to present times through the words of Alec Baldwin from his incomplete work. This rich archival material transports you to the times and the immediacy surrounding those who lived then.

■ **UMA N. TANUKU**

India and Japan: Shared Values

COLLOQUIUM

India–Japan Colloquium.

COLLABORATION: MEA and the Embassy of Japan

8 September

Member of Parliament.

Dr. Jaishankar spoke about the shared values and complementarity of interests between the two countries. He referred to the important role of Japanese Official Development Assistance in the infrastructure projects undertaken in the country. Cooperation in the civil nuclear defence field is an important development. Ambassador Hiramatsu focused more on the strategic aspect of the relationship. He said that global power was shifting to Asia, and that we are living in an age of uncertainty. He emphasised the security of sea lanes becoming very important. Mr. Panda in his special address said that in Asia, serious challenges to security were posed not just by North Korea, but by the nuclear powers in the region. Security is not only a regional concern, but a global concern as well.

Session I was on ‘Science and Technology Cooperation’. Dr. Tairo Nomura gave an interesting presentation on the ‘Symbiotic Relationship with Robot, AI and Human Being to Succeed in Today’s Complex and Diverse World’. He talked about the growing role and importance of robots; the enhanced importance of the internet and computers in the future, given the changing demography; quality of life; demand for efficiency, etc. He also mentioned the efforts made to introduce this technology in India and the variety of problems confronting them in doing so. This is an area in which there is huge potential for cooperation between the two countries. Mr. K. Vijay Raghavan addressed another crucial issue: climate change. He talked about the importance of having Japan as a partner in science in grappling with the variety of problems faced by the two countries due to the changing environment.

Session II was on ‘Business to Business Relations’. Mr. Ayukawa spoke of the success story of Maruti Suzuki. He said now was the time to look forward and change according to customer requirements. There is a need to invest in high technology in India. Mr. Chandrashekher stated that by all objective parameters, there should have been huge trade and investment between the two countries. The discussion during this session brought out the point that though there was a lot of potential for economic cooperation, it has not really been realised to the fullest.

The two speakers in the last session on ‘Economic-Commercial with Focus on Japan–India Proposal for an Asia-Pacific-Africa Corridor’ were Mr. Izuru Kobayashi and Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia. Mr. Kobayashi highlighted the importance of greater economic connectivity and cooperation for the development of the two mega regions, i.e., Asia and Africa. He also mentioned that in the last ten years, China had emerged as a big investor in Africa. Ambassador Bhatia was of the view that the Asia-Africa Corridor did not clarify which countries in these two regions would be involved. He stated that it would be better if the focus was on India–Japan collaboration in the Indo-Pacific with a focus on Africa.

In this colloquium, what came to the fore was that there is scope, potential and necessity for cooperation in the field of science and technology.

■ LALIMA VARMA

A Phoenix from the Ashes

EXHIBITION:

A Phoenix from the Ashes; The Destruction and Reconstruction of Warsaw 1939–1955

INAUGURATION: Dr. Pawel Ukielski

LECTURE: *Warsaw Rising 1944—Battle for Freedom*

Talk by Dr. Pawel Ukielski

FILM: *A Brave Bunch: The Uprising through Children's Eyes*

DIRECTOR: Tomasz Stankiewicz

20–26 September



Warsaw

This exhibition of photographs on the reconstruction of Warsaw after the near complete devastation at the hands of the conquering German Nazi Airforce and Army during World War II was accompanied by a talk on the miraculous reconstruction of the city by the eminent scholar, Dr. Pawel Ukielski.

Poland, despite being first harassed and then betrayed by the Soviet Union, put up a terrific Resistance through the underground movement known later as the Warsaw Uprising. The sacrifice and heroism of those involved was recalled in the film, *A Brave Bunch*. The Uprising was seen through the eyes of children.

Poland, a country with a rich and distinct culture of its own, was constantly fighting off Russia that wanted it to be its vassal state. A country with an enviable tradition in literature, philosophy and music suddenly found itself beleaguered and then decimated by the anti-Semitic forces of Nazi Germany. The largest concentration of Jews in Europe was in Poland, and possibly the most intellectually gifted. More Jews were deported to the concentration camps and gas chambers of Auschwitz, Dachau and Buchenwald from Poland than from anywhere else.

The Polish Government in Exile's Prime Minister, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, was a famous classical pianist, recalling even in times of war its profound commitment to culture.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

Memories of Another Era

FILM:

In His Inner Voice: Kuldip Nayar by Meera Dewan

Produced by Films Division of India

20 September

This was a special screening to celebrate the 95th birthday of veteran journalist, author, human rights activist and former High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom, Kuldip Nayar. The film comprised in-depth interviews with Nayar, along with selected excerpts from his autobiography read by theatre artist Suneet Tandon, that have been put together very imaginatively. This biopic traces Nayar's early life, in pre-partition India, juxtaposed with the dreams and aspirations of a young Nayar within

an ever changing socio- political cosmos.

The film also recalls one of the most tumultuous times in Indian political history—the Emergency—and the time Nayar spent in Tihar Jail along with many others who raised their voices against the tyranny of the government. It also unveils the lesser known Nayar—his regular attendance at *mushairas*, and his friendship with Faiz Ahmed Faiz whose music is an indispensable part of his life, and his favourite meals at Karim's in old Delhi.

One instance in the film is of his travel in a rickshaw along with Salman Haider in the old Delhi area. It was here that he started his journalistic career with an Urdu Newspaper called *Anjam*, and how his life has come full circle. The film uses the metaphor of the life of Nayar to reveal the history of Partition and post-Partition India. His conversation towards the end of the programme only revealed that he still has a lot to give, and his opinions and perspectives are as relevant today as they were in the past.

■ INDRAJIT

India through Western Eyes

DISCUSSION

Europe's India: Words, People, Empires, 1500-1800 by Sanjay Subrahmanyam (London: Harvard University Press, 2017)

PANELLISTS: Professor Kavita Singh; Dr. Rahul Govind; and Professor Denys P. Leighton

CHAIR: Professor Sunil Kumar

20 September

a gamut of archives in different languages to curate the exhaustive material about the early perceptions of India, but bemoaned the inadequate analysis by the author to develop an overarching thesis.

Professor Kavita Singh's approach to the book was through the prism of her own discipline of art history. Referring to the two major texts that Subrahmanyam himself uses as a springboard, art historian Partha Mitter's *Much Maligned Monsters*, and Edward Said's *Orientalism*, she contrasted the fine-grained quality of the former with the other's more versatile building-block style, and placed Subrahmanyam's book in the category of Mitter's. Exploring the collection of Indian paintings of the Swiss mercenary Polier, she concluded that just as collectors were amassing paintings, so too were artists collecting a range of patrons.

■ AJAY JAISINGHANI

Revisiting Gandhi's Thoughts

CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONTEMPORARY KNOWLEDGE LECTURE 2017

Gandhi, Hinduism and Humanity

SPEAKER: Dr. Faisal Devji

CHAIR AND DISCUSSANT: Dr. Avijit Pathak

COLLABORATION: South Asian University and Society and Culture in South Asia

26 October

paradoxical formulations about Gandhi's conception and its own non-dialectical operation of moving beyond their singularity while at the same time preserving it.

Prof. Avijit Pathak further contextualised Dr. Devji's lecture within the prevailing Indian political context, which he referred to as masculinist, patriarchal, oppressive and militarised. Thus, this lecture was a much needed and timely revisiting of Gandhi's thoughts and ideas.

■ POOJA KALITA

Tracing the genealogy of the ideas explored in Sanjay Subrahmanyam's latest erudite tome, *Europe's India*, to a seminal essay written by Subrahmanyam himself in 1997, titled *Connected Histories*, Professor Leighton discussed the book and its themes, juxtaposing those with the ideas contained in Jonathan Gil Harris's book, *The First Firangis* and to the work of historian Bayly.

Leighton highlighted the fact that the book is a salutary warning against having fixed assumptions on the state of being native and foreign, and how fluid these were as people acculturated and integrated. He lauded the book for its rich exploration of the minutiae of individual experience.

Dr Rahul Govind gave a meticulous chapter-by-chapter critique of the book and commended the author for using

Champanan

PERFORMANCE

Tribute to the Champaran Satyagraha 1917

Champanan se Bapu

Kathak Recital by Shivani Varma

Colours of Imperialism: Memory, Diversity and the Future of Champaran

SPEAKER: Professor Shiv Visvanathan

COLLABORATION: Sarvodaya International Trust

28 September



Champanan Satyagraha

This tribute to the Champaran Satyagraha was an interesting compendium of events to mark the centenary of the Satyagraha, which had clocked the start of the

National Movement under Gandhi. The opening documentary, *Then Came Gandhi*, was followed by an innovative dance recital; Shivani Varma used the kathak dance format to innovate a series of evocative *bhavas* on the much loved bhajans of Gandhian lore.

The highlight of the evening was a talk on the Champaran Movement by Dr. Shiv Vishvanathan, entitled ‘Colours of Imperialism: Memory, Diversity and the Future of Champaran’. He shared his personal take on the Champaran Movement being ‘the oral memory of the people’, with indigo becoming the colour of nationalism. He went on to call the event ‘an account of rumour’, which centred around suspicion of the police and gossip of the peasants, with Gandhi the man talking one to one with the Indian peasant. Interestingly, he revealed that the official papers that he had scanned made no mention of indigo. The colour indigo had held significance as it was a contrast to the associative links with khaki which lurched towards imperialism. In conclusion, Visvanathan went on to state that colour was a memory, and that today we need to ‘dream a new aesthetic, a new swaraj that goes beyond globalisation to dream of the pluralism of colour’.

■ SUBHRA MAZUMDAR

The Endangered Tiger

FILM

The Tiger Who Crossed the Line

DIRECTOR: Krishnendu Bose

3 July

This film won the National Award for the Best Film on Environment Conservation this year. It is a concerned attempt by the veteran director to address the issue of tiger conservation. Thirty per cent of the tigers live outside the sanctuaries provided for them. Outside their habitat, they are preyed upon by humans, who, in turn, are preyed upon by tigers on the loose looking for food, water and a habitat. A tiger can become a killer—one tiger killed nine people in three months, according to Bose in the film. These animals, fighting for their very survival, are caught

in a no-win situation.

Tigers are run over by trains, beaten to death by crowds when they stray into villages, or taken by poachers. Bose points out that no forest conservation officials own up to tigers having strayed out of the forests under their jurisdiction; instead, they put the blame elsewhere. The poor tiger, having nowhere to go, is left to its own devices to survive.

Before one proceeds with protecting the tiger, a plan must be drawn up, taking into consideration water, crops, schooling of children and employment of people who live at the fringes of the tiger sanctuaries. In a village meeting, Bose was told that the tiger indeed served a useful role in protecting the area at night from other animals and intruders. The film is well thought out and deeply felt, and it rises above the clichés of development versus conservation.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

Guiding India

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Navigating India: \$ 18 Trillion Opportunity by Bharat Joshi (Rupa: New Delhi, 2017)

PANELLISTS: Bill Spindle; Baijayant Panda; and Dr. Rahul Singh

CHAIR: Shakti Sinha

8 September

This book is a non-prescriptive, factual detail of the skewed development of India amidst major paradoxes. It is an objective compass to a complex economy, through first-hand accounts and insights from India's most respected names in business, public governance, diplomacy and intelligentsia. The linkages across sectors and industries are presented with ease in case studies woven together in a commendable level of detail in research data, figures and analysis. The core issues faced by India, the cross linkages between the government and business, culture and modernity, demographics and democracy are all vital to understanding India. There is an incisive and comparative account of the development of China and

Singapore.

While analysis forces the realisation that India is a potential \$18 trillion opportunity, the truth is that India has not realised that potential. Even as readers are curious as to where India goes off-track, the fast and furious explanations in the book about the reasons for the failure to capture opportunity are the only spoiler; the failure analysis and causes are not discussed in sufficient detail.

A key take-away is that growth is not automatic and instead of one method, it is a convergence of various methods that can harness technology with politics, regulations and businesses to effectively address the rapidly evolving aspirations of the youth.

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Training for Governance

TALK

Role of UPSC in Governance

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Deepak Gupta

CHAIR: Sanjay Kothari

COLLABORATION: IC Centre for Governance

8 September

This talk was part of a new series on 'Role of Constitutional/ Statutory Institutions in Governance'.

Mahesh Kapoor, Vice President, IC Centre for Governance, welcomed the speakers and the audience, and Prabhat Kumar, former Cabinet Secretary, gave the introductory remarks. Kumar briefly traced the history of the process of recruitment to the Civil Service in India, beginning from the days of the East India Company when a three-year training course covered international law, oriental languages and Indian history and ethics. He also raised some key issues for the speakers to address, like the age of recruitment for the civil services and lateral entry to the IAS.

Both the speakers covered a whole range of subjects and agreed that the age of recruitment to the Civil Services needs to be brought down and catching them young was very important. Unfortunately, the age limit has become a political issue, which is highly undesirable. It was emphasised that the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has enjoyed an unsullied reputation ever since its inception. Its roles and functions were enumerated, mentioning how it was able to enjoy a good reputation and maintained standards in selecting civil servants strictly on merit.

■ NANDITA SINHA

Making of a Masterpiece

FILM

Shatranj ke Khilari

BOOK RELEASE: *My Adventures with Satyajit Ray: The Making of Shatranj Ke Khilari*

By Shantanu Ray Chaudhuri and author Suresh Jindal

COLLABORATION: HarperCollins India

24 October

Awadh, was in the wrong profession. Poet, singer, composer and dancer, he was not interested in matters of state. But the riches and jewels of the crown could not be ignored. He remained, consequently, just what the British wanted him to be: a figurehead. When the imperialists finally decided to take over Awadh, the Nawab, faced with a checkmate in real life, decided to give up his throne rather than fight the enemy. The two chess players, who would do anything to keep moving their pieces on a board, were not concerned at all as the British occupied Awadh.

Starring Sanjeev Kumar, Saeed Jaffrey, Victor Bannerjee, Richard Attenborough, Tom Alter, Farida Jalal and Shabana Azmi, *Shatranj ke Khilari* is one of Ray's very few films in Hindi.

■ SWATI DASGUPTA

Workography vs Biography

DISCUSSION

Trial, Tribulations and Triumphs: Life and Times of a Sociologist (New Delhi: Konarak Pub. 2017)

CHIEF GUEST: M. Hamid Ansari

SPEAKERS: Dr. T.N. Madan; Dr. George Mathew

CHAIR: Justice Rajinder Sachar

COLLABORATION: Konark Publishers

25 October

A 30-year old man approaches Satyajit Ray, who was by then a legend, and tells him he wants to work with him in Hindi or English or even Bengali. Ray accepts. This man, Suresh Jindal, goes on to produce, in 1977, Ray's most expensive film, *Shatranj ke Khilari*. Forty years later, Harper Collins publishes *My Adventures with Satyajit Ray: The Making of Shatranj Ke Khilari*. After a short introduction by Ray Chaudhuri, Jindal shared his interesting experience of working with Ray. This prompted him to publish the exchange of letters between the two.

Shatranj ke Khilari is based on a short story by Munshi Prem Chand. Through the story of two chess-loving landlords, the film highlights the condition of Awadh at the time of the 1857 Mutiny. Wajid Ali Shah, the Nawab of

The discussion around Professor T.K Oommen's book, about his journey as a sociologist, was marked by the elegance and humour the writer himself exhibits. Professor Oommen insisted that his book be called a 'workography' as opposed to a biography; the latter would apparently belie his intention to present a perspective from below. *Trial, Tribulations and Triumphs* includes vignettes from his life as an 'accidental' sociologist, his life as a student and a teacher; along with a few speeches, and various texts and monographs written by him. The humility and light-heartedness with which the writer introduced his new book was soon replaced by an engaging conversation about his significant contributions to the discipline as a teacher, a sociologist and a friend.

Professor T.N Madan took up the themes in the book to re-present it as a life of a sociologist who had to overcome different barriers: linguistic, disciplinary and ideological. Dr. Mathew recalled the memories of having Professor Oommen as a teacher and guide in Jawaharlal Nehru University. Dr. Krishnan emphasised the underlying theme of the book, that at the core of it lies Oommen's attempt to link sociology to social welfare.

Is it possible to fully pen one's life as a sociologist who has witnessed the trials and triumphs of a discipline and of institutions? When the answer 'No' comes with laughter, possibilities open up.

■ LEKI THUNGNON



Bharatnatyam Ensemble: Breaking New Ground

Monarchy and autocracy. The private salons of courtesans. An ancient river, now post-apocalyptic. Justin McCarthy dwelt on several worlds in his new work, calling attention to how we access and cite history in our imagination of Bharatanatyam.

The first piece explored the spatial geometry of the procession, in three instances featuring Uma and Maheshwara, an archetypal south Indian king, and Elizabeth I. Deploying movement that is minimal and deliberately repetitive, the dancers gesture to the static, tableau-like quality of the procession. The procession is a premise that is greater than the sum of its parts. We are not being asked to behold the ‘dance’; instead, we reflect on the dynamics of a composite being in motion—harnessing charioteers, onlookers, deities and animals. Echoes of the *mallari*, a *nadaswaram* composition played during processional temple rituals, are present in the piece.

From the very public procession, the next piece was the scene of a salon performance. We are introduced to the patron, with his



Shri N.N. Vohra, President, IIC inaugurating the Festival



Where the Streets are Fragrant with Sandal Paste: New Ensemble works in Bharatanatyam choreographed by Justin McCarthy

7 October

briefcase and his umbrella. The notion of performance becomes self-referential, as the women perform, supplement each other’s narratives, confide in each other, flirt with the patron, and offer a willing shoulder to cry on, as they recreate the space of the salon. Key *javalis* by the Telugu composer Dharmapuri Subbarayar form the backbone of this narrative. Conflict undergirds the *javali*. If *sakhi prana* leaves the *nayika* increasingly despondent, pained by rejection and betrayal, *vagaladi* sees her being strident and forceful, reaffirming her claims over love and desire, one allegation at a time.

McCarthy initially created his final piece, *On the Banks of the Yamuna*, for students at Ashoka University. In this version, Bharatanatyam dancers dwell on the poetics of nature, juxtaposing them against the reality of ecological devastation. One of the poems McCarthy draws on is the *padam Mathura nagarilo*, which previously served as a moment of rupture

for the dancer Chandrlekha—shaken into questioning her art by the *padam*’s dissonant recalling of a plentiful Yamuna in times of drought. By bringing in various poetic references to nature and offering a textual evocation of the present state of the river as metaphor, the piece makes a statement about the fraught, stilted depiction of nature in dance, even as reality takes a different turn.

The individuality of McCarthy’s dancers is heartening to watch, with each of them taking ownership of the performance and assuming a particular agency in how they interpreted various situations. The performance was celebratory in spirit.



Bharatnatyam Ensemble

■ **RANJANA DAVE**



Enthralling Music

The Carnatic Violin Duet concert by the Mysore Brothers, Nagaraj and Dr. Manjunath, was enthralling. Their father and Guru, Vidwan M. Mahadevappa, adorned the royal court of Mysore. They were accompanied by Tumkur Ravishankar on mridangam and Guruprasanna on *kanjira*.

The Mysore Brothers began the concert with Muthaiah Bhagavata's composition *Jalanthara*, set to Raga *Valaji*. The nuances of this captivating morning raga were well elaborated. This was followed

by a rare *kriti Pariyachakama* by Saint Tyagaraja in Raga *Vanaspati*. The main piece was *Manavyalakinchara* in Raga *Nalinakanti*, another popular *Thyagaraja kriti* suited for instruments. The composition is an appeal to the mind to understand the compassionate heart of Lord Rama. The essence was well captured by their lucid performance.

The next piece was a short Ragam *Thanam Pallavi* in Raga *Kalyani*. The Mysore Brothers beautifully extended the *Pallavi* with a *Ragamalika*, touching upon Raga *Charukesi* and *Nattakurinji*. In the *Tani Avartana* which followed, Tumkur Ravishankar and Guruprasanna matched each other with masterly skill over their instruments.

The concluding piece was *Paahi Paahi Gajanana*, a bhajan in Raga *Sindhu Bairavi* rendered in a unique way, mixing with Muthuswamy Deekshidar's English Note.



Carnatic Violin Duet

■ GEETHA RAJARAM



MUSIC

Carnatic Violin Duet by the Mysore Brothers

8 October

IIC Experience: A Festival of the Arts

Variegated Experience

DANCE

Folk Dance and Music from Cambodia. Presented by the Cambodian Artist Troupe

COLLABORATION: Indian Council for Cultural Relations

11 October



Folk Dance and Music from Cambodia

Cambodia has had a centuries-long performing arts tradition serving the royal courts, and village and temple rites. However, during the tragic era of the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s, this came to an end when cultural institutions were closed and all performances ceased. After the regime change, in 1979, surviving professional performers returned to Phnom Penh to commence performances.

As it unfolded, the range of sounds encompassed solo as well as ensemble music, including the sharpness of the vertical spike fiddle and the more mellow two-string fiddle. We also got to hear a catchy item featuring the *Roneat Ek*, the deep-toned xylophone, along with a bamboo flute and the onomatopoeic *Chhap Chhing* or cymbals. The *skor*, drum, was the ever-present percussion.

Among the dances was the recently choreographed Taingyou Umbrella dance inspired by the Kula ethnic minority whose ladies use it against both sun and rain. The performance ended with the charming *Chaiyyam*, the Cambodia-India Friendship dance, where the flags of both countries wave close to each other and the artistes wished the audience good luck and success.

■ ASHARANI MATHUR



Vidushi Kishori Amonkar

Nandini Bedekar's tribute to her guru, Vidushi Kishori Amonkar, brought back the melodious memory of Gana-Saraswati Kishori Amonkar's very last concert in March this year, when she had presented the same raga assisting her late guru. It was once again the sombre evening raga *Puriya-Dhanashri* and Nandini presented it with the same restraint. Music lovers were offered the same sense of wonder, guessing the actual raga, till she revealed the pivotal *Pancham* that disclosed the long-awaited secret.

Nandini opened with a *Bada Khayal* set to *Vilambit Teen-Tala* according to the convention of the Jaipur Atrauli Gayaki tradition, and indulged in detailed *Aalapi*, revealing the interiors of the raga from *Mandra* to *Madhya Saptak* through the gradual progression of *swaras* till the *Taar Shadja*. After meandering the upper octave, she returned back to the *Mukhda* and started the rhythmic *Taans* in '*Barabar ki Laya*', gradually proceeding to faster *Taan-patterns*. The popular *Chhota khayal* '*payaliya jhankar*' followed thereafter.

Raga Kedar was a contrast after the detailed delivery of her main raga. The slow *Teentala* composition was followed by the traditional *Drut Ektala Bandish* '*chatur sughar Balma...*' that delighted the audience.



A Tribute to Kishori Amonkar

■ MANJARI SINHA



HINDUSTANI VOCAL RECITAL

A Tribute to Kishori Amonkar by Nandini Bedekar

COLLABORATION: Raza Foundation

9 October

A String Quartet in Concert

CONCERT

By the Cremona Quartet

COLLABORATION: Italian Embassy Cultural Centre

10 October



Cremona Quartet

Giuseppe Verdi's *String Quartet in E Minor*, the only chamber music that he ever wrote, which was meant to demonstrate that an Italian composer could also excel in a genre totally dominated by German and Austrian composers. The Quartet signed off with two encores—Verdi's *aria Quando le sere al placido* from the opera *Luisa Miller*, featuring Gualco as soloist, and a medley of songs from Ennio Morricone's soundtrack for the film *Mission*.

The Quartet featured Cristiano Gualco and Paolo Andreoli on violins, Simone Gramaglia on viola, and Giovanni Scaglione on cello. The group is a highly acclaimed string quartet that has performed widely across the world. Based in Cremona, the best known centre for the manufacture of stringed musical instruments, the musicians played on instruments hand-crafted by the legendary Antonio Stradivari in the 17th and 18th centuries. The sound quality of the instruments was magnificent, and the musicians' individual virtuosity and collective playing was top class.

The group opened with *Quartet Opus 2 No. 6* by Luigi Boccherini, an accomplished cellist, whose love for the cello came through strongly. Otterino Respighi's *Quartet in D Major* followed. The Quartet then played Giacomo Puccini's *Crisantemi*, composed in a single night as an elegy to mark the death of a friend, which he also used in his opera *Manon Lescaut*. The concluding piece was

■ S. CHIDAMBAR



Discovering Ahimsa

'Mohan Se Mahatma' centred around a turning point in Indian history: the Champaran Satyagraha. The performance was dedicated to the memory of the late Tom Alter, who had last played this role. The play opened with 55-year-old Gandhi, essayed by Ravi Raj Sagar, sitting at his 'munshi desk' writing notes about the Satyagraha in his autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth*. In the chapter entitled, 'Face to Face with Ahimsa', Gandhi shows how he evolved, at Champaran, his most potent non-violent weapon of the century. It introduced Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to the Indian rural milieu.

With just a change of lighting, accompanied by the sound of a chugging steam engine, the director, Sayeed Alam created a railway platform and heralded the arrival of the then 47-year-old Mohan, in a Kathiawari dress, also enacted by Sayeed.

The high point of the play was when the British found it necessary to nip Gandhi's movement in the bud and frame charges against him. However, seeing the groundswell of public support, they panic, and before he can appear in court, withdraw charges against him. The country thus had its first taste of Civil Disobedience, and Mohan became Mahatma.



Mohan Se Mahatma

■ MANOHAR KHUSHALANI



PLAY

Mohan Se Mahatma

DIRECTOR: Dr. M. Sayeed Alam

Presented by Pierrot's Troupe

8 October

IIC QUARTERLY, AUTUMN 2017

Release: Shri N.N. Vohra

Edited by Omita Goyal

10 October

The launch of the Autumn issue of the *IIC Quarterly* in the green and serene environs of the Gandhi-King Plaza is now a much anticipated event of the *IIC Festival of the Arts*. The release was preceded by a sumptuous tea that gave distinguished Members and guests an opportunity to mingle, while browsing the contemporary sculptures and installations by young and upcoming artists on view in the Plaza.

Air Marshal Naresh Verma extended a warm welcome to the large gathering, and in particular to Shri N. N. Vohra, who was to release the Journal for the first time as President, IIC. Chief Editor Omita Goyal welcomed the two new members of the Editorial Board, Malavika Karlekar and Pratik Kanjilal, and briefly summarised the contents of the issue with its focus on literature and the arts, both Indian and foreign.

President N. N. Vohra noted the absence of Dr Karan Singh, with regret and reminisced about the *Quarterly's* origins from its earliest days as *Conspectus*, and its evolution into its modern avatar. The *Quarterly* deserved a much wider readership amongst Members, as one purpose of the Centre was to 'precipitate a deeper understanding and to bring the national spirit more in focus as to where we wished to go'—and the *Quarterly* played a critical role to this end.

■ RITU SINGH



IIC Quarterly Launch

Encounters and Collaborations



Exhibition Russian State and India

This exhibition marked 70 years of diplomatic relations between Russia and India.

Curated by Dr. Hari Vasudevan, it revealed the historic bonhomie that prevailed between Russia and India, with several pictures and illustrations showing Lenin, the undisputed Russian leader, interacting with revolutionaries from India. It contained a wealth of archival information and included photographs, maps, illustrations, copies of paintings, portraits and engravings, and gave us an insight to the role of Indian revolutionaries in the Russian revolution, among other facets of Indo–Russian engagement.

The links between India and Russia have always been presented as connections forged between centres of power. Moscow, St. Petersburg, Delhi and Calcutta figured prominently on various occasions. Policies and visits of dignitaries have been central to relations, and continue to be seen as such, but are often much more. The links between centres of power reflected the range of large states and kingdoms that have formed and reformed in Eurasia and South Asia.

■ GAURIKA KAPOOR

EXHIBITION

The Russian State and India—Imperial Encounters to Contemporary Collaboration

CURATOR: Dr. Hari Vasudevan

COLLABORATION: Institute of Foreign Policy Studies, Calcutta University; and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata

7-21 October

Crossing Generations

These were two rich and varied visual treats: a group show by established artists, and a display of ‘sculptures and installations by young upcoming artists’. In his curatorial note to the group show *Carrying Roots Around*, Manish Pushkale highlighted ‘the metaphor of “roots”, very relevant in ‘today’s violent modernity’. Ganesh Haloi, Atul Dodiya, Jaishree Chakraborty, V. Ramesh, Veer Munshi, Akhilesh, Nancy Adajania, Jagannath Panda, Mona Rai and Manisha Parekh used a range of multimedia to express their take on what it meant to have one’s roots—or that of the nation, the world—embedded within one’s psyche. For Atul Dodiya, a huge blow up of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi walking with followers on Juhu beach needed a flaming man-simian figure suspended above, or a Mondrian-like panel attached to another image of the Mahatma’s funeral pyre. It was attached—and yet separate. At a corner of the image of the beach, a man walked out of the frame with a chair on his head. Ganesh Haloi’s delicate play with geometrical shapes in water colour drew attention within a large, almost colour-free context, and V. Ramesh’s ‘With Memory of Blue’ was evocative of dream sequences.



Exhibition Carrying Roots



Exhibition Rumbles in the Playpen

In 'The Israp Chronicles', Nancy Adajania dealt with something that bothers her—the dwindling Parsi population. If Adajania succeeded in bringing home the fact that the Parsis may indeed be almost gone from the globe, Veer Munshi used the gardening term 'scarify' to advantage in his huge MDF frame called *Scarifying Heritage*.

Rumbles in the Playpen was what Curator Tarini Sethi called 'the land of the strange, the accidental, the questioning, the never-ending road'. Youthful enthusiasm can well afford such ruminations on infinity and the imaginative brought out in Tarini's large metal puppets and the many evocations by Harsh Nambiar, Ayesha Singh, Mehr Chatterjee, Aditya Dutta, Jaiveer Singh and Nanaki Singh. Ceramicist Ishaan Lamba clearly loved working with clay and spending hours firing his pieces, while the writings and sketches by the Zines group stressed the desire to 'to go back to the old copy machine, say goodbye to photo shop and apps, and say hello to staplers and ink'. This reviewer felt very comfortable seeing their renderings, and could not but feel that there was a connect between the two exhibitions: art in many forms satisfies this primeval quest for roots, crossing generations seamlessly.

■ MALAVIKA KARLEKAR

EXHIBITION

Carrying Roots Around. Contemporary Art
curated by Manish Pushkale

COLLABORATION: Raza Foundation

7-21 October

EXHIBITION

Rumbles in the Playpen. Contemporary work—
Sculptures and Installations by young upcoming
artists

Curated by Tarini Sethi

7-11 October

'Ha Mitbach'—Cuisine from Israel

CUISINE, 7-11 October

Israeli Jewish cuisine has today developed into a fusion of traditional Mizrahi, Sephardic and Ashkenazi styles, with influences of the Levantine, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines. This evening diners were treated to delectable starters with humus, falafel, tuhina and pita, a range of various salads and main courses of vegetables for the veggie-conscious, along with a delicious baked fish, baked eggs, lamb kebabs and chicken shashlik, followed by deserts from miscellaneous regions topped with cold mint tea and strong Turkish coffee. The presentation by the Embassy of Israel was outstanding. If there was any shortfall it was the absence of olives!



■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Traditional Bihari Bhoj

The ancient land of Bihar is a palimpsest of many cultural influences and its cuisine mirrors this. It's not about *litti-chokha* only. In fact, the types of *chokha* are endless, made with fish or different vegetables, each with its distinctive flavour. Potbelly restaurant presented this variety with delicately spiced mutton champ and *Jamarua*, a potato and aubergine dish flavoured with mustard oil. *Makhana* was used in a curry, as well as a *kheer* and *boondi* served with a fine sauce of hung curd.





The Original Indian Table

Creativity is a hallmark of good cuisine and Alex Moser and Vipul Gupta served an exciting meal using the ‘forgotten foods of India’ such as millet, barley, varieties of rice and locally grown ingredients such as Ladakhi black peas, wild mushrooms and Himachali walnuts. The dishes were amazing, especially the spicy mango curry served with Diana red rice, grown in Karnataka and great for diabetics; barnyard millet biryani—vegetarian and non-vegetarian; and desserts such as the black sesame *laddus*. A truly memorable dinner.

■ PREMOLA GHOSE



Flavours of Thailand

Presented by Geetika Goel of My Thai Kitchen, the starters and salads were the highlight of the meal, and included vegetable spring rolls with a sweet chilly sauce, minced chicken on toast served with pickled vegetables; and, corn fritters with a hot Sriracha sauce. The salads included the iconic green papaya salad; vegetable salad in a creamy peanut dressing; and, an egg dish curiously called ‘son-in-law’ eggs.

The vegetarian main course consisted of stir-fried vegetables with holy basil and the ubiquitous green curry. Steamed fish in soy-ginger sauce; a prawn and pineapple curry; and, stir-fried chicken with cashew nuts, red chilly and peppers were the non-vegetarian offerings. All this was accompanied by steamed jasmine rice and traditional flat Pad Thai noodles.

Mango panna cotta with cherry compote; a coconut caramel custard; and, coconut ice cream rounded off this food extravaganza.



Flavours of the Asian Spice Route

This dinner curated by Anumitra Ghosh-Dostidar of Diva Spice was an experience to remember. The starters were most exciting. Lovely, crisp tempura of assorted vegetables with a very fresh yoghurt dip; fish cutlets in a mango sauce that was sweet yet tangy; tomato salad in a Burmese dressing; and, spinach roulade with spicy coconut paste. Each starter was excellent with a very distinctive taste.

In the mains, the vegetarian dishes won over the non-vegetarian ones. Cottage cheese wrapped in banana leaf with an Indonesian dressing; fried brinjal (our very own *begun bhaja*) with beetroot raita; stuffed potatoes in a sauce; and, yam and raw banana in coconut curry. The last was excellent. The non-vegetarian dishes consisted of a red snapper curry with *kokum*; chicken stew flavoured with candle nuts; and, a somewhat unfortunate selection, *bhuna mutton*.

Dessert consisted of *laung latika*, cheesecake flavoured with *gondhoraj* lime, and vanilla ice cream with plantains.

■ SUNANDA GHOSH



Mehek–Angaron Ki

Delectable starters like kebabs, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, were followed by delicious and unique mains—made on the barbecue. The most unusual *khub* kebab was a universal favourite, as was the *ulta tawa ka paratha* made fresh on the upside-down *tawa* in front of us. Other dishes were the fish and mutton kebabs, soaked in unusual sauces and accompanied by a tangy pomegranate chutney and an equally scrumptious pineapple chutney. Finally, the *badam halwa* and *kulfi* sent us into silent contemplation and bliss.

■ CHANDANA DEY



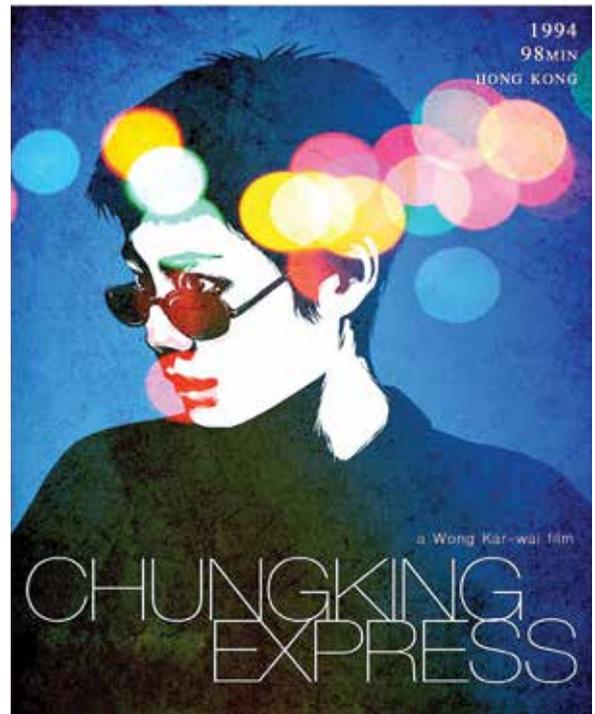


Journey through Cities

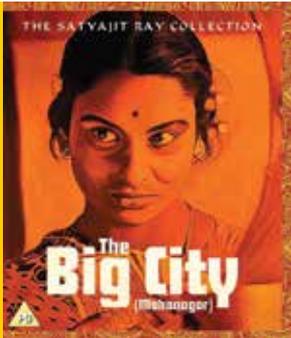
This cinematic journey presented ten award winning films of great masters of Italian cinema. Classics from China, France, Germany, UK and India on the theme of cities were also screened.

Mahanagar (The Big City, 1963) by Satyajit Ray is about a woman who begins to work as a salesperson to support her family. She becomes the sole breadwinner when her husband loses his job. Jobless and helpless, he begins resenting her. She resigns her job when her colleague is unfairly dismissed. She is worried but her husband tells her *Earning our daily bread has made us cowards. But you weren't a coward. Is that a small achievement?* Living in cities has today become much more difficult to sustain than earlier, not just financially. The film quietly brings home all that which sustains life itself.

In *Red Desert (Deserto Rosso, 1964)* by Michelangelo Antonioni, the protagonist lives with her young child and husband who works at a petrochemical plant. Deeply depressed after a car accident, she is unable to relate to the harsh modern industrial society she lives in. In his first colour film, Antonioni takes care to show us the



Film *Chungking Express*



A Cinematic Journey Through Cities: A Festival Of Films

COLLABORATION: Italian cities presented by Italian Embassy Cultural Centre Cine Club. Cineclub—Incontri in Biblioteca

7-11 October

industrial complex in all its beauty, very different from the image of Italy that we carry in our mind's eye. The film suggests our inability to come to terms with modern life.

Chungking Express (Chung Hind Sam Lam, 1994) by Wong Kar-wai is about two unrelated stories, but connected briefly in time. A young policeman, who is a regular at the snack shop Chungking Express, is trying to come to terms with breaking up with his girlfriend. He meets a drug smuggling woman and falls in love. Another policeman, not willing to accept that his girlfriend has broken up with him, visits the same shop. The girl working there falls in love with him and disappears the moment he shows interest. It is a film about 'love in absence'; characters fall in love as they clean homes/objects of the other. The small physical space or objects are just enough to become the receptacle of their affection and they do not wait for its fulfillment. 'The other' is just the trigger to be happy, perhaps.

Quiet Bliss (In grazia de dio, 2014) by Edoardo Winspeare introduces us to the Mediterranean region—the land and the sun bearing witness to the lives of four women of a family who, when faced with debts, lose their factory and home and move to an isolated olive farm near the sea. The women take their time to settle down to a new rhythm of life at the farm, while their individual and collective lives take another form. We experience the 'pace of life' in that region when the women travel through the countryside, the wind blowing through the olive trees, and the sun firmly gazing down upon moments of uncertainty in their lives.

■ **UMA N. TANUKU**



Message from the Director

Following upon the varied issues raised by Members during the Annual General Body Meetings held on 31st March 2017 (disrupted) and 23rd June 2017: the Management has initiated/implemented the required remedial measures. *Inter alia*, to meet the repeated criticism that the Executive Committee (EC) had not been kept informed about various important matters relating to the Centre's functioning, Director held two informal meetings with EC members (2nd August and 21st October 2017), while President had three such exchanges (21st July, 30th August and 3rd November 2017), and also chaired a formal meeting of the EC (28th August 2017). President convened two meetings of the Board of Trustees (on 21st July and 8th October 2017), and has also been having consultations on given issues with Life/Elected Trustees.

A Special Internal Audit of the functioning of certain wings of the Centre has been carried out and, based thereon, disciplinary action has been initiated/taken against defaulting functionaries. President has directed strict action to be taken for any deviation from the norm whatsoever in regard to the conduct, efficiency and integrity of the Centre's staff. As decided by him, we are also engaged in a full scale revamp to see that we have beautiful gardens in the coming months. Besides meeting Members, President has taken rounds of the various wings of the Centre.

The IIC Experience 2017, which was held from 7th to 11th October 2017, received immense praise and plaudits. In many ways, this year's festival broke new ground. Justin McCarthy's new ensemble works in Bharatnatyam were choreographed especially for the Festival. 'The Original Indian Table' was an innovative and unusual food experience using forgotten ingredients from our rich food heritage.

The Festival paid tribute to two eminent artists, the late Vidushi Kishori Amonkar and Tom Alter, and also commemorated 70 years of India-Russia diplomatic relations through an exhibition. A heartening feature of this year's Festival was the large attendance, which saw the Fountain Lawns filled to capacity.

The Centre is considering a makeover of its website to incorporate new features and to engage viewers in its programmes in a more interactive format. We believe we can take advantage of the new forms of social media to attract young minds to contribute to this unique institution that has for long been a platform for the meeting of minds for intellectual debate and the promotion of culture and the arts. We will keep our members informed as this proposal moves forward.

To improve service, the Dining Halls and Lounges will soon be provided with a wireless waiter calling system. There will be a four-key call button pad, on each table, to call for the required service—drinks, food, bill, etc. The waiter will get an indication on his wrist-band, for immediate response. We hope that this innovative addition will improve the service in the catering venues.

Some Members had complained about the lack of toilet facilities for the large number of drivers who park their vehicles along the Max Mueller Marg. We had taken up this issue with NDMC. A toilet block has since been constructed by NDMC, across the road in front of Gate No. 2.

Air Marshal Naresh Verma (Retd.)

Obituary

L-0367	Shri Inder Sharma	A-0766	Shri N.J. Kamath
M-1205	Prof. Satish Chandra	A-1769	Shri Sohindar Singh Rana
M-1663	Shri Vir Vikram Prakash	A-2365	Smt. Naazish Husaini
M-1800	Shri H.P. Palamkote	A-2526	Smt. Prem Arjan Singh
M-2037	Shri P. Parameswara Rao	A-3098	Smt. Prabha Sikri
M-2108	Marshal of The Air Force Arjan Singh	A-3219	Dr. Atindra Sen
M-3305	Shri M.V. Murugappan	A-3559	Smt. Pamela M. Singh

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