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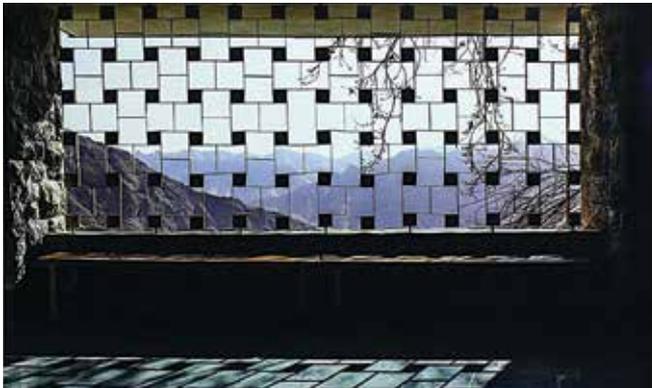
July – August 2019

Rowzaneh Be Iran

EXHIBITION

Rowzaneh: Iran Through my Lens
by Aziz Mahdi

24 to 30 July 2019

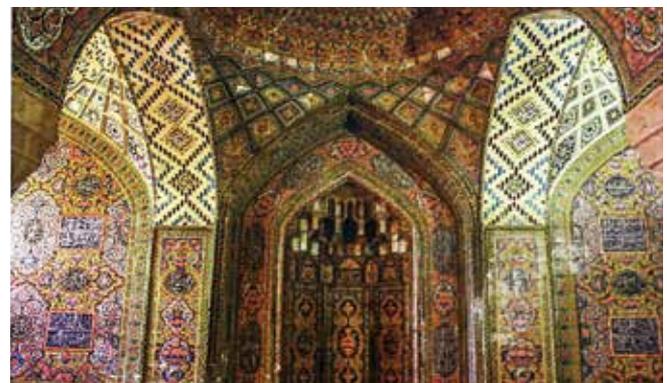
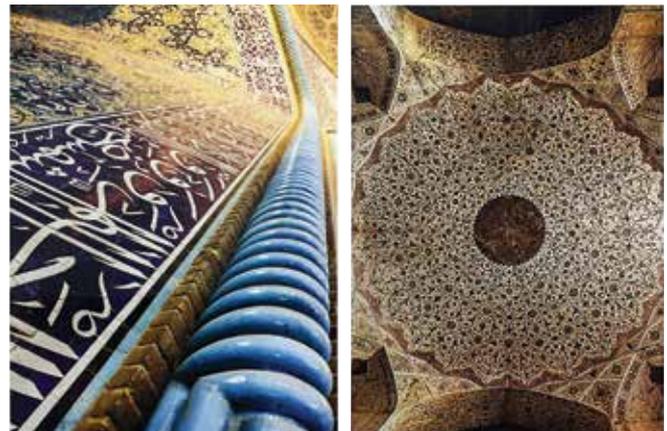


From captivating landscapes, to the intricacies of Islamic architecture, to portraits of people—Aziz Mahdi captured all this through his lens, having spent more than a decade in Iran.

We think of Iran as an oil-producing nation, and it rarely occurs to many that it is a land of beauty and gentle, smiling people. Aziz showcased these other facets through his photographs.

One of the most eye-catching images was that of the 'chakachak' fire temple. Shot through a window with the mountains in the background, it was a frame within a frame. Colourful architecture, with details of Islamic patterns in bright colours, made interesting compositions. Ilalliqa highlighted the texture of a doorway with brilliant turquoise knobs, making a simple picture come alive.

Iran appears to have diversity in landscapes, and Aziz has made efforts to frame these. He has also shot people at



work, and some weather-beaten faces as portraits of the inhabitants.

While the abstracted images photographed might not hold the same quality, they retain a thought process. The image of a stained glass arch did stand out through the bright contrast of colour.

It is commendable that Mahdi lived in Iran, and spent time seeking the changing times and the beauty of a lesser-known country.

Aptly, one of the images shows people silhouetted, walking in a line over a gentle slope, titled 'Walk of Life'. Indeed it is. Life through Aziz's lens.

■ LOLITA DUTTA

Art and Environment

EXHIBITION

Vriksha

CURATOR: Uma Nair

3 to 12 July 2019

This exhibition drew art lovers and environment enthusiasts from all walks of life. Forty artists with about 80 works spanned a range from photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics and prints. Historic were the 11 ink-jet prints of the master, Jyoti Bhatt, specially loaned



for the show, as well as the four drawings by Himmat Shah done as far back as 2005. Arpana Caur's 2008 work and S. Paul's 2010 photographs formed the spine of historicity, while Soham Gupta, the star of the Venice biennale, gave in a tree shot at midnight that limned the depths of darkness. The ceramic sculptures by Vipul Kumar and his brother Keshari Nandan

were a turning point in design. Interior design guru Rajiv Sethi spent an hour at the show, as did World Bank Country Director India, Junaid Ahmad. The show, curated by Uma Nair, travelled to Bharat Bhavan Bhopal on a special invitation from Culture Secretary Madhya Pradesh, Pankaj Rag. Uma Nair said she was deeply grateful to the press, and to the people who came. Ultimately it became a show with a deep karmic echo.

■ UMA NAIR

Reflections on the Judiciary

THE 27th ROSALIND WILSON MEMORIAL LECTURE:

Judging the Judges: Need for Transparency and Accountability

SPEAKER: Mr. Justice Ajit P. Shah

CHAIR: Shri Soli J. Sorabjee

COLLABORATION: Rosalind Wilson Memorial Trust

28 July 2019

This programme was one of the Centre's staples—the Rosalind Wilson Memorial Lecture. Former Chief Justice of the Delhi and Madras High Courts, Ajit Prakash Shah's talk was a frank reflection on the state of the higher judiciary at the present time. Justice Shah laid out three broad themes—the relationship between judicial independence and judicial activism, and how, in its new policy activist role,



the courts are more beholden to public control; the present status of disciplining judges being entirely unsatisfactory with either 'hard accountability tools' like impeachment and removal, or a toothless in-house mechanism with no legal basis or transparency; and, the future roadmap which ought to include a law governing judicial accountability, with a revised code of conduct by the judges that would cover the Chief Justice of India as well, and provide for a regular performance evaluation mechanism.

Drawing on his own experiences as a judge, the lecture was rife with examples of how judicial transgressions went unchecked, and procedural lacunae were exploited. In a welcome departure from the past, questions were 'Solicited' by the chair, allowing Justice Shah to frown on the proposed RTI amendments, but welcoming the prospect of videography in courtrooms. His concluding words are worth noting: 'To attribute a greater morality to judges by virtue of their office is false and dangerous.'

■ GOPAL SANKARANARAYANAN

Love, Longing and Lament

PERFORMANCE

A Brief History of Musical Time

COMPERE: Sunit Tandon

3 August 2019

The classical voice and piano recital by soprano Ashwati and pianist Dinaibo was an ode to the senses. The overture to the performances by Sunit Tandon set the tempo for a delightful music history lesson.

All the pieces performed by Ashwati, save one, were about love, longing and lament, and the meaning of each song was conveyed aptly through her gesticulation of concomitant emotions.

Each section of the three-part programme was introduced and explained by the musically intelligent Sunit, who made sure that the significance of the operas was not lost on the crowd. Dinaibo played Chopin



and Tchaikovsky solos between Ashwati's operatic performances, showcasing his talent and technical prowess to establish his artistry as both an accompanist and soloist.

The outlier in Ashwati's romantic set-list was *All That Gold* from *Amahl and the Night Visitors* by Gian Carlo Menotti. This was the first ever opera composed for TV, and Ashwati had played a leading role in its production in December 2016 and 2017. Her virtuosity intensified as Amahl's widowed mother craving for the Magi's gold, and her despair was palpable to the captivated audience.

The programme was curated expertly to give us a brief history of operas starting with Barbara Strozzi of the early Baroque period in the 17th century, and finishing with Franz Lehár in the 20th century. The two pieces in Bel canto style were sung truly beautifully, both from the Romantic period. Both the performers hit the right notes to make it a memorable evening.

■ RIMA HANDA ZAHEER

The Rhythm of the Pacific Blues

PERFORMANCE

COMING HOME: Aaradhana in India

COLLABORATION: New Zealand High Commission

29 August 2019

Aaradhana, with her first ever live performance in India, graced us with her powerful voice, infused with emotion. She opened with Bill Withers *Ain't No Sunshine*, and from then on it just got better, if that was possible.

The award-winning musician was introduced by New Zealand's High Commissioner who spoke of the importance of artists such as Aaradhana who had done a tremendous amount to promote the culture of the Pacific family. The singer and her band introduced us to the exceptional beat that permeates the archipelago of the Samoan Islands.

Aaradhana spoke openly of her emotions and inspiration for her music, and with admirable courage she shared her brush with depression and racism. She sang *Not the Same* and *Wake Up* from her low period that were amazing original compositions, filled with both pathos and inspiration.



Her lineage, part-Indian and part-Samoan, came with challenges that consequently made her write the powerful, anguish-filled *Brown Girl*. One could feel her pain through the song and also inspired by her forte, that together with her talent, was channelled into beautiful music. Her *Gotta Keep My Cool Now* and *Don't Come Knocking* had everyone tapping their feet to the beat.

Her brother and sister backed her on the vocals, and the rest of the band played their instruments while swaying to the rhythm of the Blues.

■ RIMA HANDA ZAHEER

The Politics of Sacred Music

MUSIC APPRECIATION PROMOTION

The Politics of Sacred Music. Illustrated lecture by Madan Gopal Singh

17 July 2019

The Music Appreciation lec-dem by Madan Gopal Singh addressed the difficult journey of Sufi sects in the period from the 12th to the 20th century. He featured the historical account of the travails of Shah Enayat Shahid and his followers, in the town of Jhok. The lucid presentation recalled the daredevil tactics of his followers who had taken on the Mughal state 'head on', when they had daringly snatched away the severed head of their leader from the clutches of Emperor Farrukhsiyar.

The speaker also examined basic Sufi tenets, found in the music of Bulley Shah who had likened the condition of the Sufis to that of the setting sun, comparing their condition to that of the last red streak in the sky before darkness set in. More importantly, Singh had pointed out that the

connotations of Sufi phraseology moved on multi-levels, where words such as *khelunga* in Sufi usage veered off its reference to playfulness and denoted a state of non-Being. This paradoxical standpoint was what had differentiated them from the Bhakti poets.

The speaker constantly updated the audience with lucid explanations of the meanings of the passages, and the mood variations that they fielded, focusing on the compositions of Shah Hussain and his references to 'Ram', to Khusro and his references to life around and the many connotations of the term *saiyan* in this music.

Further research by Singh yielded that the Sufis took great personal risks by living out of the 'architectural spaces' in their *khankahs*, sharing *langar*, and making instrumentation a key musical component. The lec-dem was seeped with melodious demonstrative singing, ranging from compositions by poet singers of this ilk, as also Kabir and Nanak, fielding thereby a choice selection of *rubaiyis*, that transported listeners into a journey, tracing its links from Rumi to Guru Nanak and onwards.

■ SUBHRA MAZUMDAR

Musical Evolution

MUSIC APPRECIATION PROMOTION

100TH EDITION: A Musical Journey by Pt. Madhup Mudgal

20 August 2019

The popular Music Appreciation Promotion (MAP) series was conceived with a view to inform, educate and entertain through lecture demonstrations, and the use of archival recordings. Music lovers enjoyed the rich variety of MAP sessions with diverse genres of music from Hindustani and Carnatic classical to Western, folk, popular, world music and more. They focused, for instance, on Gauhar Jaan, Mallikarjun Mansoor, M. S. Subbulakshmi, Balmurali Krishna and Ravi Shankar, to Bach, Beethoven and the gharanas of Hindustani music, to name just a few. The 100th episode of this unbroken series was celebrated with Pt. Madhup Mudgal in conversation with S. Sahay Ranjit from *India Today*.

The renowned musician talked about his musical journey from early childhood as the son of Pt. Vinay Chandra Maudgalya, the founder Principal of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya (GMV), coming in close contact with the



musical stalwarts of the bygone era; about his tutelage under his parents, Pt. Vasant Thakar, Pt. Jasraj and Pt. Kumar Gandharva; and his evolution as a versatile vocalist, composer and conductor of the Gandharva Choir, an administrator and the present Principal of GMV. It was a rare sight to see this serious musician playing the guitar, and singing his first ever

composed, joyful song from school days.

He shared his musical experiences as a disciple of Pt. Kumar Gandharva, as a composer of music for dance, and as a composer/conductor of the Gandharva Choir and much more. There was also a film screening with glimpses of his versatility, a rapid-fire session, and interaction with the enthusiastic audience.

■ MANJARI SINHA

Films from Kerala

FILM FESTIVAL

Malayalam Film Festival

CURATOR: Bina Paul

3 to 6 July 2019

The seven Malayalam films during this festival gave a glimpse into the minds of both young and experienced filmmakers from Kerala. The works ranged from interesting (*Bhayanakam—Fear*, director: Jayaraj), to pretentious (*Sleeplessly Yours*—director: Gautham Soorya/Sudeep Elamon), to genuinely poetic (*Kanthan*—director: Shareef Easa).

Veteran Jayaraj's *Fear* is about a postman who has lost a leg as a soldier in World War I, and is feared as a harbinger of bad news by all in riverine, rural Kerala, whose sons are fighting on the British side in World War II. It is a tad too long, thus losing some of its bite. However, debutant Shareef Easa's *Kanthan* was the standout film.

Kanthan is set in idyllic, lush green, rural Kerala. It is about a little tribal boy brought up by an impoverished, deeply generous old woman who could be his grandmother. The boy goes to a government-run school, not liking it too much, though he enjoys making paintings with crayons about his surroundings.

Kanthan is about finding harmony in nature, and through it, within oneself. It is a film without a dramatic plot, but a genuine forward narrative movement. The forest contractor mafia is seen at work by the young Kanthan on his way to school on more than one occasion, but the director does not labour the point; the juxtaposition of the lives of Kanthan, his wise grandmother and others of the same community is quiet but telling. Everything about this film is unobtrusive but memorable, be it the digital photography, editing or sound design. The two protagonists, little Prajith and old Daya Bai, as grandmother and grandson, respectively, are splendid, as is the varied supporting cast.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

Indianness of Leconte de Lisle

TALK

The Most 'Indian' of the Major French Poets, Leconte de Lisle

SPEAKER: Come Carpentier de Gourdon

CHAIR: Ramin Jahanbegloo

26 August 2019

In a captivating talk, Come Carpentier de Gourdon unfolded the 'Indianness' of the 19th century French poet, Charles Marie René Leconte de Lisle. The speaker has lived in India for over 25 years, and has published several books, among them *India to Infinity*, and *Memories of a Hundred and One Moons*.

Carpentier started his talk with an outline of the life and poetic career of de Lisle, and followed it up with excerpts from some of his poems read in French for their sonority. The slides in the background had the English translations so that non-Francophones could also understand.

Leconte de Lisle, a republican, was very disappointed with the results of the Revolution of 1848, and subsequently with Napoleon III proclaiming himself Emperor, especially since Napoleon had started his political career as a republican. De Lisle delved instead into Indian philosophy, and the philosophical and aesthetic dimensions of the history of the world. Born in La Réunion, where Indian culture was very strong, de Lisle naturally imbibed a great deal of it. Since his father wanted him to trade in India, he did come to India (though many biographers claim that he never set foot in India), but was not interested in trade.

Charles Marie René Leconte de Lisle was very interested in Sanskrit and Persian. For him, what mattered in the world was aesthetic archetypes. So 'beauty for beauty's sake' was the keystone of the Parnassian School which he founded.

Many of de Lisle's poems included in *Poèmes Antiques*, like 'La forêt vierge', 'Le conseil du fakir' and 'Prières védiques pour les morts', were inspired by French translations of Hindu and Buddhist texts, and they described Indian philosophy and the Indian view of the world.

■ SWATI DASGUPTA

Melting Pot of the World

TALK

GANDHARA: A Confluence of Cultures

SPEAKER: Naman P. Ahuja

5 and 6 July 2019

Gandhara, which, in our present-day imagination, conjures up images of destruction, war and terrorism, was brought under the spotlight by art historian Naman Ahuja. In a series of four lectures, through 35 art objects, he delved into the earliest histories of the region, the cultural identity of its inhabitants, new understandings of the role played by Gandhara in the development of Buddhism, and the later histories of the area.

What emerges is a material culture of cosmopolitan settled societies and nomadic cultures, with a rich intangible heritage of performance, rituals and medical practices. The figure of the Bactrian princess found across the BMAC, ceramics with Egyptian motifs discovered in Balochistan, terracotta cremation urns that closely resemble vedic *agnicayana* ritual pots, mother goddess figurines—all attest to a region connected across geographies.

In the wake of Alexander's invasion, migrants from Greece established themselves in cosmopolitan cities like Ai Khanoum, where their own religious icons influenced the representation of the Buddhist pantheon, as seen in the Hercules-inspired Vajrapani, and struck coins depicting Greek deities. A sundial discovered in Ai Khanoum is calibrated to time in distant Alexandria.

By examining objects discovered in Begram, one comes across artefacts and motifs from multiple cultures: Indian designs in ivory for furniture inlays surrounded by Greek and Roman patterns, vessels of porphyry quarried in Egypt, drinking vessels in the shape of *kinnars*, and glassware that describes life in Egypt. Mundane objects like gymnasium weights carry images of Krishna, Hercules and the Gemini/Ashwin twins that communicate to a heterogeneous audience.

Naman Ahuja decoded the British Museum image of the Buddhist goddess, Hariti, that was co-opted into the religion, and demystified the identities of the children surrounding her, who represent the Buddhist Priyankara, the Egyptian Harpocrates, the Hellenic Dioscuri, the Phoenician temple boy, the Hindu Kartikeya and the Zoroastrian twins, thus appealing to multiple faiths.

The recent appearances of rare Kharoshti manuscripts in the global antiquity market are now being studied for the



genealogy of the formation of Buddhist sects. Historians have shed new light on the Mohammed-Nari stele found in Gandhara, and believe it to be a forerunner of beliefs in Mahayana Buddhism.

While Kushan paintings from the 3rd century AD depict the gods Shiva, Zeus and Pharro, coins from the Kashmir Smast show fire altars and Shaiva, Vaishnava, Iranian and Islamic iconography. The Varaha, marble Shaiva image, the *ekamukhalingas*, the buffalo-slayer goddess *rhyton* found in Gandhara have stylistic differences from those found in the Indian mainland.

Ceramics and metalware of the Samanid period hark back to a memory of metal casting traditions that existed since Seleucid times. An image of Shakyamuni in a 15th century manuscript painting of Gandhara is proof that the Buddha was not forgotten.

Naman Ahuja ended his marathon series of lectures with the poignant story of war rugs that have flooded the market, and have woven motifs of rifles, tanks, helicopters and more recently, drones, that ironically represent images of the culture's own destruction.

■ AJAY JAISINGHANI

Remembering Nelson Mandela

THE 2ND NELSON MANDELA ANNUAL LECTURE 2019

Nelson Mandela's Struggles and Worldview

OPENING REMARKS: *Suhas Borker*

SPEAKER: *Rajen Harshe*

CLOSING REMARKS: *H. E. The High Commissioner of South Africa in India, Mr. Joel Sibusiso Ndebele*

CHAIR: *Shri N. N. Vohra*

COLLABORATION: *South Africa High Commission and Working Group on Alternative Strategies*

18 July 2019

Rajen Harshe discussed the wide spectrum of issues and problems of South Africa during the period of Nelson Mandela's struggle against apartheid. While he was hesitant to compare Gandhi's struggle with Nelson Mandela's, he could not ignore the influence of Gandhi on the latter. He also mentioned the resistance before 1960 in South Africa. He added, 'resistance to apartheid came from all circles, and not only, as is often presumed, from those who suffered the negative effects of discrimination. Criticism also came from other countries, and some of these gave support to the South African freedom movements.'

Rajen Harshe also divided the trajectory of resistance by the African National Congress into three phases: he said, 'The first was dialogue and petition; the second direct opposition, and the last, the period of exiled armed struggle. In 1949, just after apartheid was introduced, the ANC started on a more militant path, with the Youth League playing a more important role.'

While throwing light on Nelson Mandela's struggle, the Chair, Shri. N. N. Vohra, did not forget to share the experiences of his three-week stay in South Africa to volunteer for the electoral process. He mentioned and praised Mandela and Gandhi's long years of struggle to achieve democratic victory.

At the end, in a closing remark, H. E. the High Commissioner of South Africa in India, Mr. Joel Sibusiso Ndebele, raised an important question: What kind of democracy does South Africa want? He also mentioned India's importance as the world's largest democracy. Further, he added: 'The people of India can never be racist, because they can't tolerate less than democracy.' During his keynote speech, he also condemned the recent racist remarks of the US president. However, at the end, he concluded his speech with thanks to India, and the Indians who supported the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Moreover, he also hoped that this struggle will and must continue.

■ M. SHAHID SIDDIQUI

Women in Science and Technology

INAUGURAL LECTURE

Friends, Heroes, Scientists, Women by Gagandeep Kang

OPENING REMARKS: *K. Vijayaraghavan*

CHAIR: *Shri Shyam Saran*

1 August 2019

While the progress of humankind in the field of science and technology has been celebrated for long, the contribution of women in this domain reminds one of the barriers faced due to the socio-cultural constructs women are faced with. Gagandeep Kang's achievements, besides their revolutionary contribution to the medical sciences, also address the stark gender disparity that continues to haunt the scientific fraternity. The first Indian woman scientist to be elected as a Fellow at the prestigious Royal Society, London, Gagandeep Kang shared her research and personal motivations that shaped, as well as contributed to, her successful professional journey.

She discussed one of her biggest achievements—a massive data-driven study of diarrhoea-related deaths among children, and the development of a rotavirus vaccine which eventually got inducted in the National Immunisation Programme in 2016. The gravity of the problem lies in its prevalence in India among a large number of children. She highlighted that out of 27 million children born every year in India, one in two is affected by diarrhoea, and one in 350 dies. Also, unlike other health problems, diarrhoea is a complicated problem to study since the gut environment is not sterile. Specifically, her selection of the data set among the slum children affected with diarrhoea played a key role in identifying the complications faced in developing an effective vaccine. After this successful venture, her next project is researching pregnancy risk stratification. Her professional achievements notwithstanding, she cited frequent travelling in her childhood years, a persistent curiosity to learn, and a supportive family as the driving factors of her success.

■ PRATEEK JOSHI

Improving Health Facilities

HEALTHCARE IN INDIA

*Crucial Gaps in Delivering Health Care—
What's Done? What's Ignored?*

SPEAKER: Shailaja Chandra

DISCUSSANTS: K. Sujatha Rao and Anand Krishnan

CHAIR: K. Srinath Reddy

22 August 2019

It was distressing to learn from the talk that 57 per cent of the doctors in India are not fully trained, and close encounters with realities in different geographies indicated the popularity of 'jhola wala' paramedics. This information is not new; however, what is alarming is the fact that poor quality care leads to more deaths than insufficient access to healthcare.

The speakers cited evidence to indicate that 1.6 million Indians died due to poor quality of care in 2016, nearly twice as many as those who died due to non-utilisation of healthcare services (838,000 persons). The major emerging concern was the absence of consistency in quality of care at the ground. As administrators, there was utter helplessness at the choices made by the community,

when they chose the unqualified medical person over government clinics. The gaps are difficult to cement in present social contexts.

The situational analysis of health indicators is both encouraging and one of despair. While the fertility rates in many states match those in Europe, the momentum of the population is difficult to check. Education, awareness of reproductive health initiatives for girls' education are some of the factors that have had a positive impact; however, the Jansankhaya Sthirtha Kosh has a long way to go in filling the gaps.

It is alarming to note that in rural areas, upto 805 of allopathic, and even Unani and Ayurvedic medical facilities, are in the private domain. The public health system is almost invisible. Ignoring the public health facilities has made communities dependent on private care where the quality of care is questionable.

Srinath Reddy has provided instrumental direction to strengthening training, research and policy development in the area of public health. Responsible civil servants can provide insights and ways to document malpractices, and generate awareness among people for providing improved health facilities in a way that developmental indicators can improve our status in the world community.

■ ASHA SINGH

A Blot in the Colonial History of India

BOOK DISCUSSION

Martyrdom to Freedom: 100 Years of Jallianwala Bagh (New Delhi: Rupa Publications India, 2019).

Edited by Rajesh Ramachandran

PANELLISTS: H. K. Dua; Salil Misra; Y. P. Anand

CHAIR: Shri N. N. Vohra

22 August 2019

It was a unique discussion on what led to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 13 April 1919, presenting new facts and research in the seminal essays by well-known authors, thinkers and historians of India. The contribution of the *Tribune* newspaper, led by its editor Kalinath Ray, in chronicling the colonial atrocities in the Punjab was applauded.

On 9 April, two nationalist leaders, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal were deported from Amritsar and confined in Dharamsala. Coincidentally, on 10 April, there was a Hindu *Ram Navami* procession in which Muslims too participated in large numbers. As the news of the arrests

spread, markets and establishments were closed. When people began to congregate, tension escalated, resulting in arson, looting, and damage to government property.

Lieutenant Governor Sir Michael O'Dwyer now masterminded the action to punish Punjab, bringing in substantive military reinforcements. Deputy Commissioner Miles Irving then issued notices to the leaders, forbidding gatherings or processions, stating these would be fired on, but the notices were not widely disseminated.

On 12 April, while Amritsar was quiet, with Hindus and Muslims managing funerals and burials, Hansraj, then assistant to Dr. Kitchlew, insisted on a public meeting the next day at the Jallianwala Bagh premises, to update the public and discuss the implications of the Rowlatt Act, and to protest about the arrest of Kitchlew, Satyapal and also Gandhi. It was not known at the time that Hansraj was working closely with the British. After about 20,000 people had assembled peacefully at the venue, Reginald Dyer and his hand-picked troops surveyed this assembly, and then under specific orders, opened fire. The Jallianwala massacre, of the army firing upon an unarmed, civilian crowd, is a blot in the colonial history of India.

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Transformative Education

CONFERENCE INAUGURAL SESSION

Education for Equity and Social Responsibility

WELCOME: Shri K. N. Shrivastava

INTRODUCTION: Anita Rampal

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Shri Gopal Krishna Gandhi

CHAIR: Shri N. N. Vohra

29 July 2019

The theme of the conference was the role that has been envisioned for education—it deals with equity and education in a transformative role. The question is: How do we understand equity, and how do we understand social responsibility?

In his keynote address, Gopal Krishna Gandhi covered the long colonial history, from the views of monarchs down the ages to current times. He started with Ashoka and his *shilalekh*, and how he reached the minds of his people; *Sarva mamah prajah*, all are my children, he said. After him, Samudragupta superscribed his ideas about

himself and his government onto the edicts of Ashoka as inscribed on the pillar. Jahangir too inscribed his message. In modern times, many committees, including the Mudaliar Committee, have produced a palimpsest of policies. The question is whether they interacted with people in the business of policy—the difference between the principles and the implementation.

In 1952, C. Rajagopalachari, or Rajaji, formulated a new education policy on a formula which laid the seeds of the destruction of that very policy. It was important for him that precious skills and traditional crafts needed to be preserved, and a strong reaction ensued. This was due to lack of communication and interaction between experts and policy makers. Some constants and some variables have to mark our education scheme.

He ended with some hope by giving the example of Anwara, the daughter of a *beedi* worker in Murshidabad, who read out the Preamble to the Constitution from her schoolbook to him.

Shri N. N. Vohra mentioned the importance of education beyond school education, and the need for vocational education to combat unemployment.

■ RACHNA JOSHI

Ravenous Desire

POETRY READING

Love Without a Story by Arundhati Subramaniam

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS: Ashok Vajpeyi and Keki N. Daruwalla

COLLABORATION: The Poetry Society, India

22 August 2019

Arundhati Subramaniam quoted T. S. Eliot's poem 'Do I Dare to Disturb the Universe.../Do I Dare to Eat a Peach' to express her philosophy as a spiritual seeker. She said that the divide between the flesh and the spirit, the sacred and the secular, the erotic and the spiritual does not exist in the Bhakta tradition, which is a living tradition and a legacy in India. The continuum between these dichotomies is seamless.

In his opening comments, Keki N. Daruwalla spoke of the shift in Indian poetry, where modern Indian poets in English have carved a niche in India and abroad. According to him, Arundhati Subramaniam maintains a chatty dialogue with the subjects she encounters, but the poetry is profound.

Ashok Vajpeyi said that in 'Love Without a Story', Arundhati is literally eating love. With emotional intelligence and candour, she has connected the lure and depth of love and its disasters. She states, 'The strange things about love is that it melts you into an amateur.'

Arundhati read out her poems on the monsoon, her parents, journeys, conversations with friends, and *mitti*, some of which were commissioned poems. In her poem, 'Finding Dad', she deals with the ancient preoccupation of the lyric poet: death, wonder, the 'great, charring dance'.

Urvashi Bahuguna, who was in conversation with Arundhati, asked her about the title of her book. In *Love Without a Story*, she deals with Avvaiyar, the grand old woman of Tamil literature. In the trio of poems called 'Goddess', she looks at the notion of the divine feminine, which for her was a theoretical idea till she met her local goddess in a shrine in Coimbatore, called Lingabhairavi. Creativity and spirituality are similar in that they demand a first-hand experience of truth rather than a second-hand wisdom. They are characterised by a ravenous desire which is the spirit of bhakti; hence the title of the book on bhakti poetry, *Eating God*.

■ RACHNA JOSHI

An Old Classic Revisited

FILMS OF THE SPIRIT

The River

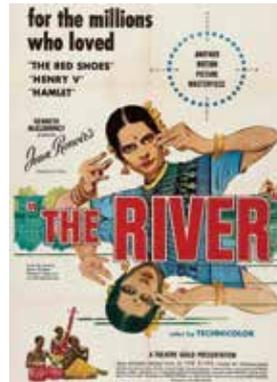
DIRECTOR: Jean Renoir

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

21 August 2019

Jean Renoir's *The River* (1951) is 68 years old, and its status as a film classic was confirmed once again after this screening on 21 August. It held the audience's attention, despite some irritating sub-titling. Filmed in 1950 Barrackpore on the banks of the Hooghly, 14 miles from Calcutta, *The River* is based on Rumer Godden's novel. It helped revive Renoir's glorious pre-World War II career that had meandered during an enforced exile in Hollywood from 1940 onwards.

Renoir cast his film with a mix of amateurs and professionals. Using a little girl's voice-over, he tells the story of a British family living peacefully in the riverside



town where the paterfamilias is the manager of a jute mill. It is a coming-of-age tale that embraces the cycle of life and death effortlessly.

Renoir was unfamiliar with the worlds of both the British family in the film, and the Indians in it. He, however, sought the help of his chief assistant Hari. S. Dasgupta, and his friend

Kamal Kumar Majumdar, the deeply perceptive avant-garde Bengali fiction writer, to familiarise himself with the world he was to film. He gathered his impressions—he was, after all, the son of the celebrated French Impressionist painter Pierre Auguste Renoir—and created out of them a moving, truthful film that flowed like the river, which was a recurring motif in the narrative.

The River is like a journey through a family album, evoking memories of times long past. The emotions evoked are happy, sad, invaluable.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

JOURNEY OF LIFE

EXHIBITION

Drawing by Arun Kumar Chatterjee from Latur

10-16 July 2019

The journey of life is filled with lessons, hardships, heartaches, joys, celebration and special moments that will ultimately lead us to our destination and our purpose in life. The path will not always be smooth. In fact, throughout our journey, we will encounter many challenges.



My paintings express that we all are on different paths, one of the major causes of unhappiness in the world of entrepreneurs, business leaders and high achievers is not taking the time to value the journey we're on.



■ ARUN KUMAR CHATTERJEE

OBITUARY

MEMBERSHIP NO.	NAME
M-0063	DR. TUHIN K. ROY
M-0685	PROF. ASHOK PARTHASARATHI
M-2137	SHRI SUDARSHAN AGARWAL
M-2378	SHRI DIPANKAR P. GUPTA
M-2381	SMT. SHEILA DIKSHIT
M-3665	VADM S. P. GOVIL (RETD.)
M-2958	SHRI ARUN JAITLEY
M-3186	SHRI L. C. GUPTA
A-3291	SHRI VINOD A. BOBDE
A-4109	SMT. LOLA CHATTERJI
A-4316	DR. SUBIR V. GOKARN
A-4489	SHRI J. P. SHARMA
A-5379	SHRI LILAMANI PRASAD
A-5603	SMT. OONITA K. HIREMATH
A-7100	SMT. PUSHPA VERMA



Shri N.N. Vohra, President, IIC, hoisting the Indian flag on Independence Day, 15 August 2019.



Director's Note

This year the Centre will celebrate its annual festival, 'The IIC Experience: A Festival of the Arts', from 11 to 15 October 2019. The festival opens on 11 October with 'Magic in Movement', Odissi by artists of the Rudraksh Foundation, Bhubaneswar, and concludes with a 'Carnatic Concert' by T. M. Krishna. Other performances include 'From Bossa Nova to Samba'; 'Shabd Leela', by Ila Arun; and a Yakshagana performance of 'Padmavati'. This year, the festival also presents a special focus on the multicultural identities that make up Lucknow. 'Lucknow ke Chand Varq' will include two exhibitions; a performance; and an Awadhi dinner. As always, each evening will conclude with different cuisines. There will be two film festivals this year—'Filmi Duniya Mein Awadh', and 'Magic at the Movies: A Selection of World Cinema 2017–18'.

Members will be pleased to know that the IIC Film Club was awarded The Pritiman Sarkar Memorial Award 2018–19 for Best Film Society by the Federation of Film Societies of India, Northern Region, for its 'outstanding contribution in promoting awareness and appreciation of film art'.

The Art Reference Library has a collection of 1,400 books, magazines, art catalogues, posters and pamphlets which cover diverse subjects, including about 200 books on cookery, some of which were donated by Mrs. Bhicoo Manekshaw. Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan has donated books from her valuable collection, and Mrs. Usha Malik has given us books from Shri Keshav Malik's collection. The Foundation of Museum of Modern Art (FOMA), Karachi, has donated over 78 books.

The process of digitising the Library's resources is underway. The rare books collection will especially benefit as these valuable books are in very brittle condition, thereby restricting their use by Members. The automation of the existing manual and paper-based processes, enabled by the digitisation of information from an analog to a digital format, will be taken up shortly.

Among the Centre's ongoing initiatives: the 70.4 KW roof-top Solar Power Electric Plant was formally commissioned by Shri N. N. Vohra, President, IIC, on 2 August 2019, and is fully operational. It is generating an average of 300 units of electricity per day, which will increase in the sunny months ahead. The Centre is installing a Biogas Plant as a part of its Green Initiatives. This plant will use food waste from the kitchen to produce biogas for cooking.

The refurbished Reception was commissioned on 15 August 2019, and the process to upgrade the Hostel rooms has begun. This work will be done in phases so as not to inconvenience the guests. New furnishings and furniture, a mini refrigerator and modern sanitary fittings are among the new features.

The instant bill payment system (Smart Card System) came into effect from 1 September 2019 and the monthly credit billing has since been discontinued. When this system becomes fully operational, we hope to achieve a status of 'no outstanding dues' from Members and others who use our facilities.

For making the IIC premises free from polluting emissions, the entire premises, including the Kamaladevi Block and Annexe, have been declared 'No Smoking Zones'. This regulation applies to the external surroundings as well.

The recently constituted Lawn and Gardens Committee, comprising eminent horticulturists, urban planners and experts with a keen interest in plants and gardens, had its first meeting (which was also attended by President) to advise and guide us on the upkeep and maintenance of attractive lawns and gardens.

■ K. N. Shrivastava