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ART

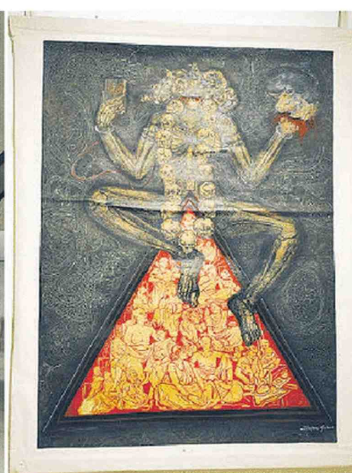
AMI ARTS FESTIVAL 2023, WITH t2, WAS A MELTING POINT OF ALL THINGS ART. HIGHLIGHTS

Kolkata Centre for Creativity at Anandapur turned into a cauldron of creative and artistic expression with AMI Arts Festival 2023 in association with t2. The 10-day extravaganza supported by Emami CSR, held last month, filled the air with a creative spirit and engaged the city in a slew of events that included discussions on topics that almost sparked a heated debate, workshops that brought people closer to art

practices that otherwise remain confined to artisans, and musical performances that celebrated the magnanimity of performing arts. FootPrint Film Festival in partnership with Peninsula Studio showcased films by young filmmakers apart from engaging film enthusiasts with a digital filmmaking workshop by Nandan Saxena.

Richa Agarwal, chairperson, Kolkata Centre for Creativity, said: "We are thrilled to inaugurate the

fourth edition of the AMI Arts Festival, aiming to create a platform that celebrates the mosaic of artistic traditions and talents while promoting cultural harmony and making art accessible to everyone. This year, the festival will feature the remarkable artworks of talented art students from various art colleges across West Bengal. The chosen artworks will be on display, providing these emerging artists with a platform to connect with esteemed veterans from the art world."



There's no dearth of talent in India and in Bengal and the visual art exhibition 'In Search of Imperatives: The Changing Landscape of Contemporary Art in Bengal' curated by Nanak Ganguly was a testimony of that that explicitly lay bare the talent that Bengal has. Interestingly, the artists exhibiting their works were selected by an open call and included students who are part of different colleges in Bengal. Abhrajit Kundu of Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship, Sayanti Das from Government College of Art and Craft, Sudeshna Nandi from Kala Bhavan, Neha Dey from Rabindra Bharati University among many others were joined by a bunch of invited artists like Dasarath Das and Meenakshi Sengupta of Sister Nivedita University, Ritendra Roy of University of Kalyani and others. This was also one of the rare instances when a student and professor showcased their work at the same exhibition. The exhibits were as diverse as it could get with artwork on watercolour on paper, cotton-rag pulp, stoneware, acrylic, mixed media, ink, charcoal, oil, digital print, laser cutting and more.



The first floor turned into a mini museum with 'Museum Exhibition — Preserving Nature's Splendour: A Celebration of Natural Heritage' that saw a collection of artefacts collected by Adivasi Museum, private collectors in Sundarban and more.



Karigari, an art bazaar, brought artisans and craftsmen directly in contact with customers. It also saw award-winning artisans displaying their artwork.



The festival was not just about being a spectator but being a part of it and a series of workshops were organised for a first-hand experience. From ceramic plate painting to Sanjhi art and block printing to Pichwai painting, visitors tried their hands and learnt the traditional art forms.



The festival restarted old discourses and pushed new ideas on various topics with amazing panellists. There were eight talks that offered food for thought. Actors Riddhi Sen and Sudipta Chakraborty joined theatre veterans from the city for the session 'Is Bengali Theatre Dead?' The one-hour panel discussion threw light on the current scenario of theatre groups in the city, the perspective of the audience, and what should be done to strengthen the ecosystem.

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Lavani Ke Rang performed by Shakuntala Nagarkar and Geetanjali Kulkarni was a one-of-a-kind experience. Directed by Bhushan Korgaonkar, as the artists, heavily decked up for their act, took the stage, the barrier of language blurred and music spoke fluently conveying the tales of love and longing.



1 ‘Bengal Art Colleges at Crossroads: Teachers’ Take’ saw Bengal’s art college teachers and expert conservators discuss the evolving landscape of contemporary art in Bengal.

AMI Arts Festival added an inclusive element to the festival with a set-up exclusively for visually-impaired visitors.



‘Confluence: A Meeting of Maestros’ featuring Partha Bose on sitar with Abhijit Banerjee on tabla was a treat for classical music enthusiasts.



Silajit Majumder delivered a magical performance on the last day of the festival.



‘The Built Heritage: Inner and Outer Shells’ saw Anupam Sah, art conservator-restorer director at Anupam HeritageLab, in conversation with Soumen Mitra, former commissioner of Kolkata Police, and Monica Khosla Bhargava, principal architect-urban designer KHAM consultants.



The festival also saw a solo exhibition — *Love and Longing* by Rajan V.S. Kapur, curated by Kounteya Sinha.



Among the many performances that were lined up in the festival, Arko Mukhaerjee’s stood out for many reasons. The folk singer’s infectious energy caught up with the audience and made the evening unforgettable.

Farah Khatoon
Pictures: Biswajit Kundu and Krishna Kumar Sharma