

htdo!

HUMAN HAIR RECAST AS FLOWERS, THE COLONIAL IN THE DOMESTIC, AND THE MANY YOUS BEHIND THE LENS ARE ALL PART OF EXHIBITIONS UNDERWAY IN THE CITY

UBERCOOL

WHAT'S YOUR SPIN?

Check out exhibitions that invite you to view art differently

WHEN THE BAD GUYS WIN

For two decades, walking into an exhibition of Clare Arni's photographs meant you could be sure of a few things. The works would have a documentary quality (her 2008 series on India's disappearing professions), present India differently (her shots along the Kaveri river) or find the intimate within the expansive (images of a Belgian woman who lives in a cave in Hampi).

Notorious Rowdies will make you check twice to see if it's really Arni's work.

The UK-born, Bangalore-based photographer switches from reality to fantasy. Friends and family were roped in to invent, develop and build elaborate backstories for villainous alter egos, which Arni then photographed. The resulting images feature sinister sari-clad 'madams', leaping ninjas, petty thugs, masked bandits; macabre Morticia Addams types.

"It's good, every now and then, to break your own stereotypes and try something new," says Arni. "But right from the start I wanted a level of authenticity to it, so it wasn't fancy dress, but a cathartic experience for the person involved."

Arni's work is a foil for today's selfie age, when we're all very aware of the images and brighter persona we create on social media. Creating a dark side, however imaginary, ended up being surprisingly liberating for her subjects - shoots would go on and on as people came to terms with their new selves. Her soft-spoken sister, Oriole Henry, "literally transformed into another creature," as Arni shot. "How often do we get to become somebody else?"

RACHEL LOPEZ

WHAT: Notorious Rowdies, photographs by Clare Arni
WHERE: Tarq, F 35/36, Dhanraj Mahal, Near Gateway of India
WHEN: 11 am to 6 pm, until October 19
Entry is free

THE ART OF FREEDOM

A simple installation, which puts together a photograph of Mahatma Gandhi, a trowel, stone beads, a rosary and laminated marine frame, tries to see 1947, the year of Independence and Partition from the view of a disappointed Mahatma Gandhi.

The installation, by Atul Dodiya, is part of India Re-Worlded: 70 Years of Investigating a Nation, a mammoth show that fea-



COMBO DEAL

In The Sacred and the Profane, two young artists present an eclectic mix of works, prompting a new examination of images and visuals around us.

Jeetander Ojha is interested in looking at the darker side of objects, which is often ignored. In his installation of the Taj Mahal, he shows some kind of an overgrowth from below the structure. "People always talk of the magnificence of the wonder of the world, but hardly anyone discusses the apparent brutality the labourers had to undergo to create it," Ojha says.

Ankush Safaya, a former engineer, looks at the world differently. Technology exposed him to complex interconnected devices like circuit boards, made him see an abstract world of imagery within them, which led him to discover his artistic language. He arranges his images in such a way that they assume a rhythm, movement and a meaning of their own.

At first glance they appear still, but as the eye trains itself on the picture, the flat surfaces seem like activated linear whispers, with kinetic energies that suggest poetic missives of human experience. "Time and space resonate as elements within my work. And in the chaos of a disorderly world I create spaces of harmony and balance," he says.



Viewing these together could be sacred or profane... you decide.

RIDDHI DOSHI

WHAT: The Sacred and the Profane
WHERE: Sakshi Gallery, Arthur Bunder Road, Colaba
WHEN: September 14 to October 6, 11 am to 7 pm (Closed on Sundays); Entry is free.

(Clockwise from below): Sudhir Patwardhan's 1996 - Elegy for the City; acrylic on canvas; 2017.

A work from Notorious Rowdies, by the UK-born, Bangalore-based photographer Clare Arni.

Jeetander Ojha's In the Memory of Others; human hair, shells, calcium, wire, glass jar; 2017.



Strange sounds come from this abandoned furniture godown in the Mughhat area, locals say.

THE WALK

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?



Every area in Mumbai has a story, and sometimes a resident ghost as well. At least that's what Bharat Gothoskar, 43, founder of Khaki Tours, will tell you. He narrates a series of thrilling and macabre stories on the Grisly Girgaon tour, always ending with a characteristic 'believe-it-or-not' grin.

The night trail is a two-hour walk through narrow dimly lit alleys, winding roads and eerily quiet areas.

"In the 18th and 19th century, people came to cremate the dead by the sea," says Gothoskar. "The sea-facing area on the west coast is called the Backbay, and is where the ghost stories begin."

Gothoskar's tales are morbid, intriguing and downright bizarre. Neighing horses have been heard in the

dead of the night in Kranti Nagar chawl, which was once a stable for the horses of British officers.

There are tales of Maan Kapya, the headless hunter who would behead lone wanderers by trapping them in the labyrinth of alleys in Khotachiwadi.

History mixes with hearsay on the tour. "The Pimpalwadi temple in Mughhat has a 500-year-old curse stone from the Shilahara period, with an explicit engraving of a woman and a donkey," says Gothoskar. "It says if anyone dared to violate the orders, his mother would be cursed to copulate with the animal."

But, all's not morose and disheartening. Thakurdwar has a temple built to protect the neighbourhood from evil spirits. Smaller shrines on the trail are dedicated to Babdev or the 'good ghost' who protects the localities from the big, bad, bully ghosts.

"Growing up in Girgaum, in a lane

suggest that Indian artists after independence have 'de-worlded'," says curator Arshiya Lokhandwala.

Pushpamala N revisits images from a 1985 trip to Naya village in West Bengal to reflect upon how she sees them now. "The visual difference in the pictures between us and the villagers mimicked records of old European colonial anthropological expeditions, and yet the photographs possessed the familiarities that we could have as insiders," says Pushpamala.

Shakuntala Kulkarni's performative works, which invite viewers to gaze at their bodies, takes from 2012 Nirbhaya rape case. The work was prompted by conversations with electricians and carpenters in Mumbai on how men should change the way they look at women.

RIDDHI DOSHI

WHAT: India Re-Worlded: 70 Years of Investigating a Nation
WHERE: Gallery Odyssey, Tower 2, Lobby Level, One Indiabulls Center, Senapati Bapat Marg, Parel
WHEN: September 11 to March 31, 11 am to 7 pm. Entry is free.

WEEKEND FLEX

THE FOOD

PERCH ELSEWHERE



If The Finch were a person, it would be accused of being moody, unpredictable and inconsistent.

Past its grungy, industrial-looking façade (including a laser projection of a finch 'flitting' all over the external wall) is a whole other world. The retro-chic lounge bar pays rich homage to the nightclubs of the 1970s. There are faux-leather booths, velvet drapes, bird's nest-shaped pendant lights over the bar, and a stage at one end for live music.

The Finch's menu is also all over the place - with Thai, Korean, Mediterranean, European and smatterings of Indian food.

We opted for the marhabba mezze sampler to begin. Silken hummus, moutabal and baba gannoush came accompanied with falafel and pita bread.

The amuse bouche of Korean spinach soup was the perfect spicy foil, with its gochujang sauce and kimchi bits hitting the back of the throat.

Our server insisted we try the house's signature saffronini cocktail.

It looked like liquid sunshine. But that's perhaps the only thing good about it. Its off-putting synthetic saffron taste prevented a second sip.

The frozen kiwi granitas fared better.

The retro-chic lounge bar pays rich homage to the nightclubs of the 1970s. (Below) The mezze platter featured silken hummus, moutabal, baba gannoush, falafel and pita bread. HT PHOTOS: SATYABRATA TRIPATHY

They came generously spiked with tequila with the fresh kiwi fruit and lime juice, offering a refreshing finish.

At a whopping Rs 875 per serving, the criminally overpriced pork belly with sor-potel curry sauce was the night's biggest letdown. Its stringy slices of overcooked meat came coated in a sickly sweet syrup that had nothing in common with sor-potel.

Our Shanghai-style street noodles were better, with juicy bits of chicken and umami-rich shiitake mushrooms.

Suffering from a severe lack of imagination was the crumbly, tasteless Oreo cheesecake. Its gloopy, salted caramel topping did little to hoist up its taste.

The restaurant replaced it with a moist, superbly composed trio of chocolate mud slide pastries with a hint of salt. We demolished them in one fell swoop.

We'd probably go back to The Finch just for the live music. But as far as the food and drink are concerned, we'd rather perch ourselves elsewhere.

RAUL DIAS

(HT reviews anonymously and pays for all meals)



WHAT: The Finch
RATING: ★★ ★
WHERE: John Baker, Saki Vihar Road, Andheri (E)
WHEN: 6 pm to 1 am
COST: About Rs 4,000 for two, with one cocktail each
CALL: 2875-8300

THE CONCERT

SOUND BECOMES HER

The Iyer Foundation, run by tabla maestro Balkrishna Iyer and his classical singer wife Jyoti, has been hosting the Sadhana festival every year since 2012.

For its sixth edition, the focus is on the talent of women in dance and music.

The two day festival, which began yesterday, will feature a percussion duet today in the first session. "It is rare to find female percussionists making it to the concert stage," says Jyoti Iyer. "Of late, many women have begun to storm this male bastion and shine as fine performers."

Sangeeta Agnihotri is a well known tabla player from Madhya Pradesh. She will play a percussion duet with Prerna Munde, pupil of the leading pakhavaj player Manik Munde. The pakhavaj demands a lot of energy and it will be interesting to watch and listen to this duo interact during their performance.

Among other performers, Apoorva Gokhale and Pallavi Joshi (right) have a common biological and musical lineage. Their grandfather Gajananrao Joshi was a veteran violinist and music guru.

Their music has the same roots and there is an agreeable coherence in their presentation.

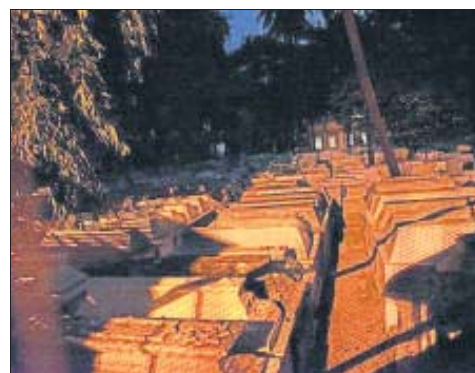


WHAT: Jugalbandi festival with women performers
WHERE: Savarkar Auditorium, Shivaji Park, Dadar (West)
WHEN: Saturday, 7 pm
ENTRY IS FREE

The jugalbandi is an attractive format because it showcases the musicians' ability to mix their music based on demands of the situation and infuse a degree of spontaneity. And an all-woman line-up is likely to be even more interesting.

AMARENDRA DHANESHWAR

THE RATINGS
★★★★★ OUTSTANDING
★★★★ VERY GOOD
★★★ GOOD
★★ AVERAGE
★ POOR



The walk ends at the Muslim burial ground. HT PHOTOS: SATYABRATA TRIPATHY

between a Sunni Kabrastan and a Shia Kabrastan, I knew never ever to look back if you are walking home alone in the night," says Saish Khandekar, 25, an architect who participated in the walk. "Today, I am not afraid, but I sure have a lot more stories to spook people out with."

WHAT: Grisly Girgaon ghost walk
WHERE: SK Patil Udyan to Charni Road station
WHEN: September 17, 10 pm to midnight
COST: Rs 699; Call: 88281-00111

GHOST BUSTING 101

Pop culture, legend and lore have created their own rulebook for members of Mumbai's afterlife.

- A ghost cannot walk. Don't freak out over the old lady in white; she's just trying to get home after a hard day at work.
- Ghosts have their own categories and hierarchies. And castes.
- Brahmorakshas are proud of their learned ancestry so don't get into a debate with them.
- Munjas are restless children who haunt trees and annoy young women.
- Dakin are ghosts of married women who have not had their fill of wedded bliss and hence are bitter.

ANESHA GEORGE