

TWO SHOWS TO CATCH

Decoding the Koli archive

An exhibition by artist Parag Tandel explores Koli culture, memories and the community's changing relationship with the sea

COMMUNITY

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AS we experience Parag Tandel's new exhibition, Khari Gaboli/Salted Caviar at TARQ, the first story he tells us is about Maan Kapya, a headless figure from Konkani folklore. Tandel laughs as he recalls how the story stayed with him. "The story dates back to our childhood, when adults would invoke Maan Kapya to keep children away from the roads and the seashore after dark," he says. It is an unusual introduction, but one that quickly sets the tone for an exhibition rooted in memory, coastal ecology, labour, and the lived histories of the Koli community.

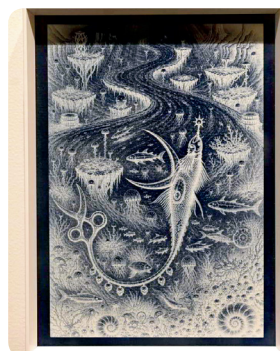
"At heart, the exhibition is Khari Gaboli (in Marathi), but after wanting to translate it, we fixated on Salted Caviar," Tandel says, explaining the title. He then takes us through four bodies of work developed over several years, each examining the relationship

between the Koli community and the sea from a different perspective.

At *Estuaries of Waning Sounds*, Tandel speaks about the Koli words and knowledge that continue to shape the project. At *Salt Shrines: Colour Blind*, he draws from Koli votive traditions, coastal rituals and found materials to explore the community's relationship with the sea, while *Vitamin-Sea Archives: Sediments of Intelligence* brings together geological memory, marine life and technology to imagine an archive of the ocean floor.

As the walkthrough comes to an end, Tandel leads us to the vividly coloured *Sea of Relation*, explaining how the interactive space invites visitors to touch and explore different marine forms which in a way offers a more playful way to engage with the underwater world that runs through the exhibition.

FREE **TILL** October 17; 11 am **AT** TARQ, Ground Floor, KK (Navsari) Chambers, Fort.



Maan Kapya



Coloured stainless-steel wire, polyester and cotton threads represent the different communities within Koli culture, with blue symbolising Ambedkarites, yellow representing haldi (turmeric), and green denoting Islam. **PICS/ASHISH RAJE**

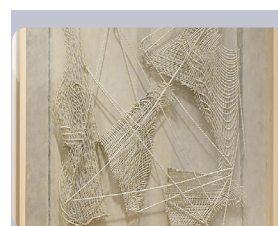


Parag Tandel explains the cyanotype images, which explore the relationship between the seashore, aquatic organisms, coral reefs and the communities that depend on them; (top, inset) original untitled image from Vitamin-Sea Archives: Sediments of Intelligence along with its colourful AI-enabled version (right) brings together coral reefs, marine organisms, undersea cables and shipwrecks to create a reverse-engineered map of the ocean floor



A sea slug made from Habur stone, a fossil-rich material from an ancient seabed in Jaisalmer, combines marine forms with cast oil pipes to explore petrochemical extraction, geological time and the changing Koli coastline

Sea of Relation is an interactive display featuring marine organisms including plankton, jellyfish, and sea slugs, made using silicone rubber, marine plywood and cotton fabric



Let's talk Koli

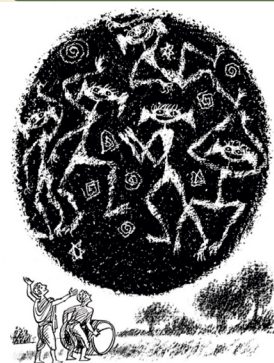
Works from *Estuaries of Waning Sounds: Koli Dictionary Project*, is where Tandel uses fishing nets, shells, knots and found materials to interpret Koli words. Among them are Garva, a type of hook-fishing technique; Baidul/Kavat/Gaboli, referring to egg sacks; and Devlu, a word whose meaning is yet to be identified.

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From storybook to canvas

A travelling exhibition explores children's literature through art and illustrations from visually captivating titles for young readers

KIDS



'Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne,' first appeared in Sandesh, a children's magazine by Upendrakishore Ray in 1915. **ILLUSTRATION COURTESY/SANDESH**

If you ask yourself, "What is your idea of becoming?" The answer might seem subjective or ever evolving. For curator Richa Jha, "Becoming is not simply about growing up — it is about the constant transformation of the self and the world around us." This idea forms the core of *Becoming*, an exhibition tracing 130 years of illustrations in children's books in India, curated by Jha and designed by Ayesha Goel.

The journey begins with an 1896 illustration of Abanindranath Tagore's *Kheerer Putul*, one of the earliest Indian children's books created specifically for recreational reading. "Before this, illustrated books for children in India,

particularly in Bengal, were largely educational, including primers and language textbooks produced by missionaries and Bengali writers as an inspiration to inculcate nationalism," explains Jha. The exhibition also touches upon the influential Ray family by talking about the magazine *Sandesh* by Upendrakishore Ray, paternal grandfather of the legendary filmmaker, Satyajit Ray alongside other illustrations.



Richa Jha

Divided into two broad sections — the becoming of self and the becoming of spaces — the exhibition explores stories, dreams, identity, self-doubt, loss and young voices questioning established norms, alongside the universe, the planet, cities, villages, social divisions and,



An illustration from the book, *Sarayu's Museum Adventures* by Anusha Ramanathan. **ILLUSTRATION COURTESY/CHANDRIMA CHATTERJEE**

ultimately, hope. Adding to which Jha says, "All of us in our lives in some way are all at different stages of some form of becoming."

Alongside more than 100 illustrations, the exhibition presents their original textual contexts as picture-book spreads, allowing visitors to experience the relationship between image and story. A walk-in, seven-foot-by-four-foot book installation, a reading corner with

nearly 300 books, workshops and a puppet show by author-illustrator Lavanya Karthik for visitors to step into the world of children's literature and choose their own journey of *Becoming*.

FREE **TILL** October 11; 11 am to 8 pm **AT** PL Deshpande Maharashtra Kala Academy, Prabhadevi.

By Rumani Gabhare