

#EVENT Elevating the Power of Design From art installations, paintings and art works to a plethora of home furnishings, the Indian International Design Conclave was a one stop shop for artistes, art lovers and design enthusiasts.



A display of art works at the Voice of Dunes art exhibition.

Tusharika Singh Freelancer, writer and city blogger

In a grand celebration of creativity and innovation, design enthusiasts, students, artists, artisans, and professionals from various fields converged at the illustrious India International Design Conclave (IIDC). The event, hosted at the newly opened Rajasthan International Center in Jhalana, served as a remarkable platform for design enthusiasts, offering a myriad of opportunities for learning, networking, and embracing the captivating world of design. In addition to an exhibition on furniture and home furnishings, there were a variety of interesting happenings that added to the dynamism of the event.

Here is a recap: **Voice of Dunes** Captivating the attention of visitors, an exquisite art gallery was specially curated for the event, aiming to showcase the malleability of art, architecture, and design. Titled 'Voice of Dunes,' this



Isometric installation by students of Aayojin school of architecture.

exceptional exhibition beautifully blended different art forms such as painting, sculpture, murals, and design, resulting in a harmonious and aesthetic presentation. Featuring approximately 60 artworks created by 30 accomplished artists hailing from cities like Delhi, Bangalore, Jaipur, Mumbai, Hampi, and more, this exhibition highlighted the artistic prowess of eminent creators like MF Hussain, Bhawani Shanker Sharma, Dharmendra Rathore, Arpana Caur, Jodhiya Bai, among others.

Students' Creativity Recognizing the pivotal role of materials in design, students from IIT Jaipur embarked on a creative journey by repurposing surplus design samples into modern furniture. Their thought-provoking art installation, aptly named 'Upcycle Minds,' unveiled the transformative potential of



Art installation Upcycle Minds.

discarded materials. Plastic bottles sourced from junkyards and waste dumps of cafes were ingeniously transformed into a mesmerizing chandelier, radiating ambient light. Waste fabric samples found new life as floor runners, while laminate swatches were skillfully repurposed into wall panels, curtain partitions, and coffee tables. This ingenious showcase exemplified the power of sustainable design and innovative thinking.

Artisan Village Coloroots, a unit of Kalaneri Art Gallery, brought vibrancy and culture to the conclave by setting up a captivating artisan village. This vibrant space provided a platform for rural and tribal artisans to exhibit their traditional crafts, while also hosting shows, workshops, demonstrations, and interactive experiences for young attendees eager to explore the world of languishing arts. Visitors were treated to awe-inspiring displays of Rajasthan's traditional miniature art, alongside demonstrations of other crafts like Tarkashi, Puppetry, Thikri, Clay Pottery, and more. To create a holistic experience, the village also featured a live demonstration of contemporary art, seamlessly blending heritage and innovation.

Kursi Ki Kahaani An intriguing installation by students from Vivekananda Global University narrated the captivating story of chairs and their transformative impact on human life. The installation featured an oversized chair surrounded by numerous smaller chairs, each adorned with doodles depicting the evolution of chair design. Symbolically, it also served as a satirical commentary on politics, highlighting the overwhelming power associated with a single 'kursi' (chair) while shedding light on the aspirations of the lesser powerful chairs. This thought-provoking installation sparked contemplation on the dynamics of power and the complexities of democracy.

Breaking Stereotypes In an endeavour to challenge preconceived notions, students from the Aayojin School of Architecture presented a groundbreaking Isometric Installation. This innovative display explored the possibilities of new-age design by reimagining the use of stone elements, drawing inspiration from the architectural heritage of Rajasthan. Breaking free from conventional norms, the students employed stone not only for foundations and walls but also as a medium for openings and intricate ornamentation. This thoughtfully crafted installation showcased the students.



Anjali Sharma Senior journalist & wildlife enthusiast

Every now and then, as is the case with human life, something or the other goes wrong. May it be illness, bad business deals, poor earnings, Job worries? The causes can be endless, but a good Pandit, trained in astrology, can find some of the worst to be taken care of. At one such unhappy time I was advised to feed milk to a snake.

That was my first encounter with the kabalas. They were not the glamorous 'Gulabo,' I was surprised to see. Their settlement so near the city did not make them a rich lot. The master of the house was not about, but his wife came out, as I was also a woman, she did not hesitate to talk to me. "My husband does not like me to talk to strangers," she told me, and "so come another day when he is home". I didn't want to go back with the job not done, so I requested her to get her mother-in-law to stand with us while we fed the snake, after a little hesitation she agreed to ask her mother-in-law. The older lady came out to assess me, and satisfied, she agreed.

The attempt to get the snake drink up was not exactly a few minutes to say the least. So a conversation started up between us all. She had brought out her basket of snakes for the milk drinking. I was quite nervous, as I couldn't be sure these women knew their job of keeping the snake in restraint. Tentatively I enquired, if they knew

#GONE TO 'GREEN'

how to keep the snake within the basket; I didn't want to offend them, but the repercussions could be horrid. They both began to laugh. "We have looked after these babies since we were children. Although very few women are trained to catch snakes, but looking after them is our job too".

New Perspective

"They are more than our children; they provide roti for our families. They occupy the best spot in my little house. If it rains, and all family members can't fit into the house, the basket with the snakes gets the non-leaky spot and older members of the family have to brave the elements. If my husband or brother-in-law fails to catch a mouse or a frog for the snake, I have to buy some pieces of fresh meat for the snakes, even if my children do not get any. I am duty bound to do so by my religion".

The master of the house walked in by then. He took over the job. The snake basket lid was opened, while I held my frightened breath. It was an anti-climax, the snake was peacefully asleep. They sleep through the day; you see and look for food, once in four to five days. This one was caught only two days ago, so he had to be left at home, as he is not calm yet. He will come to know that we are Kalebela- the people who amuse Kaal, and then he will go out with us to the Amer Fort to show himself to the tourists. The packet of milk I had got with me was cold from the fridge, testing its temperature, Jagdish Nath and Badri Nath asked one of the ladies to warm it up a little. I was a little puzzled. Why this fuss? Maybe this man is more worldly wise and wants make a fast buck off me by including cooking charges, every single man is a thief in small or big measures these days, I was thinking angrily.

The next moment I was ashamed to hear him explain that I was not to worry, the chulha was already alight with a small amount of twigs to keep the hut warm for the many baskets of snakes. The milk was brought to us by the young girl who had been playing outside a little while ago. It was January, and I noticed a chill wind outside. "We have to keep the Nag Dev in comfort, see his basket is lined with my grandson's old sweater, with half of the sweater doubling up as cover

The Lost Snake Charmer

They have a short stay with the family. In promised eleven or twenty one day they will go back to the bushes". This looked such a waste of effort, so I couldn't but help asking;" why do you do that? You have spent so much time and effort to catch one, and then look after them so carefully". The answer was even more surprising;" It is my religion, my Kul- Guru, Kanipa Nath has made it mandatory for us to do so, I cannot keep them in captivity longer then this". "So every twenty one days you go looking for new snakes, and what happens to the ones you leave in the wild?" He told me, they leave the snake near water and soft earth, so they can find cover, preferably near some burrows to get into."

We are very poor people, and can only afford this for our dear 'God'. Winters are easier, in summers we find it very difficult to keep them cool. So we have to keep sprinkling water on the basket. We don't have coolers or fans. This has to be done carefully because they can catch a cold very easily, and then their nose gets blocked. It makes them panicked. You see, in the wild, they rub their nose into loose earth which makes them sneeze, and clear the nose. In the basket I have to do this for him by blowing into his nostril with the help of a small pipe. A cold is really miserable thing for the snake".

It was a kind of catharsis, in my life I had at best looked after my children with this amount of care, or, in a much less careful way, had looked after my pet dog. But never did the dog get the meal and my children get the leftovers. I was forced to look at the Kalebela family anew and with respect. "Tonight it's my wife's turn to keep the basket with her; she will keep the basket in her rajai while herself to keep it warm. We take it in turns so the snakes know us all and feel secure. They have a short stay with the family. In promised eleven or twenty one day they will go back to the bushes".

A Sacred Duty This looked such a waste of effort, so I couldn't but help asking;" why do you do that? You have spent so much time and effort to catch one, and then look after them so carefully". The answer was even more surprising;" It is my religion, my Kul-Guru, Kanipa Nath has made it mandatory for us to do so, I cannot keep them in captivity longer then this".

He was a defeated, sad man. Pleading to show the one person who had visited his home, in his capacity of a sapersa, which he remembers with pride.

This incident has for long troubled me and my sad observations of the pitiable poor conditions of these people who used to be respectable at one time if not rich. And I have to share this surprisingly sensitive moment in my life with other ready to be sensitive people, although not in the established green traditions. Our 'Green' men and women have so overtaken the imagination of the educated and so, now sensitive people, that their green simplification of wild matters cannot be challenged by rationalists of any colour, at least not when they are animals. One need not be categorical in our rejection of their various stupidities, because after all they did a yes-man's job at one time to take up an almost untouched matter of cruelty to beings unable to fight for themselves. All this while



Colour TV Day

There is an innovation that many of us take for granted every day. Whether we're sitting at our computers, watching television with the family, or even playing with our handheld games, we are inundated with a bright parade of colours. Colour TV Day reminds us that this hasn't always been the case, when television was first introduced we had nothing but black and white images, really even of a myriad shade of grey. In 1951, an event came to pass that changed the future of broadcast entertainment forever.



another equally meritorious but helpless being was being created for future cruelties unappreciated or heard. Our mettlesome activists have read the first 'Green' book, never to go back for any further research that may deviate from their original teachings; quite like a die-hard extremist. At the peril of finding myself at the receiving end of a barrage from the zealots, I have with trepidation- tiptoed into the unthinkable. To take stock of what was never factored in by the activist- could it just be possible, that we need to rethink our 'Green' notions, and to take note of the harm that some 'activists' actually cause to wildlife in their misplaced zeal to protect it. The protesters as well that ancient and venerable folklore that is peculiarly Indian and once upon a time defined India-the land of the snake-charmer.

At the peril of finding myself at the receiving end of a barrage from the zealots, I have with trepidation- tiptoed into the unthinkable. To take stock of what was never factored in by the activist- could it just be possible, that we need to rethink our 'Green' notions, and to take note of the harm that some 'activists' actually cause to wildlife in their misplaced zeal to protect it.

The sapersa render a service- a great service in fact- to both society and serpents, when the two species come into conflict. The instinctive, pathological dread that snakes excite in human beings on being sighted almost always leads to their extermination- whether a human being has or has not been bitten by them. A sapersa, if one is nearby, is almost always willing to come forward to trap and take away alive a cornered snake. Of course, there is an incentive in it for him for doing so- he extracts the venom, if the ensnared snake is carrying it, and likely makes money from the various medicines he can make out of this venom. The snakes captured by the sapersas are always, as a kind of religious duty, released in the wilds once their venom storing glands are about to fill up again. There is a very practical reason too for the sapersa to let the snakes go; he is able to extract the precious venom from the snake only if there is one living. Never is it in his interest, neither religiously nor practically to kill the dreaded reptile. While performing this very useful function for society and for snakes, the only concessions that the sapersa seeks from Authority is that the snake charmer be regulated and that he be permitted to display the collection of snakes in his 'custody' to the public at large to earn a livelihood, and some respect as the tamer

of the untameable. He asks for the two indulgences only to eke out a living. But the busybodies, the animal rights activists, will have none of it. The moment they hear of a snake-charmer at work in his tradition, they are up in arms. All hell breaks loose and the Forest Department is wily nilly made to intervene and penalise the delinquent, earning some publicity and, questionably, some piety. They are blind to any rational and humanitarian arguments that, if translated into positive action, they could provide succor to both the hunted and the hunter, the prey and the predator and help preserve the traditions of the sapersas as well that ancient and venerable folklore that is peculiarly Indian and once upon a time defined India-the land of the snake-charmer.

With the now lost snake charmer some of India's mystery is also lost to the World. No more are we a land of the rope trick, the madari, or the snake charmer. These professional animal trainers can no more educate our children about these beings of the earth; they are no more accessible to the close viewing of our growing children to learn any kind of co-existence. We have to be living in villages or cities, and they have to be seen in a zoo if you must. Notwithstanding how good for the animals that may be.

Pride In Speciality

The one kind of animal care professional has taken over, to set aside another who carried away with him our wild life lores, our religious beliefs, and mystique. One could argue that there could be no better taking over of a land than to kill its special people. This has been better achieved by the 'Green' terrorists than any British Raj. No more are the snakes to be revered; they must only be feared. Though how this can be a safeguard for them is quite unclear. It may be argued by some patriots, that there is no pride in doing a land of the snake charmers, or rope climbers. Why cling to it. Well just as much pride in a nation being the land of the acrobats, who win the Olympics, or a land of people who have the ballerinas to dance their stories, or even a land of the people



who make the best football players. There is pride in speciality. We just have to throw off the 500 year old yoke of finding 'perfections' in other 'places' to emulate. In our zeal to copy people who have made it in to the 'buddy-hood' of advancement, we have without thought sacrificed our own. The Sapersa is no more respectable, even to himself. He either hides away from official eyes or takes on another kind of job. They now dance, for the tourists or at public functions, like 'Gulabo'. Some are good at it, some not, but their self-pride does take a beating, as some Kalebels tell. "We have to shift from our traditional jobs to do this-but we make sure our women are not touched by people". This sentence alone can break any sensitive human beings heart and I hope the pseudo dogooders to our civilized, new existence have their eyes open to this slaughter that has successfully taken place. They would again argue that the thing to do is to re-educate these poor people to fit into other jobs. To what end one may ask. To help protect the snake? But when was it in danger? Not while the snake charmer needed it alive to milk some venom from to help cure some hapless fellow bitten by one. Nor when the people revered it like a God to be left to go away when seen. Possibly not even then, when a couple of them are seen at close quarters within the safe company of a Kalebela, demystifying some of the fears of common public.

rajeshtsharma1049@gmail.com

"Snake Charmers," A Chromolithograph

By Alfred Brehm

The early 20th century proved something of a golden age for snake charmers. Governments promoted the practice to draw tourism, and snake charmers were often sent overseas to perform at cultural festivals and for private patrons. In addition, the charmers provided a valuable source of snake venom for creating antivenoms.

Today, cultural changes are threatening the profession of the snake charmer in India. One reason for this is the rise of cable television; nature documentaries have extinguished much of the fear and revulsion once felt toward the animals and thus demystified the snake charmer. In addition, many people have less spare time than they once did, especially children, who in previous decades could watch a charmed all day with no commitments to school. Animal-rights groups have also made an impact by decrying what they deem to be the abuse of a number of endangered species. Another factor is urbanisation and deforestation, which have made the snakes upon which the

charmers rely increasingly rare.

This has in turn given rise to the single most important reason snake charming is declining, at least in India: It is no longer legal. India passed the Wildlife Protection Act in 1972. The law originally aimed at preventing the export of snakeskin's, introducing a seven-year prison term for owning or selling of the creatures. Beginning in the late 1990s, however, animal-rights groups convinced the government to enforce the law with regard to snake charmers as well. As a result, the charmers were forced to move their performances to less-travelled areas such as small villages, or else to pay hefty bribes when caught by police officers. The trade is hardly a profitable one anymore, and many practitioners must supplement their income by begging, scavenging, or working as day labourers. Children of snake charmers increasingly decide to leave the profession to pursue higher-paying work, and many fathers do not try to make them reconsider. Modern Indians often view snake charmers as little more than beggars.

Myths

Several myths are prevalent about snakes, their behaviour, dietary habits, habitats, etc. among the tribal, rural and even in urban masses of Rajasthan. Tribal people relate the snakes so much with themselves that they consider some snakes good and some snake bad for example Pythas mucosus is the totemic snake of the Bhurias which is a clan of the tribe Bhilli. Similarly, Python molurus is considered an esteemed serpent by the Bhlis. Similarly, another snake species,

Xenochrophis piscator, locally called as Dindru is considered as ancestor of the Dindor clans of Bhill; hence their name Dindor, i.e. off springs of Dindru. Bhill and Garasia tribes also conserve the snake Python molurus as they think that killing of the snake will cause drought in that year. A snake temple, locally known as Gatodji ka Devra situated in remote areas of Rajasthan is used as lie detector. Some Devas are especially dedicated to treat snakebite patients.

Stories of Kanipa and Gorakhnath

The Kalebels say they are descendants of the followers of Kanipa, said to be one of the Nine Naths, one of the eighty-four siddhas (yogic adepts). Kanipa is the guru of the Kalebels. There are many stories told about the rivalry between him and Gorak Nath, which indicate a rivalry between two Nath schools. Although Kalebels are popularly supposed to be Followers of the left hand path, black magicians. "There were Nine Naths and eighty-four siddhas. ..." so the storyteller begins. Jalandhar Nath, Machindra Nath, Gorak Nath and Kanipa, all these are guru-bhal and so is Hanuman because their Father is Shiva and they were all born from Agni. Kanipa from the ear, Jalandhar Nath from water, Machindra Nath from fish, and Gorak Nath from cow-dung. Kanipa's disciples were the Kalebels. Within this part of The Nath sect, the 'pa' sect is also known as the 'penance' Panth. There is an interesting story, which

goes like this- Machindra Nath's two disciples/sons, Nim Nath and Paras Nath went to the village in Bhartnari where they had reached after a long and tiring journey to reach their destination where Machindra Nath's disciple Guru Gorakhnath had organised a very large Bhoj. Instead of Gorak Nath they went to the village for bhiksha to collect food for the Bhoj, since they were the youngest at that time.

There was a Jain house in this village, and a big dinner was being held in that house, so the two boys went there to beg for food. To make the boys work in return of alms, the householders asked them to remove a dead cow which everybody had refused to remove for them. Because they were young and ignorant, they agreed to remove the dead cow. Nim Nath put a cloth over his mouth because the dead cow was stinking. When he returned to the Jain family's house in the village the cloth was sticking so tightly to his mouth he was unable to remove it. In return for taking away the dead cow the boys were given food. In the meantime Gorak Nath predicted to Machindra Nath that the boys were returning but bringing only blood. When they arrived and their bag was opened, there was only blood.

Gorak Nath strongly complained to Machindra Nath that these disciples should be sent away, but Machindra Nath refused. He said to the boys, "Go and take your bath and then tell me what happened."

The slink was so great that the boy who had covered his mouth, tied the cloth more tightly, and the other

finding blood on his clothes, threw them away. After their bath they related the whole story, and while they were doing so the Jain family's kitchen was magically sprinkled with blood. The Jain family realised the two boys, whom they had requested to remove the dead cow, were not ordinary boys, but saints. So the Jain family came to Machindra Nath to ask for forgiveness. Machindra Nath said, "The boy who put a cloth over his face, he is your guru. And the boy who threw off his clothes, he is also your guru. One is Jain guru and the other is Sarowgi guru." (Jains of different sub-groups).

Machindra Nath, Gorak Nath, Jalandhar Nath and Kanipa were together once in Nagarkot, and Gorak Nath invited all the disciples to stay for dinner afterwards. Tradition decreed they bring hollow gourds to eat from, and Gorak Nath instructed them to cover their gourds and wish for the food of their choice. Everyone wished for delicious food, except Kanipa's disciples who were angry with Gorak Nath and wanted to put him to test. They asked for snakes and poison, thinking it would be impossible for Nath to fulfill this, but that was not so, and their gourds were filled with poisonous snakes. Gorak Nath was annoyed and cursed them. From that day forth they would have to carry poisonous snakes and use them to be for their food.

"You will go to jungles and hunt, you will beg from all castes!" So from that day to this, the followers of Kanipa have to carry the snakes and poison in their bags.

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

BABY BLUES



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman