

#MOMENTOUS

When Vyjayanthimala Sang in Bangla

This collaboration was more than just a musical novelty. It symbolized a quiet breaking of barriers



In the 1960s, Vyjayanthimala stood at the pinnacle of Hindi cinema, admired for her elegance, expressive acting, and mastery of classical dance. She was one of the defining stars of her era, seamlessly blending artistry with mainstream appeal. Yet, beyond the glamour of Bollywood, she once stepped into an entirely different cultural and musical space, one that few remember today.

It was filmmaker Tapan Sinha who saw the possibility of this unique crossover. Known for his thoughtful storytelling and deep connection to Bengali culture, Sinha encouraged Vyjayanthimala to sing not in Hindi, but in Bangla. It was an unusual proposition at the time, as language boundaries in Indian cinema were far more rigid than they are today.

To bring this vision to life, Sinha collaborated with Mrinal Chakraborty, a talented yet often underrated com-

poser. Together, they crafted a duet that would bridge two artistic worlds. The song, "Chey Thaki Chey Thaki," for *Hatey Bazarey* (1974) became a rare and beautiful experiment, melding the voice of a Hindi film icon with the lyrical richness of Bengali music.

This collaboration was more than just a musical novelty. It symbolized a quiet breaking of barriers, showing that artistry is not confined by language or region. Vyjayanthimala's willingness to step outside her comfort zone reflected her dedication to creative exploration, while the composition itself carried the emotional depth characteristic of Bengal's musical traditions. Though not widely known today, "Chey Thaki Chey Thaki" remains a fascinating cultural moment, a reminder of a time when artists dared to cross boundaries and create something truly unique. It stands as proof that true artistry transcends language, connecting people through shared emotion and expression.



'Portrait of a Woman'

Despite its small size, this painting holds a very special place at the National Gallery: it is the earliest painting by a woman painter in the collection. Signed and dated, it is a true masterpiece that shows Catharina van Hemessen at her best.

● Bulbul Joshi

For International Women's Day 2026, we sat down with curator Dr. Christine Seidel to find out more about this incredible 16th-century artist.

Catharina van Hemessen is the earliest European woman painter whose works can be identified without doubt. She was just 23 years old when she created this small, intricate 'Portrait of a Woman' in 1551.

In a time where very few women worked as artists, van Hemessen painted with confidence and skill, proudly signing her name on nearly all of her works.

Though we don't know who the sitter in this artwork was, her soft brown eyes and slight smile draw us in. Imagine her chatting to van Hemessen as she sat for her portrait, sharing a rare moment of creative connection between two women in the 16th century.

For International Women's Day 2026, we interviewed curator Dr. Christine Seidel to ask...

- What makes this painting so special?**

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- Which is your favourite detail and why?**

A wonderful detail is the lap dog that the woman carries by her side.

It was common for women to have their portrait painted alongside their favourite companion during this period.

Here, the dog takes on its own personality. The way in which she holds him suggests that he did not want to sit still in her lap but wanted to be tucked under the arm. The bells on his collar would jingle with every move. The liveliness is somehow captured in the way van Hemessen characterises the white and bright orange fur and whiskers.

They are painted 'wet in wet,' a quick way of layering paint and brushstrokes on top of other paint layers that are not fully dry. The wet paint can be dragged and blended to create a lively mixture of textures and colour.

- What three things do you think people should know about Catharina van Hemessen?**

Firstly it's important to know that she worked in Antwerp, one of the most vibrant artistic centres in 16th-century Europe. The city was a hub for banking, luxury goods like paintings and tapestries, international trade and innovative thinking. The opportunities created a certain liberal atmosphere.

This influenced attitudes towards the education of girls and the legal status of women within society. The social circles and networks of van Hemessen's father, who was himself one of the most sought-after painters of the day, allowed her to enter a world that was otherwise rarely accessible to women.

Secondly, she was a literary figure during her own lifetime, which is unusual. One of the reasons we

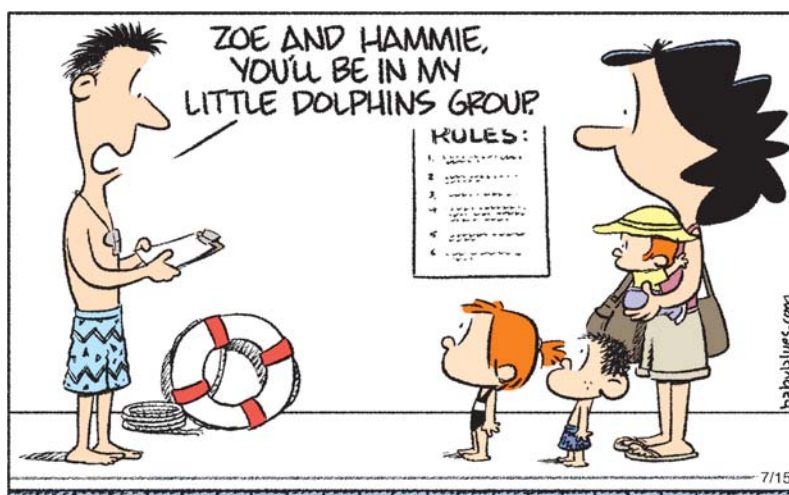
#CATHARINA VAN HEMESSEN

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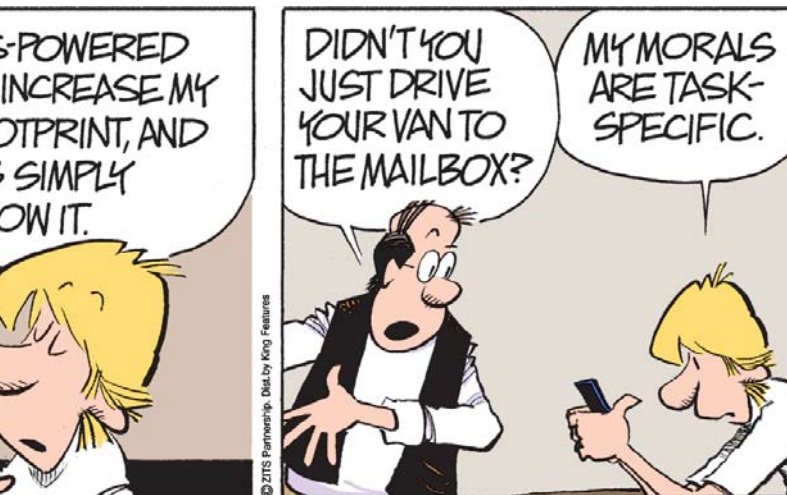
ly she did not run a workshop as a professional painter but rather worked within the network of her father's workshop. Here, she had the opportunity to learn about the craft and come in contact with potential clients as well.

BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



Remembering the Voyage That Shaped History

Mayflower Day is observed on September 16 to commemorate the historic voyage of the Mayflower, the ship that carried the Pilgrims from England to the New World in 1620. On this day, the Mayflower set sail across the Atlantic with over 100 passengers seeking religious freedom and new opportunities, eventually establishing one of the earliest English settlements in America. The journey symbolizes courage, perseverance, and the pursuit of liberty. Mayflower Day serves as a reminder of how this voyage shaped early American history and continues to be celebrated as a milestone in the story of migration and settlement.

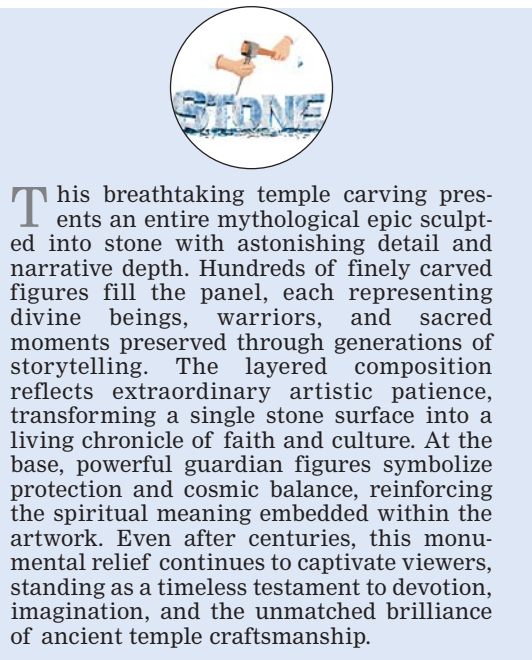
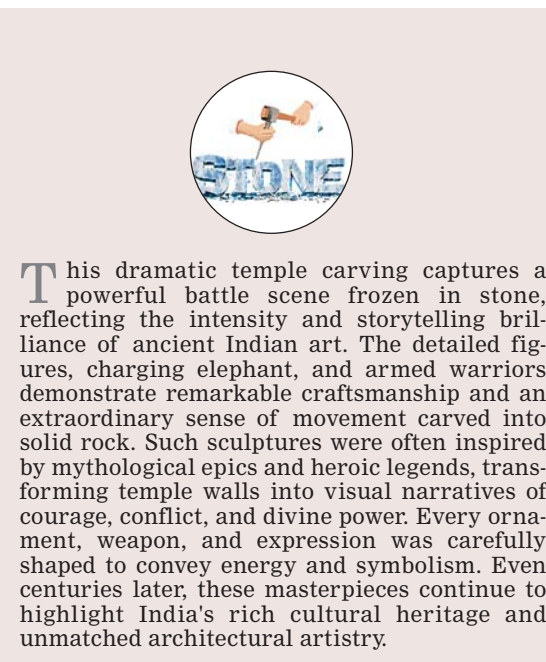
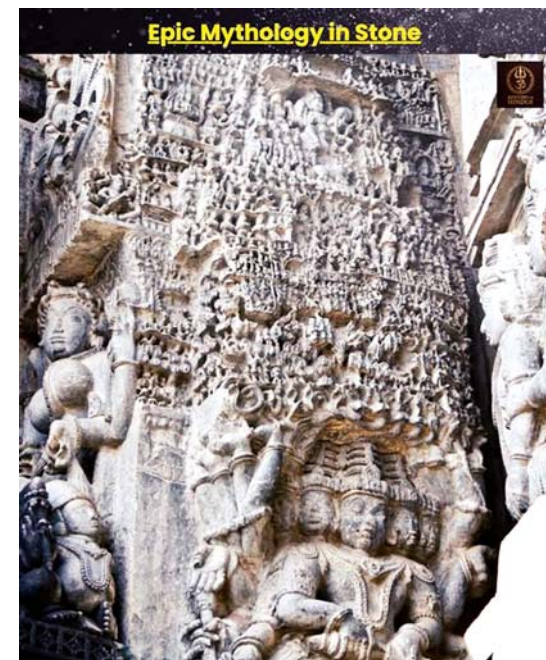
#STONE

Things To See And Not Miss

So, here are some stone carvings to appreciate and wonder at the craftsmen, their skill, and what inspired them to do them, the way they did

Beauty need not be described in words. Sometimes, all one should do is, look at it. A story, a piece of history, or most valuable, something to see which leaves each viewer free to look and realise, or not even that, just see something of wonder. So, here are some stone carvings to appreciate and wonder at the craftsmen, their skill, and what inspired them to do them, the way they did. What you and I can see in them and what the next man may find in them.

Looking upward, this intricately carved stone ceiling reveals a breathtaking display of symmetry, devotion, and architectural brilliance. Layer upon layer of circular patterns draw the eye towards the central pendant, creating a mesmerizing sense of depth and balance. Every ring is adorned with finely sculpted motifs, reflecting the extraordinary craftsmanship and patience of ancient artisans. The precision in detail speaks of a time when temples were not only places of worship but also masterpieces of mathematical and artistic excellence. This ceiling stands as a silent testament to heritage carved in stone, where spirituality and geometry unite in perfect harmony.



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