

WOMAN COLOUR

#2



NOV-DEC
THE DREAMER ISSUE



local colour

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We started Local Colour to bridge the gaps we felt as young creatives and connect with people to build something we are all proud of. We're very glad that so many of you resonate with this idea and the kind of content we attempt to produce. The experience of producing and publishing the first issue was so nerve-wracking but the response we received was so gratifying that we couldn't help but make another issue! We didn't think we'd get this far when we started Local Colour. Yet, here we are, two issues strong, with so many more to follow.

We explored the theme of Identity for the first issue. For this issue, we wanted to delve deeper into the phenomenon of dreaming. Dreaming has always been an interesting piece of conversation amongst us. Whether it was a vision for our futures or even a strange dream one of us had last night; Dreams are one collective experience that connect us all and have influenced intellectuals time and again. We wanted to explore how dreams have played an important role across various creative fields, helping creatives break boundaries. The events currently transpiring in the world feel like a crazy dream anyway..

In this issue of Local Colour you will find insights in the work of creatives of different fields through interviews with people within and out of the industry; some great inputs by our team members about their understanding of the concept and wonderful interpretations of the concept via submissions! We can't wait for you to dive into this issue and reimagine the way you dream with us.

The production of this issue came with its own challenges and made us realise that nothing good comes easy. We tried our best to create and curate content by venturing out of our comfort zone in every way to produce something better than what we previously had. We really enjoyed the process of putting this issue together and we really hope you enjoy reading it.

-Neehara & Phalgun
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Illustration by - Saloni Singh

“Dreamers must dream on as long as the nightmare wakes them up to greet with a bucketful of reality”
-Munia Khan

As we grow older and as the world nosedives further and further down this spiral, one can't help but dream about an alternate utopian reality. A reality where they're happy, thriving, emotionally fulfilled, safe and content. A reality where they don't need to worry about the necessities or the reigning fascism or the plummeting economy or the overheating of their planet or the never-ending pandemic or the ... well you get the point. To dream is to hope, and there's not a lot of that to go around in the reality that we live in.

Dreams feel so distorted yet real, so close yet nothing makes sense. They're calm yet are uncomfortable, like you're being watched as you cruise from one broken fragment to another figment of your imagination, waiting for the demons to pull you under your sheets into your next nightmare. Or are you floating atop an ocean, looking down to see you're being watched?

For the cover, we wanted to capture that feeling you get when you're fast asleep and dreaming, how you find yourself slipping away, into the abyss, all eyes on that moment yet falling through. The undeniable pull towards a world so brilliant yet confusing that one can't help but feel disoriented, taken aback by the sheer surreal vista of one's subconscious mind.

With the cover art illustrated by **Saloni Singh** and conceptualised by **Priya Madhu**, Local Colour brings to you their multifaceted exploration of the world of dreams, contemplating the existence of a fine line between utopian and dystopian realities.

local colour LOVES



The Varnasi Kulhar Chai by Indus People is the perfect companion to establish a peaceful afternoon transporting you to the streets of Varnasi. Available for purchase at induspeople.in

MURAKAMI



The Strange Library is a graphic novel by Haruki Murakami. The book- like the name suggest is truly strange; pulling you into a dreamlike atmosphere that is unforgettable. Available on Amazon.



Dream Decoder presents 60 cards of the most common dreams, explaining what your unconscious mind and events or situations in your waking life might inspire certain dreams. Available on Amazon .



Do We Make Sense?, a podcast by Nitya and Srishti explores the conversations of everyday things that matter through personal anecdotes. You can find them on Spotify.

MOVIE RECOMMENDATIONS



Pink Floyd- The Wall (1982)
Musical/Drama
Directed by- Alan Parker,
Gerald Scarfe



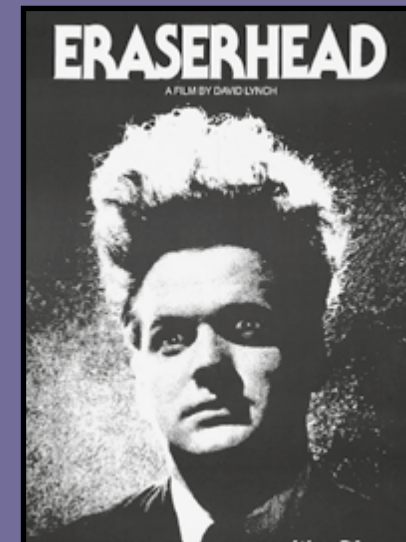
Birdman (2014)
Drama
Directed by- Alejandro
González Iñárritu



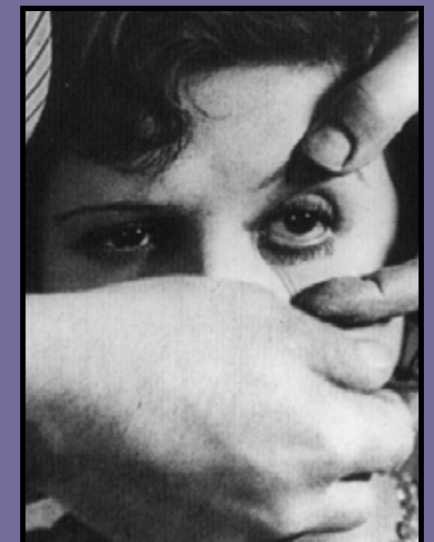
Alice in Wonderland (2010)
Fantasy/Adventure
Directed by- Tim Burton



8 1/2 (1963)
Drama/Fantasy
Directed by- Federico Fellini



Eraserhead (1977)
Horror/Indie Film
Directed by- David Lynch



An Andalusian Dog (1929)
Fantasy/Short
Directed by- Luis Buñuel,
Salvador Dalí

WHEN WE ALL FALL ASLEEP, WHERE DO WE GO? THE IMPACT OF DREAMS ON ART AND PREDICTIONS FROM THE PANDEMIC

Words by Priya Madhu Srinivasan
Illustration by Neehara Kothapally

It's a tale as old as time.

People love and live in their dreams. Thinking about it, talking about it, writing about it; however we choose to engage with it, it's no secret that we just can't get enough. We create entire worlds and ecosystems for our dreams to live and grow in. While philosophers, musicians and writers have gushed about dreams, it is the visual artists who have painted paths to the places and shown us where we really go when we fall asleep.

One of the most important records we have of humanity's obsession with dreams is from 'the Renaissance'; this is when many Humanists began interpreting the meaning behind dreams and allowed their inner desires and dreams to manifest via their art. They believed that while sleeping, the soul can be freed from the corporeal realm of the body and achieve a higher spiritual state. Standing for uninhibitedness and freedom, in art, this was depicted with lots of nudity, leisure, angels, and musical instruments. For some context, this was preceded by the era where dreams were suffocated and only allowed to be seen as a mode of communication with God.

Following this, in the Symbolist movement, artists developed a means to express the spiritual realities and the mind through the playing field of dreams. Their subject matter consisted of a mix of occult, fantasy, eroticism, and death. A great example is Henri Rousseau's "*The Sleeping Gypsy*" where the lion can be the product of the woman's dream or maybe the abysmal reality she lives in or the whole composition itself is the dream. This movement left a lot of unanswered questions for the next generation of artists to resolve!

Then, in the 20th century, Freud published his theories on dreams and the unconscious, and the consequences were immediate in the field of art. Dreams became the primary source of inspiration for the new generation of artists who wanted to transcend the oppressive shackles of reality and societal norms: the Surrealists. Explicit in the works of Breton, Dali, Miro and Ernst, the unconscious became a tool that contained unbelievable interpretations and acted as a tinted lens to one's inner self. While the Surrealist movement gave way to many more art styles that are spectacular in their own right, the method of tapping into one's inner ecosystem to make nebulous art

is a dynamic movement with a life of its own. This movement has allowed the art world to document the collective unconscious of society through pivotal moments of human history. When artists explored their inner sanctuaries through their art, we can see what they feared, what they valued, what they cherished, what they desired, and what was forbidden. It allows them to fully explore the landscape of dreams as an avenue for self-exploration and immortalizing the psyche of society in context.

According to research conducted by 'National Geographic', with the current global COVID 19 pandemic, people all over the world have been having extremely vivid and unusual dreams. People are dreaming with a lot more clarity and frequency and are also remembering their weird dreams. As billions of people are isolating at home, the withdrawal from our usual environments has left dreamers with an utter lack of inspiration. This has forced our subconscious to dig deeper into the unconscious and draw from themes from our past. Adding the stress, isolation, lack of stimulation and changes in sleep patterns, most dreams are being colored with strong, negative emotions.

As the pandemic continues to choke reality, life when awake has also taken a dreamlike, almost surreal turn. We feel lonely, disconnected, scared, disorientated and dissociated, all of which are reflected in the vivid dreams that we have been having. Most dreams are metaphors for the anxiety we feel about the future and the virus itself. As dangers and threats are difficult to visualize, our minds fill in the blanks in weird and graphic ways. Some people describe being swarmed with birds, or the monsters taking people away or tidal waves or fading into darkness.



While these dreams are frightening, it is also riveting to see how there is almost a collective unconscious; a cornucopia of the world's darkest fears and deepest regrets. As art imitates life, it's going to be interesting to see how the artists of the world will document this moment in history, as they dream and tap into their subconscious. In the next few years, we will see a movement that will take its bricks from Surrealism and Abstractionism and build a foundation for a style that will represent the impact of the pandemic on our ecosystems; inside and out. We will see more contact-less, spiritual transcendent and nebulous art, that reflects the context of the time we are living in. Moreover, as artists are unable to visit their studios and access to their mediums are getting limited, we see more experimentation with newer mediums and narratives. There will also be more craft incorporated into the art world at every level, as a consequence of this experimentation. The colors will get brighter and louder, screaming the pain. Art will once again veer towards being an outlet for the collective fears of the world. The pain, the grief, the disconnectedness, the isolation, the utter lack of stability and clarity, and all the questions that this pandemic has left us with, will all be reflected in the art movement that is to come.

As the dreamers of the world hurry to process the world through their canvases, we will see a style that is born from this cornucopia of the world's darkest fears and deepest regrets. Dreams and their interpretations will once again become a core touchpoint of art and art history. I mean, when each day feels like a disorientating fog of dreams, isn't it almost easier to dream fantasies to the age-old question,

"when we all fall asleep, where do we go?" ☺

Words by: Dhruvya Ramadass, Lavanya Bhatt
Art by: SN Devishree

YOUR NEXT DREAM COULD BE MADE INTO A VIDEO GAME



We all wish to live in and control the dreams we have at night; the thrill of being away from reality, creating things unimaginable, dreams are an escape into the colorful corners of our minds while our bodies snore away in the real world. Imagine remembering all this when you wake up the next day! Imagine understanding the meaning behind the crazy visuals! If you want all this, then lucid dreamers we have something in store for you!

Lucid dreaming is dreaming in a semi-conscious state. The people who practice lucid dreaming can control things around them in their dream - from tiny objects like their character's shoes to huge buildings, they can even reform the way they look. They are the Creator of their own worlds! The things the dreamers usually create are bizarre and nothing like we see in real life, exploring their creativity in a way reality restricts them to. It is not for everyone though; only people who have gained the skill through long experimentations can successfully do it.

Lucidity is not only for losing oneself in the rabbit holes of our minds., some dreamers use it as a tool to solve problems, heal from certain mental traumas, and gain deep insight into one's reason for existence.

These days we see a surge in the number of people playing video games where they can live in virtual realities - quite like lucid dreaming except that they are fully conscious. Professional lucid dreamers have often pointed out this similarity - virtual reality provides a window to the seekers of freedom of imagination who do not have the skill to lucid dream. A study conducted by Marc Sestir of the University of Central Arkansas showed that virtual reality gaming had some of the same benefits as lucid dreaming - cures for anxiety, PTSD and so much more. After certain experiments that brought out these positive results, they boosted the development of virtual reality gaming. Now your mom would not nag you for spending too much time on these games! Certain game designers started taking inspiration from this skillset as well and developed a similar feel through their work. Playing a game based on what you dreamt one day? Sounds as crazy as pigs flying. Another

study conducted in 2006 by Gackenbach denotes that frequent gamers showed signs of being able to control their dreams; it is believed that these gamers, with the help of a tool in the future, can lucid dream more efficiently and examine their thoughts and emotions.

All these studies show the relations between lucid dreaming and game designing - how these fields can assist each other. If game designers and developers begin using lucid dreaming as a tool to find inspiration thoroughly, it will be the beginning of a revolution! The visuals, plot, characters and theme for a game can be worked upon by exercising controlled dreaming. The imagination will likely lean more towards surrealistic objects rather than real-life ones, but that is the beauty of it.

How crazily awesome is the idea of having a game based on your dreams, a game in which you can alter reality in full consciousness, inspired by the imagination of your semi-conscious state! The designers can also use it to explore how to provide mental health relief through their games. This will result in a fresh turn of opinions amongst people who consider gaming as harmful. Simple virtual reality experiences can also be ideated upon through lucid dreaming.

As we go ahead into the future, we can control things around us that we never thought we could. Doing wonders in game designing by taking cues from the powers of our mind, lucid dreaming can aid in a fun and immersive experience and provide therapeutic relief from mental depressors. With proper practice, it can enhance the ability to mindfully find solutions, analyze each scenario and responsibly shape one's destiny. Anyway, the wildest things go on to become the most sensational ones!

(WARNING: LUCID DREAMING WITHOUT THE HELP OF A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL CAN LEAD TO HARMFUL EFFECTS AND SLEEP PARALYSIS) ☹



A series of photographs exploring the medium of long exposure photography inspired by hypnagogic dreaming - a time period in the sleep cycle, where the lines between consciousness and unconsciousness begin to get blurry. The projections seen during this time are a layered amalgamation of subconscious imagery and the surrounding reality.

Images by Hrutuja Admuthe





Kira Issar

MERGING ART, PHILOSOPHY AND FASHION

Interview by Ankith E.S. & Shrijaya Bhaduri
Illustration by Rithika Menon, Photos and Collage work by Kira Issar

Kira Issar is a photographer based in Delhi, whose work is largely inspired by “eco-feminism”. We delve deeper into a warm conversation with her on a Sunday evening, as she describes to us what makes her tick.

Smitten by her surrealist collage work, and her minimal yet striking photography, we decided to contact this up-and-coming photographer. With no prior background in the field of fashion, Kira Issar has truly chased after her ambitions. She nonchalantly tells us how she was a year into leather design at NIFT Chennai, when she realised that it wasn't her cup of tea. Kira instead went on to pursue a triple major in psychology, literature and journalism at Mount Carmel College in Bangalore; and while she thought these were just subjects that she could easily score in, she raked them up and made full use of it in her career. Bashful yet confident in her speech, she tells us more about how she followed her dreams to work in the fashion industry.

LC: How would you describe your work?

Kira: Strange but, minimalist, definitely. That's a quick answer for you. I like a lot of clean space in my work, wherever I can, I use a lot of texture and a lot of colour. I, too, am learning as an artist. An interesting revelation was that, art is an imitation of life, and to incorporate that within your work is really necessary otherwise you're making a copy of a copy. I need to include parts of myself within my work, no matter how ugly or pretty they truly are. I need to go ahead and be about ideas; as much as I like being visual, I need to have an idea behind it.





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LC: What are your thoughts on surrealism? Have you been inspired by it?

Kira: Definitely. I was pretty into Dali at one point of time. I love Salvador Dali's work. I do question some of the work that he did, because we do need to be critical of our idols as well. Surrealism is very important in order to detach from reality, because a lot of people are looking for escape when they look at art like that.

LC: Your work seems to emanate eco-feminism. How would you describe the connect between it and your work?

Kira: My artwork, even with no introduction to eco-feminist theory already consists of the visual elements of womxn, animals, and nature. In fact, ecofeminist literature is the starting point when it comes to developing my collage art ideas. For instance, in 'The Feminisation of Nature & the Naturalisation of Women' - (which can be interpreted as absolutely abstract) is inspired by the 'commodity status' imposed on womxn, non-humans, and nature in patriarchal culture. 'Outside-Inside', which was created during the lockdown, was inspired by Greta Gaard's essay 'Toward New Eco-Masculinities, Eco-Genders, and Eco-sexualities' combined with my yearning to be on the 'outside' while laying around 'inside'. I thus articulate a lot of my feelings/belief systems through my artwork in particular.

LC: What goes into the process of your work?

Kira: With regard to photography, I like to go ahead and make a lot of ugly pencil sketches of something that I visualise and then replicate that on set. With regard to my artwork, I ask myself the question "What motivates this in the world", and then I try to write about it. And then I go about reading, reading is so essential. I feel like I have to develop my thoughts and feelings, and that's why reading is definitely the next stage. And the third stage is coming up with a few rough sketches, looking at the various mediums I have around me. But I'm still finding my medium. A medium can be anything, it can be a bunch of rocks you found, a weird plant you grew or even wax. Expanding your mediums is very, very necessary, and at the moment I'm super into collage art.

LC: How has the pandemic affected your work?

Kira: The pandemic had me absolutely jobless for 6+ months, much like most of the country. I would have certainly not survived it had I not been privileged enough to be living with my parents. Work continues to be slow, but has certainly picked up.

"I need to include parts of myself within my work, no matter how ugly or pretty they truly are"

LC: What kind of dreams do you have? What is your perception of dreams with relation to reality?

Kira: I'm going to ruin your question and tell you that I don't dream often. I mean I do dream, but I end up forgetting them. When I go to sleep, I just want blackness, I just want to close my eyes and not have another story to deal with. But I can answer your question philosophically with regard to dreaming and the future. I think dreaming is essential in the sense of visualisation, you need to visualise the future and materialise it. You need to direction yourself; you should make those 5-year plans. To even dream of a better world is very brave, dreaming is an act of bravery.

LC: Have your dreams or someone else's dreams influenced your work?

Kira: No, it hasn't, but I've thought of it influencing my work. One day one of my friends came over and told me about a dream she had last night. She said it was strange and that she didn't remember most of it, but she remembered seeing flowers. When she looked carefully at those flowers, there was a pinky finger wiggling at the centre of it. I was so fascinated by this, I told myself I have to draw it, and then I never drew it (she laughed). I've also thought about making art about how I don't want to dream as well.

LC: How do you manage your personal projects alongside your commercial projects?

Kira: I'm about 2 years into this career. The kind of work I get, it's sporadic. Sometimes I'll get a lot of work in a month, and sometimes there'll be 2 or 3 months of no commercial projects. With the pandemic going on, I had about 6 months of that sort of free time, and as a freelancer you will encounter this problem. That's why I feel it's essential to have your own thing on the side, your own vision, to have your own dream with regard to what the fashion industry should look like. I don't plan my personal projects in line with my commercial projects, the irregularity takes care of it. It's always better to distance them far apart because you don't want them to clash. With my personal projects I like planning everything to a T, so as to not waste any time.

LC: What advice would you have for up and coming photographers?

Kira: I would say do a lot of test shoots, really explore your machine and try different editing styles. Photography is a very visual subject and colour is such a big part of it. When it comes to your post production, you have to put in work and see what style really attracts you. Photograph a lot, and edit a lot. Those are my two pieces of advice.

LC: What's one of your favourite projects?

Kira: I'm really excited about new stuff coming up. I'm looking forward to this really cool shoot that I'm doing which involves a friend who isn't a typical model, she has a fuller body if I could put it that way. I'm trying to combine her with an interesting fashion take with regard to nature. I'm making her this interesting bikini of leaves, and a headdress too. This is where craft really comes into my work. I think you can take a footnote of Studio Metallurgy being one of my favourite shoots, because they let me have complete creative freedom I made my own props for it. That was a project I truly and genuinely enjoyed.

By the time our conversation with Kira Issar culminated, we were delighted to talk to such an amiable personality on a Sunday evening. We got to view the world through her lens, and absorb the philosophies of her life (as much as we could in those forty minutes). That being said, we sanguinely look forward to what this talent has to offer in the future. You can find her exciting journey with art on instagram

@kiraissar or through her website
www.kiraissar.com ©

"I think dreaming is essential in the sense of visualisation, you need to visualise the future and materialise it."



“stop for a moment”

- on Penrose steps and dreams

Words by: Saaj J
Illustrations by: Saloni Singh

i'm walking
down
the steps into a spiral
with different scenes
from different times
with characters dressed up
to play the part
in those scenes
in those times
spiralling down
down
down
to its true meaning.

why are you here mother? this is my world.
she stares
because she cannot talk
this is my world.
so i walk
down
down
down what seems to be
a never ending
staircase

“they’re after us, they’re coming!”
the smallest creature
rushes past me
did it, just speak?
excuse me sir
please tell me
why are you here?
he dims out into the background
a colour of red plastered against the black
spiralling
still walking
down
a marching band of colourfully decked men
circle me
excuse m—
they’re gone.
there’s no point.
i will never know
why my mother
was here
or who’s after us.

why am i still walking?

down

the red is gone
and is replaced by a solitary room
chipped grey paint
white cushioned flooring
maybe if i yell someone will find me
get me out of here
watch the words
float
leisurely
like a little red balloon
in the night sky
they hit the chipped grey walls
like a DVD screen
the wall is white now
the words are wisps
and the float around.
the cushioning is very tough
it doesn’t seem friendly.

i’ve stopped in my way.
is there
no one here?

steps

just
more
steps

and darkness.
darkness
darkness

d a r k n e s s

STOP.

i open my eyes
i see,
daylight?
is it real? yes.
am i awake? yes.

i never did find the end of those
stairs after all.



Tarun Balani

The Shape Of Things To Come



Tarun Balani

SONIC STORYTELLER

Words by: Kirtana Rajeev
Illustration by Rithika Menon

“To break or innovate first you have to truly learn the rules and study the art form by immersing yourself in it”; We tend to think of breaking the rules or innovation as an action arising from a single brilliant flash of insight, but the truth is that it is a long-drawn-out process. To be able to innovate, one needs to learn and imbibe their artform to its core. It is through this rationale that Tarun Balani, artist, musician, producer and educator, approaches his art.

Born and raised in New Delhi, Balani’s earliest recollection of music traces back to his parents. His father’s love for Indian classical and his mother’s peppy Western taste (ABBA, Bee Gees) were the two musical worlds that coexisted for him. The entry of MTV in the ’90s and its introduction of American bands to Indian viewers was Balani’s first calling into the world of music. It looked and sounded so cool to someone disillusioned by staid school music classes. Having started with a piano, he later discovered the drums and was instantly sold. Starting first with rock and fusion he later went to New York, the city of jazz.

“Being surrounded and influenced by the sheer love for the music; I completely immersed myself by being around jazz clubs and jazz musicians, I was just instantly sold”.

Berklee School of Music connected him to different cultures through one common language, music. “I like to absorb different cultures into my music”, and working with band members from around the world involves improvisation. “I like the challenges that they pose at me as an artist. Being able to blend these differences is the beauty of improvisation”.

“Just immerse yourself in the study of the art form because all of the answers are actually there.”

A musical storyteller listens to the world and depicts it through music. A sonic storyteller and improviser at heart, Balani is constantly inspired by his surroundings, his music has evolved to a point where it can align inward with his spiritual quest and be an outward expression of his feeling depicting the outside world. Being someone who is extremely immersed in his art, Balani has become an organized and regimented person, sticking to a strict daily schedule to maintain his art practice at a very high level while simultaneously making time for everything else.

Balani's latest EP, *'The Shape of Things to Come'* was conceived as a collective creation from a limitless sonic exploration breaking apart and hence, new ideas of the music came into perspective for him. Writing music for this EP was all about experimentation, done in a different format, in a different headspace. This experimentation that Balani talks about can be heard in his music and in the cover art, designed by Travassos, a very talented artist from Lisbon, Portugal. "The idea was to play with shapes since the title *The Shape of Things to Come* is an amalgamation of futuristic yet very earthy pieces that look like rocks which are abstract depictions of climate change, love and emotion", drawing inspiration from Indian artist Prabhakar Barwe and Dutch artist MC Escher who depicted futuristic ideas and visuals in their art that was way ahead of their time.

Balani looks to capture moments in time through his music and this truly depicts his state of mind and people can also find relevance and reliability to the art. "Fifty years down the line if somebody picks my record, they pick up the EP of *The Shape of Things to Come* it should really tell them what was happening in 2020". Azaan, the palette cleanser of this EP is a reinterpretation of the original version that is on his debut album *Sacred World*. "Putting this tune in this record is almost like a balancing act as the EP starts and ends very fiercely, it just really settles everything. So Azaan is like the equalizer, it's more like a reflection piece rather than a statement piece".

Seasonal Affected Beats, his alter ego, sets as an interesting change for both Balani and his fans as he broadens his palette by bringing together the realm of improvised music and electronic music. He does this by exploring drum technology which is also called Sensory Percussion. "Imagine being able to play the drums but at the same time also convey much richer and much more extravagant musical language. This blew my mind!!". Not just a musician but also an educator, Balani got into teaching by accident, not having any intention of being an educator. Once he began teaching he realized the need for being an educator and teaching eventually became a primary goal for him.

"I envision the future of music which is more equitable, more sustainable, that is art centric; not based on preconceived notions, biases and disparity. It's very utopian but I think it is possible-I think it's truly possible."

So, to provide a platform for students to access affordable music education, he co-founded Global Music Institute. "I was going to be a full-time educator but later on in my career when I started to go on tour I realize that for me right now is a time to be an artist and an educator". As an artist, we come across various challenges, a common enemy being creative blocks. Balani seemed like the right person to ask considering he is both an artist and an educator. He says, "I feel like as soon as we think about 'creative block', we automatically form one in our mind."





Instead of building walls in our mind, constant practice and learning helps with seamless expression and allowing yourself to be okay with the fact that what you've created is not happening. So my only advice to young musicians is that don't worry about your next release or next photoshoot or creating a narrative behind your EP. Just immerse yourself in the study of the art form because all of the answers are actually there."

The future of music or the arts seemed like a trick question for Balani to answer. 2020 brought the world as we know it to a grinding halt when the pandemic hit us. The music industry had a lot to cope with starting from the way it was treating its upcoming and existing creators while coming up with new

ways of engaging their audiences. Balani believes that those who survived did so by holding onto their dreams. He is truly grateful that he studied improvisation as it helped him to adapt to these uncomfortable situations. "With everything going digital this year, the industry is rethinking the way it approaches its creators. Reimagining and revamping the future of the arts are conversations that need to be spoken about. This is where I would love to see the industry and in general, people going, I think it is truly possible". ☺

Last evening a raven confessed

Words by: Asawari Jagushte
Illustrations by: Neehara Kothapally



Last evening I had a dream
A raven confessed.
It confessed of it's near study,
An eyeball split in parts.
Singing the song of death,
It cranes in to the window.
We flock and hop
We dance to the funeral of lilacs and pop.
The country runs on a graveyard of skins.
Ripped apart and thrown
For the raven's family to grow.
The raven once casted a spell,
C'est la vie, in hot air.
And the leaves dropped like ice.
In to our house of purity,
Melted in to our sorrows, the earth and the
past.
We held and we laughed,
with silences interrupted and dreams
quarantined.
With the raven we cried,

Towards a dying race.
It hides and it runs towards an invisible
future,
Telling tall tales to unborn babies.
I want to paint the colour I smell,
Blue, white and green.
No.
Yellow Marigolds.
It's a more comforting smell.
How else will you remember graves, the
raven said.
And I curled up like a prawn,
With my heart in my head.
Asking the raven to peck me.
And drink my blood.
Because the raven needs to be there, for
the dead.
While I am in my deep slumber,
Inside my grave.



Dream Diary

‘Daydream’

Words by: Varsha Panikar
Illustrations by: Saloni Singh

What if you want to leave?
Fade to black in fantasy.
Don't want to be found.
Don't want to be seen.
Simply cut off from reality.

You take a leap!
Into the recesses of your mind, You leap.
Not knowing whether you will land Or if you
will live.
Just a deep voice inside you, Saying, “Don't
think, just leap”.

So driven by this urge
I dig my bare feet into the ground, Raise my
arms to the black sky, Close my eyes so I can
see,
Take one last breath,
And leap.

With my heart weighing me down
Like a sinking ship,
I leap.
And just as I do
I feel my spine tingle,
My legs go numb,
And I can hear my soul quiver.

It feels like I am nearing the end
So in a desperate attempt
I struggle and look up,
Hoping to see the moon one last time,
And I do.
In that pitch black,
I can see only the moon.
We lock eyes just for a moment,

A moment that feels like a lifetime, And that is
when it hits me,
The wind!
It captures me,
And raises me;
Higher than higher can be,
And slowly I begin to float.
Slowly I begin to dance.
Slowly I begin to soar,
And slowly I feel it cleansing my soul.

I feel the weariness wash out of me
Like a wave of soothing tranquillity.
The sound of it's crashing waves
Echo through infinity.

I can see the stars again!
Each one luminous with the spark of
a memory. Burning bright
With infinite shades of passion
and peace.

I rise from the
shimmering
stars

And find myself standing before my soul
In all its breathtaking splendour.
An infinite spectrum of colours
Dancing behind.
A wondrous beauty
Beyond description.

I know at this moment
My mind will never be the same again.
I can't possibly continue existence
Within reality the same way.
Not after conceiving this abstract concept
Of my soul.

And just then
The restrictive echo of reality returned
With the dull and numbing visage
And it's cold concrete eyes
Steal colours from my mind.
A shriek!

A sudden blinding flash!
I am back in the
fucking grind!





EPIALES REPTILIA

Images by SN Devishree



The Promiseland of Dreams

Words by: Devi Dang
Illustrations by: Tushara Kothapally

“Ae dil hai mushkil jeena yahaan, zara hatt ke, zara bach ke, ye hai Bombay meri jaan.”

The Indian promise land of dreams lies on the country's West coast; you can call it land, but a bird's eye view would probably reveal a sea of people. You may find yourself in this sea's deeper end or the shallow one, depending on how deep your pockets are. You'd drown in the deeper end if you're not used to the smell of fish, dump, or strangers. If this makes you think swimming in the shallow waters would be easier, you're wrong. You would hit rock bottom if you dived in without wearing a life jacket stuffed with cash. Between this striking juxtaposition of Bambai and Bombay lies Mumbai, for whom the sea is never deep enough to drown or shallow enough to swim. It tries to stay afloat in this sea, but mostly it suffers - having enough to survive but not enough to live. Most of the city comprises of these Malads and Borivalis, Vashis, and Goregaons, and yet, they are lost between the polarity of Dharavi and SoBo that has come to define this city.

Every day the tides of this sea become larger, engulfing all that comes its way. A constant influx of immigrants into the city never lets the waves subside. Yet, even with all this population to contain, this city manages to house some land and natural resources within it, but, nature always remains the tenant to the sea-lord of people, who may ask them to empty the house at any unknown moment. After all, every now and then the sea needs to make more space

for the incoming family of strangers; strangers and their dreams. Nonetheless, the current tenants seem like they're here to stay; the sand and the Arabian sea, a happily married couple that doesn't seem to believe in hygiene, their children are still small hills. They expected puberty's conservation plans to turn them into lush green mountains, but I guess not everyone gets a glow up and then comes the family pet; the one who everyone loves and adores, the Aarey forest. Everyone's close to Aarey. It gives them all a breath of fresh air when they need it and this city needs it very often.

When someone thinks of this city, they either think of Bollywood or “Bhais”. One is a glamorous yacht to envy and the other is the pirate ship to fear, both lingering on in this sea. If someone knows the city a little bit better, they'd think of traffic jams, Marine drive, and the Sea Link but, when I think of this city, as a resident in it for ten years now, I think of a habit or a routine of sorts.

Bambai: Wake up, take the fast local to work, slog all day, pav and chai for lunch, hang out of the local on your way back, eat dinner with the little family you have here, sleep and repeat.

Mumbai: Wake up, take a bike to work, slog all day, Dabba for lunch, buy groceries on your way back, help your daughter with homework, eat dinner while watching the match, sleep

worrying about the loan you've taken, and repeat.

Bombay: Wake up, water the plants, take your BMW to work, slog all day in AC, sushi for lunch, head back home to walk your dog and dress up, eat dinner at Taj, party all night, pass out and repeat.

Just like its people, the city also has its own habit. It has a regular skincare routine to be strictly followed every night. With all the expectations and dreams that enter into this city every day, an intense acne outburst is a given. Therefore, every night the city puts on a face mask of false promises and encouragement for exactly fifteen minutes, and then washes with some water, cold enough to demoralize you but warm enough to believe in miracles. After that, it applies an antiseptic cream containing a blend of daily struggle, loneliness, and hopelessness and then, a final look in the mirror to confirm that failure has been achieved. The city knows it's too small to house all the dreams of India's ever-growing population, so it throws some out time and again, you know, detox. So, if there's one thing that this city never forgets to do, it's self-care.

This city is oddly like a giant washing machine. You prepare to enter it, like thousands of other clothes, with dreams of making it to the sea's shallow end, with a bungalow and fancy cars to your name, sometimes with just dreams of sending back enough money to put six children through school and sometimes with just dreams of being free enough to dream. You get sorted, like thousands of other clothes, into Bambai, Mumbai, or Bombay. You get sorted by color, the color of cash, into the sea's shallow, deep or whatever-lies-in-the-middle end. Then you enter it, and it makes you spin. Spin in circles of habit, and of routine. Of routine, you can't escape because you still have hope and you still believe in this promise land of dreams and then, the city needs some me-time, so it stops spinning and throws you out. You come out of the washing machine, soaked in the water of a sea that couldn't contain your dreams.

You enter this city, seeing from afar, a kaleidoscope of dreams that come true. When you're in it, you realize, it's a washing machine. A giant washing machine. ☺



A Tapestry of Dreams

Words and Interview by: Sarah Gazder
Illustrations by: Rithika Menon

Krishna is an almost 19-year-old pansexual trans male with the voice of an angel. With a growing fanbase as a singer-songwriter, activist and a vocal voice amongst the Chennai trans community, he sat down with us via the go-to pandemic mode of socialising, Zoom, and discussed his utopian dream, the unfortunate realistic counterpart and his thoughts on inclusion.

A cabin in the woods, he declares. That would be his ideal future. After working his way up in the “crappy” corporate world and making that dough, he would build a sustainable cottage in the midst of nature with a cat and maybe even a partner, with the house being a homestay open to tourists, and just living off the land. The ideal, so serene, so beautiful. But there is another, bigger dream as well. One that doesn’t exactly stray away from this ideal, but works to see it come true. One that lays the foundation.

When asked if he has ambitions that are bigger than himself, he says he dreams of a world that has done away with ingrained hierarchies; with patriarchy, with anti-feministic notions and gender binaries. Things would have been so much better. But he wonders, would he be who he is today? Would he be facing the difficulties that he does, as a minority? Or would there be a great coexistence, where everyone just lives in peace?

He shifts away from this ideal to unfortunately also acknowledge that regardless of which reality he lives in, “people are people” and human tendencies are probably always going to bring some kind of conflict. He aims to destigmatize, to dismantle these hierarchies not just outside but within himself too, and finally, to not let it fester simply as a thought but to go out into the world and make it tangible.

Identifying as a pansexual trans male, would inclusion tie into this dream, be it the utopian or the realistic? Well for Krishna, it doesn’t. The ultimate dream isn’t inclusion, its coexistence. It’s a scene that reads “we’re all just chilling”.

There would be no need for inclusion if no one had to ask for permission to just exist. Enough with people forcing their own beliefs and opinions on others and essentially oppressing them with that weight, he says. You have your space where you live your life, and I have my own space, where I live mine. Ending with the exceptionally wise and articulate words, “you be you, I be me, hand in hand, party”. The mark of a true singer-songwriter.

So, with this perspective in place, how is his dream impacted? “I’m in this race, with a finish line, but it’s so jam-packed and crowded, there’s no place to move.” That’s what it feels like for him. There’s so much he wants to achieve, but if there isn’t a space open to him, then he feels like there isn’t a lot that he could do. For this, he blames comfort in the status quo. He finds that there is a sense of ease that comes with putting people in boxes, giving people zero incentive to change. He finds that people haven’t learnt and just don’t know enough, adding to that lack of space and not allowing him to do what he truly wants to do. And he knows this is going to affect his life, where he is always going to have to fight for his space and his voice. He made his name in school, now he will go to college and later join the workforce and still have to “come out”, still have to explain his very existence.

“You realise that people will never see you and see who you see, you have to lay that image for yourself.”

“The ultimate dream isn’t inclusion, its coexistence. It’s a scene that reads ‘we’re all just chilling’”

In a kind of circular fashion, his dream is not only impacted but is impactful as well. He believes that destigmatisation and the creation of discussion and discourse comes with education. Stressing on this process that begins at a young age, he takes up the issue of “gender reveals”, something he staunchly believes as wrong.

“Don’t call it a gender reveal, call it a sex reveal. Or better than that, don’t call it anything at all and instead celebrate the new life that is on its way. These binary reinforcements need to stop, and instead kids need to be told that they have options outside of these blue-pink borders. It is only with this education that acceptance and subsequent growth is even a possibility.

Living in his bubble, his little safe space is how he deals with the stark difference between his dream and reality. His healthiest coping method, as he calls it, is surrounding himself with his best friends and accepting family members. He’s even chosen a family for himself. It is a space where there is no misgendering, and his identity isn’t a topic of conversation. He calls himself lucky and privileged to be able to even have this kind of support. He just exists, as any other individual, with his own wants and dreams, ups and downs, a complex singular person. If you can’t find a safe space for yourself out there, build one.

He has this untouched dream that brings with it a sense of utopia. A “what if” that breathes tranquillity and peace. And then there’s the dream that is built from this world we live in, one that forces him to become something bigger, one that is made from the cloth of desperation. I often wonder if I should abandon my original dream; there is so much more I need to do first. ☺

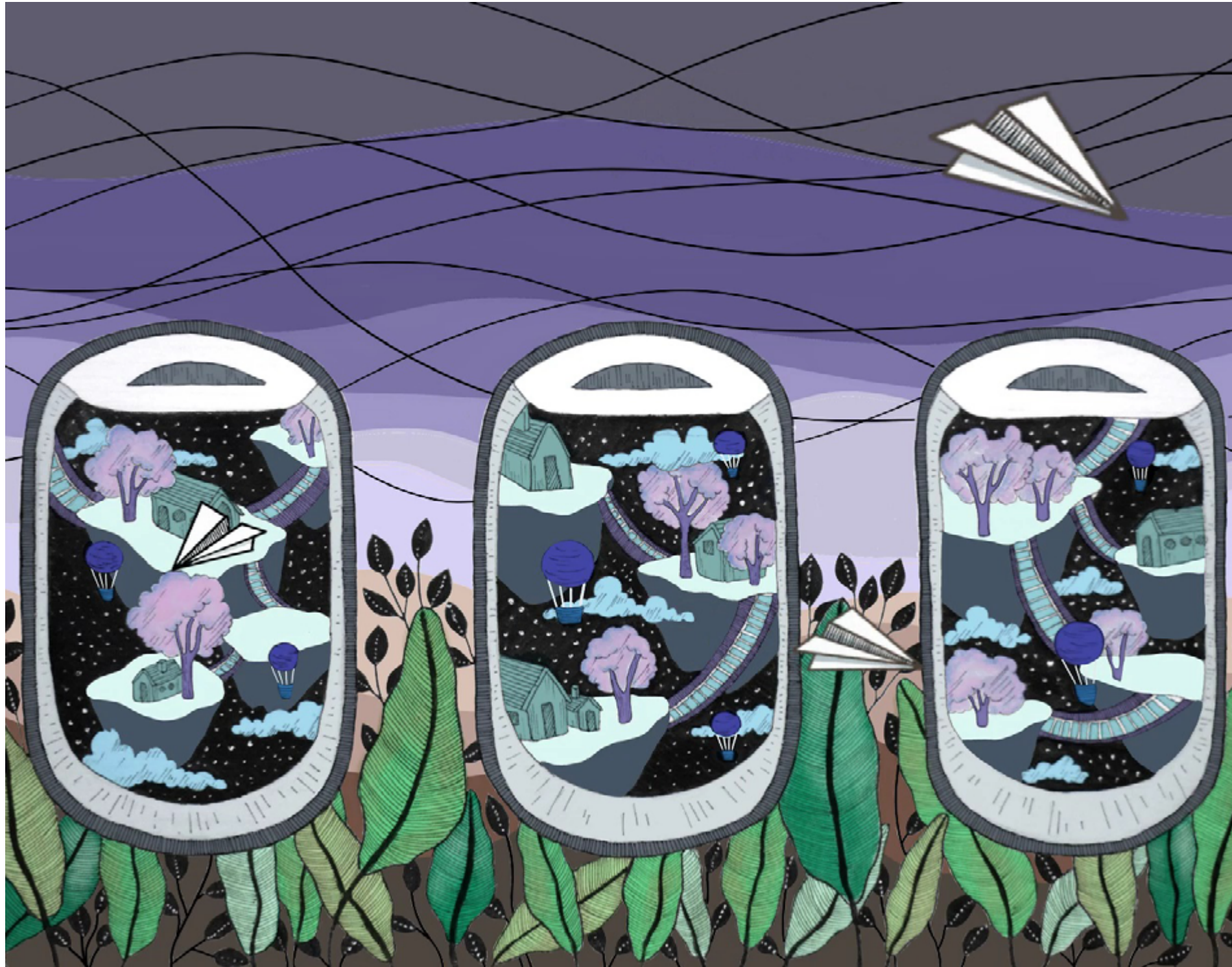
Find out more about Krishna [here](#).



Are dreams delusions? A memory of past experience can accurately determine whether that experience is an imagination, a dream, a film, a story we made up, or hallucinations. The definition of delusion is a little different as it involves the experience of something that feels real, but isn't; something we believe in even though there is contrary proof that it isn't! Dreams are somewhat similar to a delusion; an image, idea, or sensations that usually occur involuntarily. Some say they aren't real and some say they are real because they convey real information, real impact, and real emotions and might have real consequences too. So are dream delusions? Or are they not?

Exposing Sleep

Sleep is the most peaceful state of mind.
A comatose-like state giving us equanimity.
In the always awake world, sleep provides refuge.
Broke people find solace in it.
It's like an escape to the world of fantasy,
To a world where we govern what happens.
Though sometimes our mind shows us
unfavourable things,
Yet getting hold of it, we again claim tranquillity.
Sleep is a lie served to the mankind,
We believe it repairs our body,
Nay, it harms us. It shows the image of a world
That doesn't exist. Far from existence.
A world where we are under the spotlight,
But actually, we are always under the 'blacklight'
Ready to be blacklisted, and trampled on,
In this obnoxious race of survival.
Yet, we all fall prey to this illusion.
And continue dying every night,
Just to wake up in the world of dreams.
In the world which appears to be ours,
But, in reality is the world of dead.



I wish there were cities in the sky, and at night people laid down on a cloud and looked at the stars till they fell asleep. This piece was born out of the frustration of being stuck in one place, the fear of walls closing in on me, and a need to break free.

Anushri Shah

My true self

*A visual ode to who I was before
and what I am now.*

Words and Images by: Ankith ES

While watching the acclaimed Assamese film director Rima Das's "Bulbul can sing", instead of following the protagonist, my attention was completely driven to Suman. The sidekick of the lead, Suman, is a teenage boy often teased by his male friends for hanging out with girls and having an effeminate nature. He is struggling with his own identity and the only thing that makes him happy is hanging out with his best friends, who happen to be girls. It was like watching my reflection on the screen and it made me revisit my childhood. I have a very clear-cut memory, I don't know whether it's a boon or a curse.

My first experience with sexism was when I was in preschool, I used to love sitting with one of the girls from my class. I would rather say she was the only person whom I could call a friend. But, I remember my classmates and teachers trying to drive us apart by often proclaiming "boys should be friends with boys". For a four year old, that was kind of hard to comprehend. Eventually, I went up to primary school, these taunts started getting crueler. From teachers to classmates, to friends, to relatives, to my parents forbidding me to interact with girls more than what they considered "normal". Finally, I sort of got hold of that and started having more guy friends.







The release of a famous movie in Kerala about an effeminate man escalated this scrutiny. I was often called slurs by everyone around me for not being the conventional idea of masculinity. I struggled hard, I was afraid to go to school and face my bullies. One of the incidents that I recall is about how the boys in my school used to point out the way I walked and ran. What was sadder was that I had a similar environment in my home too. I have seen a lot of people around me struggling with their identity, but the kind of hostile environment that my society provided was very toxic. It made me insecure in ways I can't express in words. This went on until I left high school. Later on, I got to meet a lot of people who shared similar experiences like me through social media, and when I joined college. With the help of a new set of friends and acquaintances that I had acquired through college, I was able to let go of my insecurities and embrace my true self. But still, the idea of masculinity haunts me. What if outside my comfort zone, I will be bullied and harassed?

This is not just my story, this is something that most of the queer boys in India go through. All I ever wish for, is a safe environment for anyone to express and nurture themselves rather than get moulded into the norms of society. I will always be thankful for the environment in college for helping me love myself the way I am, instead of morphing into someone I am not. ☺



Ojas Kolvankar

A Peek Into The World Of Print Glossies

Words by: Shrijaya Bhaduri,
Illustration by Rithika Menon
Image Styling & Art Direction by Ojas Kolvankar

From learning about Indian fashion media to tips on starting a career as a fashion stylist, Local Colour Zine chats with industry insider Ojas Kolvankar about his own journey.

Aesthetic is something that is developed over time, it is largely personal and reflects one's innate sense of being. It allows a creative professional to express an idea, which more often than not is informed by their individualism. Our deeply insightful conversation with 26-year-old fashion stylist, Ojas Kolvankar, is comprised of the know-hows of a career in fashion styling. As someone who was always fascinated by print media, he did not just start off by training in a fashion school. It was quite the opposite actually; he studied law before he knew what great things he was set to achieve.

Enamoured by the arts, culture and style, he kicked off his journey by interning at a cultural think-tank, Godrej India Culture Lab where he learnt about gender, sexuality, design and fashion through an anthropological lens. According to the stylist, "Internships don't come laid out on a silver platter". He applied to every leading fashion magazine in the country to further his career. He did not let rejection get the better of him, and worked arduously at building his portfolio by independently creating work, by collaborating with other like-minded creatives. Later, he submitting these projects to independent publications to get them published.

Actor Puja Sarup for Drag King
Feature for Verve Magazine India,
Photographed by Pulkit Mogha





By the time he was done with law school, he had created a body of work which helped him secure a position as a junior fashion stylist at the homegrown luxury, lifestyle publication, Verve. He then forayed into different avenues apart from just styling. “Towards the end of it, I could do everything,” Ojas tells us. He was in the thick of print media — partaking in production, conceptualising shoots, styling, conducting interviews and writing stories. About twenty minutes into the conversation, we realised that working at a magazine is no cakewalk. While he got to experiment with different mediums at Verve — work with illustrators, and extrapolate the work of documentary photographers into print formats; he also had a chance to experience mainstream and commercial legacy during his time at Grazia. At the Italian monthly, the reportage was fast-paced, newsy, where he learnt to balance the commercial aspects of a media house. According to him, styling is a lot more logistical than one would think it to be. “It’s definitely not shopping, I keep telling my friends that”, says Ojas. “You have to keep a tab on every item that you’ve loaned from the store, from start to finish, being mindful of items going missing or getting stained. If you do slip up, then the items have to be replaced or the cost has to be borne by the stylist or the magazine.”

When we asked him about his approach towards styling projects, he answered, “Every shoot is unique and that one shouldn’t restrict themselves to a particular style. I believe in diversifying my style to adapt to the requirements of the project”, he tells us frankly. He approaches every project with a clean slate, although he admittedly veers towards a more minimal, clean and soothing-to-the-eye style. Ojas prefers working with harmonious colours that may contrast with each other but are pleasing to look at, he’s not one for jarring styles that take away from the individuals involved in the shoot. When it comes to gathering inspiration for his projects he doesn’t confine himself to one particular source. He says “You can make mental notes when you experience or see something”. He likes to track intersectional work of young creatives, drawing from their different practices

irrespective of their medium and presentation, but possessing a certain commonality among them. He orchestrates his entire process in the most organised manner and plans his mood boards, compiles body language references (if he is working with models), lighting references, and prospective looks well before time. Not like there’s no wiggle room in terms of how flexible he can be about suggestions, he makes sure to be accommodative.

When the conversation moved towards men’s fashion, Ojas agreed that men have become more conscious about what they’re wearing in the last couple of years. Menswear has expanded to athleisure and streetwear, as men become more aware of the silhouettes in their wardrobe; cis heterosexual men have started doing makeup, the gender lines are getting blurred steadily.

“One shouldn’t restrict themselves to a particular style. I believe in diversifying my style to adapt to the requirements of the project”

Questioning certain systems really does help, it makes a difference and reinforces development. “I would always ask my editors why we do things the way we are doing them”, he says. When he would work on projects that had unique requirements, he would lay two different approaches in front of them, one that was conventional and one that was unconventional, and the response would usually lead into exploring the latter. “In the last couple of years, numerous brands have contributed to pushing the boundaries of traditional masculinity. For instance, you see Harry Styles starring in Gucci campaigns; and closer-to-home androgenous model, Rabanne Jamsandekar for the country’s leading design house such as Sabyasachi”, he tells us.

After acquiring considerable experience in fashion and lifestyle media, Ojas decided to pursue work as a freelance stylist. He’s someone who strives to maintain his mental and physical well-being before a demanding job, and having his hours to himself seems to be doing him good so far. We segued into a conversation about whether print media is relevant or not, to which he asked a very real question — “What value do physical editions of magazines bring? Especially when one can access the contents of the same on the web now”. Unless it adds a distinctive experience to its tactile form that can’t be mocked by binary language, it seems to lessen in value. Through this conversation, we broadly learnt about the financial aspect of print media which works on advertising to editorial ratio, with the number of advertisements covering a large set of expenses. Over the years, with the shift of advertising revenue onto digital platforms, primarily print publications are amplifying their online presence. With writers, stylists and design teams contributing actively to a publication’s digital media to create content, continued print circulation does raise a question mark.

As far as advice goes, Ojas says, “A good way to start for aspiring stylists would be to build their styling portfolio by collaborating with photographers and models, and assist

a stylist with good practice.” Further, he suggests agreeing to do pro-bono work is something young professionals should stay away from. Always ask for a stipend, creativity should reap financial reward as financial sustainability is tremendously pivotal. When it comes to editorial, celebrity or costume styling, restricting yourself to a specific medium poses as a high risk when it comes to holding up your disposable income. “For instance, as an editorial stylist most of us also know the skill and experience an ad commercial or work with celebrities,” says Ojas.

We look forward to a project he’s doing related to gender in the future, and he is excited about working as a freelance stylist with brands and even magazines. We certainly learnt a lot of things from this interview with him, one of them being that one shouldn’t wait to be published by a magazine to get a foothold out there. There’s a flurry of platforms to project your work on, and if it’s interesting enough, someone will acknowledge it. As our conversation with him came to an end with all our interview questions answered, it left us questioning certain career choices as fashion students who are about to take off into the industry. ©



DREAM-LIKE FURNITURE

Words by Dhrishya Ramadass & Lavanya Bhatt

What started of as a literary movement and later blossomed into its visual legacy, Surrealism was founded by poets André Breton and Paul Éluard. Surrealism rides on dadaist and dream-like distortion of everyday, familiar objects. Artists like Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, René Magritte, Joan Miró and Man Ray were major factors involved in the movement becoming one of the major artistic movements of the 20th Century. To these artists, dreams represented all parts of the world that was repressed by convention and rationalism. Multiple art movements represented life in a dream state but none of them quite captured the reality of dreams like surrealism. Juxtaposing in its nature, one of its aims is to put the observer in a state of unrest and discomfort. This goes directly against the fundamental emotions associated with furniture, which is why it is fascinating to observe the perfect blend of the two.

Here are some of the iconic surrealism inspired furniture that caught our eye -



**The Mae- West Sofa,
Salvador Dali, 1937**

The Mae-West Sofa, 110 cm x 183 cm x 81.5 cm sized seating furniture made of polyurethane foam created by Salvador Dali is inspired by the lips of Hollywood actress Mae West.



Fluid Furniture, Lila Jang, 2012

Lila Jang, a sculptor from South Korea, in 2012 manipulated some 18th Century French furniture and quite literally bent them to her will. Living in Paris at the time, the space constraints in her small Parisian Apartment inspired her to create these pieces of art.



The phantom table, commonly referred to as the table that doesn't exist, designed by Graft Architects is in fact an eye catching long table made of fibreglass. The negation of gravity in this space creates an imagined form and plays with the softness in its interpretation.

The Toad Sofa, Maximo Riera, 2013

The Toad Sofa is a perfect juxtaposition of a sophisticated and classic, victorian 2 seater with the uncomfortably detailed realistic sculpting of a toad's back.



Traccia Table, Meret Oppenheim, 1939

Traccia, meaning footprint in Italian, this table takes the form of a bird's legs as the primary support. The oval top surrealist furniture was designed by German born Swiss artist Meret Oppenheim.

Dreams being the one place where everything impossible is possible and better, serves as an inspiration for many artists. Few are visual and talented enough to blur the lines between dreams and reality. Surrealism is beyond the melting clocks and mixed up, swirly faces. It has been inspiring designers for over a century and has opened a wide range of possibilities for them. Furniture design is one of the big fields heavily influenced by this.©

I Wanted.

Words by: Kritika Sharma
Illustrations by: Saloni Singh

People wish for a lot of things in their lives,
In their happiness and hardships.
A hundred wishes by a thousand words
Leaving their lips.

But I don't think I ever wanted a lot
From life and people around me.
I only wished for simple things
From the word that surrounded me.

However, I think,
The things which were simple for me
Were not as easy for others to give
As I hoped them to be.

Expensive gifts, dresses and jewellery,
I never wanted any of those;
Dinner at restaurants and partying were never
my thing,
I wonder if anybody knows.

I never desired things that others usually do,
Things that make others content.
I sought for things that would make me feel at
ease,

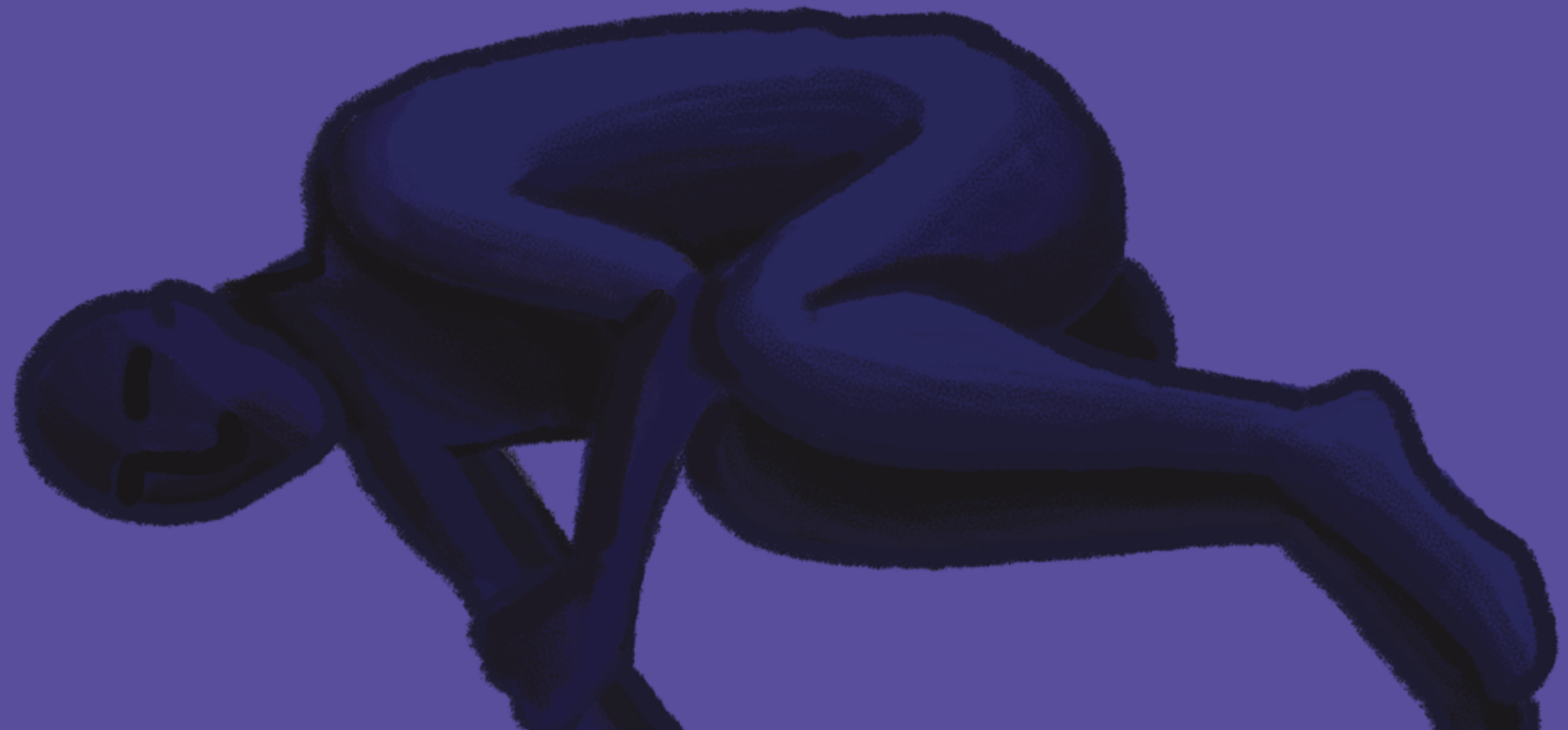
Things that would end my torment.
I wanted someone to listen,
Someone to just sit next to me,
Not to tell me "it's going to be okay",
But to just let me be me.

I wanted someone to understand,
Someone to feel what I was feeling,
Someone to appreciate me
For the things I've been dealing.

I wanted to feel the warmth,
Warmth of love and affection,
To be truly wanted,
And to feel a connection.

I wanted someone to hold me steady
When my knees gave out,
Someone to clasp my hand tightly
When I reached out.

But, if only, I would have wanted something else,
Something which was easier to give;
If only, I would have not wanted so much,
With this hopeless heart, it would not be so
difficult to live...





The Lullaby of October Rains

Words by: Vibhavari Desai
Illustrations by: Phalgun Seth

What color is October?

A dull, throbbing grey!

Its sporadic rain showers are expected now, no matter what a decade-old geography textbook says. Dark clouds loom over the city, and its residents do not question their presence. The city, although operating on an older timetable, has managed to skip through the days as if it forgot to flip the calendar over to the new month.

Almost every night, before I fall asleep, I hear the raucous laughter of the boys playing football in the nearby park, shrieking in delight as they are soaked to the bone. If October were a sound, it would be the sound of popcorn kernels popping in my roommate's rice-cooker; or, the rumbling train that reaches Kharghar at 3:25 pm, which an ex-lover would board, her eyes squinting as the breeze caressed her face throughout the twelve-minute journey, just to hold my hand for thirty more; or, my cat's barely audible twitches. Now, the month sounds like the faint metallic clinking of the jhumkas that dangle from your earlobes like little lanterns.

Have you nursed a fear of being unhinged like a door dislocated from its frame, propped at the mercy of a bolt or two? I trust you have. You thrived a few winters in a city that you learned to call home.

Us humans exhibit a peculiar tendency of creating shelters — often out of nothing — when we are miles away from familiarity. I do not know where you have drifted to: on whose dining table you sit, cross-legged, on a Saturday afternoon, traversing across space and time because a fleeting tune on the radio takes you back, to the city, to the years you left behind, to the women I know nothing of.

You were born in a town akin to my grandmother's, in a quaint, visibly discolored brick structure with a slanting roof typical of all houses in that locality. Of all houses situated by the coast. A permanent fixture. A feature of the landscape. If I were a bird screeching through the sky, a cursory downward glance would have revealed an array of red roofs. When I first met you, you must have been in your twenties. It drizzled that night. We sat in the verandah, on my grandfather's rickety armchairs, listening to the raindrops pattering against the roof. At some point, a friend retired for the day, cautioning us against the howling mind and the mosquitoes buzzing around our heads. Your eyes were on my cheek, tracing, imploring, exploring, daring me to turn around. So, I did. Several things happened at once: a shy smile birthed across your lips; my breath hitched; a train whistled by, and the neighborhood mongrels erupted into a wild chorus; you locked gazes with me, and I suddenly realized why Mondays are meant for sentimental loveWrs who are both hopeful and hopeless.

Following the summer, we exchanged emails. In one of those, I described the merciless monsoons of Mumbai — I could sit in a car, stuck in traffic, wipers gliding over the tear-stained windshield, and somewhere in Versova, an old man will be wading through its submerged streets with a rusty bicycle by his side. No one knows how his tale ends. Perhaps, it is his last monsoon. Perhaps, he lives for a few more years and passes on his wisdom to his grandchildren — “buy a car, bicycles are no good.” We were living in the pocket of a hooded sweatshirt, living on borrowed time. I think I know how it ends for us: I dream of you.

Last night, I built a cottage by the sea for you. It had no door. I walked beyond the unsettling comfort of our house to dip my toes in the water. To feel alive. Waiting for you is like a Sunday evening spent by the beach. The waves roar, crackle, threaten to undo every semblance of permanence; from afar, an approaching tide appears to engulf, swallow, consume everything on its path, only to spit it onto the shore. You are the hungry tide.

Waiting for you is painful, a wound that does not heal. Perhaps, you will eventually become a ghost ship, sailing on uncharted waters, a story only recounted in whispers because the years simply cover up the gashes left behind by almost-lovers. Just like the Sunday trip, which eventually turns into a memory of sights, scents, and sounds, the wait for you has to end. For now, though, you are the familiar figure sitting atop a boulder, lost in a gull's cry, and I stand beside you, hands deep within the pockets of the trousers my mother has grown to dislike, eyes trained beyond the calm of the sea as if I expect a storm to break out at the horizon. As if I will be roused from this trance.

Tonight, I will wait in our restless house. I will softly press the keys of the grand piano placed by the fireplace — a frame straight out another film that we cannot watch. I am tone-deaf; I can barely distinguish between the distinct hum of one scale and another, but I pretend that my fingers are walking into your palm instead. Ironical: a pretense within a pretense. There is a lot to hold on to, but each day I wake up and lose a piece of you. I cannot remember how you grip a paintbrush. When you paint the setting sun with a stroke of lemon-yellow, will I ever know whom you think of? Can loneliness be dreamt of? Have you exorcised a stubborn love?

Against rational belief, I compare myself to your other lovers, women that might exist solely in my imagination. They stand tall, don scarves in winters, and seem precisely the kind who would know the story of the crescent-shaped scar on your left thigh. Women, who might have deftly traced it on several occasions, fingers gently strumming along the flesh underneath like a violinist coaxing the instrument to yield. They must feel like sleeping in your childhood bedroom. Your lovers smoke a lot, stash away tissues marred with lipstick stains, know your go-to order at the local pizzeria, and can kiss you for each day that they have been away. I am an unintended juxtaposition: tasting like spring in December; a puddle of rainwater begging for evaporation; a creaky floorboard; a stamp not quite peeled off the envelope — it needs more steam, my mother would say; a cup oWf tea too milky for anyone's liking. I am a forgotten photograph pressed between a thick novel, an almost-bookmark, threatening to slip off the pages if it were not for the sheer weight crushing me. I sound like a broken record. No one likes a broken record — tunes get old faster than the ginger street cat, and everyone knows that cats live forever...until they do not. ☺



Radha Krishnan

SO REAL, SURREAL!

Interview and Words by Kirtana Rajeev

Illustration by Rithika Menon

Photographs by Radha Krishnan

Capturing dreamy depictions of his surroundings, pairing an interest in every day with a distinctively surreal aesthetic, Radhakrishnan Nair captures his surroundings with a whimsical approach. He is an acclaimed photographer, an artist, creative and an ad film director. Based out of Bangalore, he has over forty-five years of experience in the field and pioneering the ad film production in Bangalore with his groundbreaking company, Magic Eye Films.

Constantly transforming and rethinking, Radha brings his mastery of photographic techniques into still photography. His images welcome us into a spiritual landscape that beguiles us to contemplate and interpret. Radha's pictures electrify our senses with their intensity and fullness as he weaves a tapestry of delicate images and invites you into a deep meditative universe. His vision penetrates the ordinary and makes it extraordinary.

LC: What inspired you to pursue photography?

RK: My fine art background and exposure to feature films are the two elements that influenced me to get into photography. Essentially, films and photography are nothing

but forms of art, and I am a feature film kind of a guy as it has storytelling, multiple aspects of communication; acting, editing, music, etc. In addition to that, the sheer brilliance of nature also inspired me initially to shoot pictures right in front of my house, paddy fields, leaves, flowers, and early morning dew.

LC: Whose work has influenced you most?

RK: Honestly, no one really influenced me before I started photography. After joining advertising there were many people but the two names that come to my mind are New York-based advertising photographers Pete Turner and Eric Meola. There are so many photographers out there but I never





techniques, visual communication, or color scheme.

LC: What type of cameras do you shoot with? Which is your favorite lens and why?

RK: I use 35mm digital cameras. I also believe that cameras are just a tool to record but what's important is how you present your images. In terms of lens, I am a wide-angle man and I prefer wide-angle images. My favorite lens is a 14-24mm lens. However, that doesn't mean I don't use other lenses, of course, I do. Everything depends on the job and the kind of imagery you have in mind.

LC: What kind of tools do you use for post-processing?

RK: Like everybody else, I would say Photoshop. It is the most important post-processing software to create any kind of image; complex layering, color combination, contrast, density, everything. Then, you have the RAW processing software which is Lightroom. I rely heavily on these two softwares.

LC: Nowadays almost everyone has access to devices with which it is possible to take pictures. What do you think is the difference between a professional photographer and any other hobby photographer?

RK: In my opinion, for a professional photographer thinking and being able to deliver the desired results at any given time are the two aspects that set the difference, but for a hobby photographer, this might not be a priority as they are under no pressure to deliver a particular result in time. Hobby photographers can go and if they find something fabulous they can take a shot and that will be fabulous.

Whereas, a professional photographer will always have something in mind before going to shoot. So to sum up, for a professional photographer constantly thinking is important, and only when you think, can you produce the desired results.

LC: How would you describe your style?

RK: Frankly speaking I don't think there is

anything called a particular style. Photography is an art form and if you are constantly shooting something you tend to develop a style. People say that I have a very distinctive style which I exhibit in my pictures, however, I don't agree with that.

"I wish to show people something they have not seen before through my lens and camera"

LC: You often capture landscapes and interesting subjects you encounter everyday or when you travel. What attracts you to these subjects?

RK: The sheer potential of a subject where I can add some unusual elements which are not present at the time of the shot. In any case, landscape is a wider canvas where you can add, delete, wait for the right lighting, and so on. And that's basically where my focus lies before the shoot.

LC: How do you visualize turning a scene into a picture, before clicking it?

RK: When I do my post-processing work so when I see something, I know precisely what to add and delete. So, my strategy usually involves looking for storytelling aspects in the picture and if I don't, I prefer not shooting. And through my complex Photoshop work, I make sure to take a basic picture to another level and work till the last detail including elements, color, composition, lighting and the graphic impact of that particular thing, and of course storytelling. I don't merely take a picture but do it with a purpose.

LC: Though many of your photos look surreal, you edit them in a very realistic way. How do you achieve this dream-like atmosphere while

retaining the authenticity of the photographs?

RK: For me, any picture that I shoot should be believable. And if they are real they are believable, so the root which you take can be anything as long as the final result is believable. Another important aspect to keep in mind is to engage the audience. So to do this I have tried to introduce a particular philosophy in my photography which shows people something that they have not seen before.

LC: What's that one message that you always wish to convey to the audience through your art?

RK: My job as a photographer is to connect maximum people through my images, so whether it is commissioned work or personal work, this aspect of communicating with the audience is key and that's my only message. Just like how a painter through his brushes and canvas tries to put something that nobody has seen before, similarly, I wish to show people something they have not seen before, through my lens and camera. That is because for me photography is an art form. I hope it remains like that.©



TO BE A **DREAMER** IN TODAY'S WORLD

When we were little, we often pretended we were superheroes waving long plastic rulers in the air, trying to fight away the demons in our lives. Our curious minds asked questions no man could answer. We wrote stories and created spaces that no one had ever read or seen. We were never taught how to be imaginative or creative. It came to us naturally because that's who we were. We were, because now, that same mind is made to walk the ways defined by boundaries. Our systems have failed us, restricting expressionism at every platform from educational systems to professional spaces, societal norms to cultural acceptance.

A Generational Overhaul

- Sarah Gazder

With a new generation comes new dreams and new priorities. Our generation has gotten a fair share of the spotlight, but not exactly for the right reasons. Headlines read “Millennials have killed the automobile industry, homeownership, diamonds and even cereal!”. We are labelled lazy, entitled, miserly narcissists. When Greta Thunberg spoke to the world of the ‘distinguished old men and women’, accusing them of stealing her dreams, she was met with moans and grumbles, sighing at the audacity of this child daring to tell them how to do their jobs. But that is who we are as well. We are a generation of broke kids who would rather pay more for something ethical, than add to the impending doom of the world burning down. We seek money, sure; but we are a generation of entrepreneurs who are more likely to seek sustainable prosperity through ethical means. Respect, money, success all have different meanings now, interpretations we chase while aiming to live a rich and fruitful life. We seek truth at a time when WhatsApp University is churning out graduates by the minute. We are unapologetically political and unabashedly vocal. I mean, we were raised on Harry Potter and Katniss Everdeen, what else would you expect.

But how did this happen? How did we go from “selfish” to “troublesome” kids wreaking havoc? I think it’s this great combination of factors ranging from existential dread to well, existential dread; from a crumbling and increasingly polarised political climate to an environmental apocalypse that we seem to be hurtling towards. The boomers that make policies today need not have a long term plan in place, especially not about the environment. Saving a forest is not going to line their pockets, and destroying it won’t hurt them either. We simply cannot depend on them to run the world anymore. They do not speak for us and the truth of the matter is that they never have ever spoken for us; they speak for only themselves

and their selfish motives. We have been forced to grow up quickly, to become politically aware, to not just take up positions of authority but take on the already presiding authority as well, to save our own lives. We are fighting for our realities, our right to dream.

We dream that we can change the world. Because we can. But if we can’t?

Well, we’re here for a good time and as long of a time as we can get. Pessimistic optimism is the new black.

Unprecedented Chaos

- Muskan Pai

When talking of dreams, the immediate thought that crawls in our minds unconsciously is that of our future endeavours and wants. As kids, however, the first thing that came to our minds was bedtime and candy lands and when you think about it, the only reasoning behind it would be that we grew up. Growing up is a gradual process, as one would say throughout a child’s development but what happens if the process is accelerated. In certain cases, circumstances act as catalysts where the child has no other option but to grow up and start looking at things from a societal perspective. Losing a parent, financial burden, abusive households often creates chaos and adds responsibilities, forcibly shaping a child’s outlook.

Dreams are fueled by desires and most of the time, those desires are crushed by obligations and the persistent fearful thought of not wanting to be a liability. With growth comes the clarity of seeing things more realistically which is where we lose our imagination, on the lookout for peace within all the chaos. The expectation from a kid to do something honourable in terms of studies instead of what they want to do or are willing to be, only so they don’t defy the societal norms, ends up creating an emotional vacuum. And when one of those kids decides to break out of general norms to

follow their dream and live up to themselves, they are often made to believe how it wouldn’t earn them the momentary gain, rather would make them a laughing stock in the eyes of the society. As difficult as it is to have everyone against you, knowing that you are capable of living your dream is what brings comfort.

Chain(ed) Dreamers

- Tejal Pundit

In today’s world, where dreams are practically of no importance, the societal and cultural structure represents a threat to a dreamer that results in a loss, of both emotion and environment. We are so out of touch with ourselves, strolling with a power so valuable yet unappreciated. If we had to understand the significance of dreams and the potential they have to recuperate both ourselves and our expanse, our prompt action would be to begin where we first started devastating our inquisitive minds. Our curriculum that holds high regard for explorers like Vasco Da Gama and Magellan is the same one that instructs us to quit scrutinizing the world, focusing on just one assumed right way of solving an equation. Educational frameworks have particularly been the shepherds of teaching methodologies that nullify the ‘whys’ and slow down the incitement of development. Training minds to obey a pre-decided notion has taken a forefront to learning and exploration, while dreaming has been painted as an opposition to living in reality. The act of paving a new and unconventional path to success is often looked down upon on the grounds of unrealism. Overworking ourselves until the point of exhaustion is attributed to being successful over individuality and originality. Our lives have become monotonous, walking on the presumed pathways to success with no alternatives and altercations to solve the equations in our minds. Besides encouraging independence and an insight into ourselves, our dreams which are also reflective of the takeaway in our lives, have been conveniently side-lined to make space for a safe and secure living with minimal introspection. As the youth of today, believers of value addition, explorers of the obscure but most importantly, the patrons of dreams, we want to infuse life in vision and elucidation in existence. Dreaming isn’t a test to ace but identifiable of who we are, of the space our minds can wander into, spaces where we can breathe our souls into how we want to view this world.

The expressions represent varying forms of dread and responsibility our youth faces. While it is of integral importance to know why we need to rise up and take charge ourselves, it is imperative at the same time to sit and exercise the ability to call those out who have wronged us, to ask for justice. But when justice takes decades to arrive, it is us on whom the burden of liberation falls upon. Because our battle extends further than our eyes can meet, it stretches beyond our youth and intermixes with the youth that is yet to come.

It is the beauty of this dream, our fantasy of a liberated world, that melts into our day to day realities, with more and more of us going out to protest, using online petitions, donations and charities. It is the power of the creative mind that is running amok in the ordered chaos of the corporate, capitalist world and stripping it off of its pretence, its binaries, splashing it with the colours of the rainbow, filling that grey, dull void with the freshness of our youth.

Barriers have always existed, from being present in the formulation of territories to self-expressionism, from the introduction of novelty to questioning the prevail often a result of the conventional, established, controlled ways, deeply rooted through generations; beyond lies the world of a dreamer, unbound, capable of creating beauty out of nothing and warmth out of a world on fire.©

SURREAL STATE OF MIND

Fashion history through the lens of art, dreams and surrealism.

Words by Jesita S Limathwala

Surrealism is the manifestation of our dreams, and our unconscious frenzied Freudian thoughts. With artists such as Salvador Dali, Jean Cocteau, Rene Magritte, Man Ray, Pablo Picasso and Frida Kahlo, to name a few, the surrealist movement, which originated in the 1910s-1920s, opened up a world of possibilities in many fields; fashion being one aspect of this movement. Elsa Schiaparelli, the pioneer of surrealism in the fashion arena, began her own line of clothing which was inspired by popular surrealist artists. She moved away from catering to the brand of luxury fashion in order to explore her creativity and began with the *trompe l'oeil* (meaning “to trick the eye”) collection with faux bows on knitwear and visible zippers on dresses. This way of designing clothes has now occupied a large space within the fashion industry. One such recent design can be seen in Alexander Wang’s dress made for Kim Kardashian. The dress, made of swarovski, has a picture of Kardashian herself, in a bikini from the chest down.

Schiaparelli then went on to collaborate with Dali and designed perfumes and telephones in the shape of a telephone dial and lobsters, respectively. Soon, she took inspiration from his artwork, and vice versa. The *Tear Dress* is an example of how she drew from his painting by the name of *Three Young Surrealist Women Holding in their Arms Skins of an Orchestra* (1936), by replicating the tears on one of the women’s dresses. Likewise, Schiaparelli’s style of making pockets that look like drawers on her *Desk Suit* inspired Dali to employ a similar visual in some of his work such as the *Venus de Milo with Drawers* (1936), and *The Burning Giraffe* (1937). Apart from this, she collaborated with many other artists, sculptors, jewelers, and poets, bringing their point of view to life with her visually appealing and thought-provoking designs. She encouraged viewers to look beyond what meets the eye and reconsider what fashion represented.



Hussein Chalayan 2001 RTW

Alexander McQueen
2001 RTW

Salvador Dali & Elsa Schiaparelli
Jewellery Collaboration

Alexander McQueen 2006



Moschino F/W 2018-19



Maison Margiela Spring 2021 RTW



Philip Traecy Spring 2003



Lady Gaga - Meat Dress


She played a large role in bringing a perspective to fashion which was revolutionary to say the least. Surrealism became a point of reference for many designers in the late 20th to 21st century. Some drew inspiration from her, while others created their own set of ideas. In the Spring - Summer 2009 Fashion Week of 2008, Martin Margiela, inspired by surrealism, created a collection that stripped identity from fashion. By covering the faces of the models, their walk became more cautious, thus creating a show that took a dive into the future of anonymity.

One year before Margiela, Marc Jacobs took up surrealism as the literal representation of dreams. Here, the designer drew inspiration from dreams such as arriving to work naked or in underwear.

Furthermore, Prada, in the fall of 2016, responded to a large number of burned out designers by creating a collection with a surrealist sailor motif and busy prints, strategically layered with accessories such as tiny bags around the belt or the neck. The film *Past Forward*, a collaboration between Miuccia Prada and David O. Russell encapsulates Prada's intricate thought process which includes an apprehension of memories, the archetype of femininity and the unconscious. Scenes in the films take inspiration from Rene Magritte's work, *The Lovers*, Hitchcock, and Dali. *Past Forward* shows Prada's thoughts with the help of an audio-visual medium, which in itself is surrealist.

Interestingly, artists such as Lady Gaga look towards surrealism in their fashion choices. Her red carpet looks which include, but are not limited to, a dress made out of meat (2010), an Alexander McQueen Elizabethan Era inspired gown (2018), an oversized brown suit (2018), and a performative dress at the Met Gala 2019.

Surrealism in fashion is a way of illustrating that which is avant garde. It is an artist's way of channeling their creativity, and ideas of non-conformity. From Elsa Schiaparelli forming the idea of bringing surrealism into fashion to Lady Gaga expressing herself through surrealist fashion, it is something that is still evolving, yet at the same time also looking back fondly at its roots, where it all started from. ☺



When chasing your dreams you're almost guaranteed to face some challenges. So, during my darkest hours, when I feel like throwing in the towel and giving up, I turn the volume all the way up and fall back on my motivational playlist to pick myself back up and realize my dreams. Also known as 'The dreamers playlist'.

Playlist by Kirtana Rajeev & Mohamed Sherjaaz
Art by SN Devishree

Lake Song ————— Deja Blue
Mysight ————— Mild Orange
Dreams (2004) — Fleetwood Mac
Glimmer ————— Tame Impala
Dreams ————— Aleksandir
Amygdala ————— DJ Koze, Milosh
Roll Together ————— Weval
Mars ————— Beauvois
Reflect ————— Max Cooper
To be alone with you — Daktyl

GUIDE TO CURRENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS

3hd 2020: UNHUMANITY

Date: August 15, 2020 – January 31, 2021

3hd 2020 will act as a queer-feminist biotope created by Creamcake. "UNHUMANITY" deals with a system of human and non-human forces, built around an interconnected habitat of art, music, performance, digital culture, and its relationship to the more opaque idea of Nature Herself. The festival's program is an expression of a transition between an untenable past and an uncertain future.

[Check out the event here.](#)

インフラ INFRA

Date: August 20, 2020 – January 31, 2021

インフラ INFRA is an examination of the infrastructures, environments and ecosystems that rule the modern world. Organised by Berlin-based music platform 3hd Festival and Japanese-run online gallery EBM(T), the multimedia and international program of concerts, performances, exhibitions and talks, proposes a break from institutional and market-based boundaries for musicians, artists, and performers.

[Check out the event here.](#)

London art fair: edit

Date: 20 – 31 January (VIP Preview 18 – 19 January)

Browse through online Viewing Rooms, Artsy online catalogue and an exceptional programme of digital talks, panel discussions and events. Online gallery profiles featuring 20 works per gallery, giving visitors the opportunity to discover, browse and enquire upon selected works. Works will be presented with audio and written commentaries narrated by the galleries themselves, allowing you to interact with the works on show in an alternative format.

[Check out the event here.](#)

Other events to check out

1. In/Visible Talks 2021
Date: January 14, 2021
global lineup of amazing speakers, including Bruce Mau, Renee Reid, Debbie Millman and more. The 2021 theme is 'Re:Design,' exploring how designers might remake our future and featuring the most candid, behind-the-scenes talks on how design really gets done
[Check out the event here.](#)

2. Climate Designers Party Program
Date: Mar 1 - Mar 12, 2021
Climate Designers, a global professional network and educational platform for designers who are committed to tackling the climate crisis, has announced its first major event, the Climate Designers Party Program.
[Check out the event here.](#)

'Remarkable women': Female patronage of religious institutions

Date: Fri, 29 January 2021, 15:30 – 23:15 IST

This conference seeks to explore the ways in which women patronised and interacted with monasteries and religious houses during the late Middle Ages. The interests of female patrons have often been considered separately from the contexts of the places to which they made their donations, without a thorough consideration of their very different status from their male counterparts and how this shaped their pursuit for commemoration and memorial after death.

[Check out the event here.](#)

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local colour

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