



THE NEW
INDIAN
EXPRESS

INDULGE

The *India Photo Festival*, which is the country's longest running international photography event is back in all its glory.

We speak to eminent photographers who bring us powerful images, insightful talks and masterclasses that evoke a myriad of emotions | **P8**

*A labyrinth
of perspectives*



pick of the week

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INDULGE FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Reader,
This week, it's raining festivals in Hyderabad. The city is host to several national and international festivals and we couldn't wait to spotlight them for you. We begin the week with the longest-running international photography exhibition in the city — the *Indian Photo Festival* which kicks off today. For its eighth edition, we bring you an impressive line-up of acclaimed photographers' works on display from India, France, US, Iran, Romania, Ukraine and several other countries. We speak to award-winning photographers and festival director Aquin Mathews who tells us about pivotal themes portrayed at IPF, exploring dialogues with photography and more.



Keeping up with the festive vibe, we also have the remarkable *Qadir Ali Baig Theatre Festival* on our culture page. Expect a stellar line-up of live performances by *sarod* maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, theatre directors Ramesh Talwar and Juhi Babbar, IPTA and more. Notable theatre personality Mohammad Ali Baig joins us later in our discussion about the city's theatre scene and how the festival has been crucial in its contribution.

Moving to our fashion pages, we have tracked the trend of wearable art with the label *Drawn's Artist Edit* series. The label has collaborated with many mixed media artists and illustrators who have used fabric as a canvas for the imagination. We speak to creative force Rhea Bhattacharya and illustrator Richa Kashelkar, the names behind the making of the fun-filled limited-batch collections. We also have Nikita Mhaisalkar's latest edit *Tropical Times* which is a perfect song of the forest and its life forms. The designer tells us all about her travels that inspire her design philosophy.

For foodies, we review the recently opened *Soul of South* restaurant in Film Nagar. They serve a wide variety of regional South Indian plates like *Miriyalu Kodi Charu*, *Karaikudi Mushroom* and *Fish Fry*. We found ourselves in a food coma sampling some of the delicacies that brought a potpourri of local flavours from Telangana, Andhra, Kerala and more. Further in our food pages, we get a taste of the newly-opened cloud kitchen *Ustaads*, founded by Hana Rehman Baig, Nidhi Berry, and Vinit Raj Mahendra which serves up all of our favourite Hyderabad flavours.

Here's to a full plate — of *biryani*! And plenty of fun to dive into over the weekend.

Until next time, cheers!

Edison Thomas
Editor, Indulge

Carpe diem

November 19 | Gachibowli

Bangaluru-based artiste Vivek Madan, who has 20 years of theatre experience under his belt, will be presenting an intimate piece called *Every Brilliant Thing*. An uplifting story covering the themes of love, family and mental health, the play asks the audience to celebrate everyday existence, encouraging each other to carry on with life. ₹300 upwards. At *The Club Botanika*. Details: 7997050000.



Funny side up

November 19 | Khairatabad

Gurleen Pannu's comedy show, *Pannu Yaar* will offer humour served with personal stories. Expect an evening with plenty of laughs. Picking stories from daily incidents, and observing the life around her, she will find humour in the ordinary, prepping it with Punjabi and Hindi-centric punchlines. ₹499 upwards. At *Bhaskara Auditorium*. Details: 040 23241067.



Sing along

November 26 | Hitech City

Mumbai-based musician, Sherise D' Souza is performing live with her band, offering catchy and toe-tapping tunes. Covering genres like rock, blues and country, expect to hear the band's own compositions. ₹500 upwards. At *Hard Rock Café*. Details: 040 45474828.

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Drop the beat

November 20 | Mamidipally

The greatest season of Sunburn Arena's music tour is here! The one and only EDM maestro DJ Snake takes the stage to deliver a captivating show. Expect to dance to the beats of *Taki Taki*, *Get Glow*, *Let Me Love You* and more popular tunes. ₹999 upwards. At *GMR Arena*. Details: 9849402324.



Laugh out loud

November 19 | Lakdikapal

Catch the Delhi-based standup comedian, Harsh Gujral on his show *Jo Bolta Hai Wohi Hota Hai*, as he draws you in with his spontaneous comedy. Known to find humour in the most ordinary situations of life, Harsh will have you in splits with his witty demeanour. This show is all about youth, nostalgia and seizing the moment. Expect some relatable anecdotes at this show. ₹699 upwards. At *KLN Prasad Auditorium*. Details: 9100199977.

At the movies

November 18 | Panjagutta

This week's movie pick is *Drishyam 2*. Abhishek Pathak's crime thriller is a sequel to the story that revolves around a criminal, Vijay Salgaonkar, who sought to protect his wife and daughters by killing a person who was harassing them. The case which was unresolved was shown in the first part of the film. In the second part, Vijay learns that a cop is suspicious of him and his family with regard to the buried case. Tabu and Akshay Khanna join the cast as lead characters. At *PVR*. Details: Online.



Soulful melodies

November 20 | Gachibowli

Honouring Kaushik Dhwanee, the performing arts school by the same name for its 10th anniversary, Padmashri recipients present a soulful rendition of Dhrupad vocal recitals. The musicians who will be taking the stage include Pandit Umakant Gundecha, Anant Gundecha, Dhani Gundecha and Kaushik Lahoti. ₹499 upwards. At *Rangbhoomi Space and Events*. Details: 9700074079.

GET IN TOUCH

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INDULGE

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Photograph by Samuel Zuder

exhibition

RARING TO CAPTURE

Indian Photo Festival is back with a bang. We speak to the curator and photographers who gave us a spectacular preview of their displays, talks, workshops and more | By Priyamvada Rana



Photograph from Rice, Salt, Meat and Spice

The festival, touted as one of the most anticipated ones in South Asia, is back in its 8th edition. And like its previous editions, it has a robust lineup of acclaimed photographers' work on display from India but France, US, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Iran, Romania, Ukraine and several other countries. Expect an impressive lineup of artist talks, photography exhibitions, screenings, workshops and more.

THE WAIT FOR one of the country's biggest and longest-running international photography exhibitions is over with the start of the Indian Photo Festival. The festival, touted as one of the most anticipated ones in South Asia, is back in its 8th edition. And like its previous editions, it has a robust lineup of acclaimed photographers' work on display, not just from India, but France, US, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Iran, Romania, Ukraine and several other countries. The photographs will be showcased at historical venues like the State Art Gallery, Salar Jung Museum and KBR Park. Visitors can expect an impressive line-up of artist talks, print and digital photography exhibitions, screenings, workshops and portfolio reviews.

Given the festival is coming back on the ground after a two-year hiatus induced by the pandemic, its artistic director Aquin Mathews is quite thrilled! He shares with us some highlights. "We have Indian photographer Smita Sharma who explores the growing menace of human trafficking, French photographer Ana Bloom's work on refugee crisis, Italian photographer Diego Fedele's work on the absurdity of war, Australian photographer Matthew Dunne's photos on the loss of biodiversity, Indian photographer Nishat Fatima's captures on LGBTQIA+ community, Iranian photographer Shaghayegh Moradiannejad's work on the self-immolation among the Kurdish women amongst many more."

Apart from the line-up, visitors will be treated to India's first travelling photo gallery—an endeavour to make photography and festival more accessible to all. With IPF showing different faces of the world—from portraits of humanity, social issues, and political themes to visuals of love, loss, rituals and diverse cultures—we couldn't wait to spotlight them for you.

Reflection of society

Some of the most powerful works at IPF are the ones that hold a mirror to society and its various vices. For one, award-winning photojournalist Smita Sharma's photo-book launch *We Cry In Silence* is going to be a major highlight. The Delhi-based visual storyteller has documented the cross-border trafficking of underage girls in South East Asia in a series of moving photographs mostly taken from India and Bangladesh. Smita's challenges doubled during the project due to her pregnancy. However, she remained undeterred. Telling us about the emotional upheavals she went through and coped with at that time, Smita shares, "I have been working on crime and social justice issues for over a decade now. So what I have kept in mind while being on the field is to keep my focus on the subject and not let my emotions come in between. Yes, there are times when I have even cried but I can't let that come in between my work." We asked Smita about what went behind the documentation of her photo-book as a woman and her revelations left us startled and inspired. "Usually



Photograph by Cop Shiva



Photograph by Debrani Das



Photograph by Samuel Zuder

human traffickers are from within the local community. As a person covering the theme, I had to keep a low profile during my field visits. Sometimes I could see the traffickers just a few metres away from me, so I have to be mindful of all such perils and be safe. At the same time, I had to make sure that the victim's family did not face any difficulties or consequences due to my coverage." Given her perseverance and passion for the field, we asked her if she could talk about photojournalism as a profession. "I am happy to see that young women journalists are aspiring to be photojournalists (smiles). I am mentoring a couple of them and see an ear-



Photograph by Smita Sharma

nestness in them to learn. I also get a lot of messages on Instagram from girls wanting to be with me on the field. But somewhere I feel, there's a notion that our profession is very glamorous—where we just carry our gadgets and get on the road to cover exotic places. But mostly, this is not true. We are many a times at places that are dangerous, unhygienic and uncomfortable," she tells us. Smita will share more on her book and the creative journey at IPF.

Voices from the world

Many works at IPF will introduce the viewer to various happenings in the world. For one, Latin American photographer Gui Christ will take us to Brazil to highlight how the Afro-religious community stands against religious intolerance there. He tells us about his photographs. "My intention is to combat the prejudice, and through an intimate and enlightening perspective, show my understanding of certain religions and somehow change this panorama in Brazil."

On the other front, German photographer Samuel Zuder will take viewers to extreme geographies in his work *Face To Faith*. Here he documents Mount Kailash, situated on the snow-capped Tibetan Changthang pla-



Photograph by Tim Smith Zuder



Photograph by Lopamudra



Photograph by Regula Tschumi

teau as the origin of faith, in a set of images that capture the serene calmness of the holy mountain. Describing his work, Samuel tells us, "Mount Kailash is seen as a spiritual space in which people subordinate their own selves to a higher, non-human entity, hoping to attain catharsis from its spiritual force centre. My landscape photographs thus serve as metaphors for this encounter between the human and the divine. Closer home, Indian photographer Surender Solanki's documentation of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests will present hauntingly graphic images of the impact of a controversial law on its people. Apart from that, Manitoba-based photographer Tim Smith will bring vignettes from the life of a Canadian prairies community called Hutterite whose culture is preserved through deliberate separation from mainstream society. Next we have, American visual artist Debe Arlook's work on caregiving and French photographer Maude Bardet's street photography.

Celebrating India

This season of IPF coincides with India celebrating a stellar 75 years of independence. So the line-up has various frames that celebrate the spirit of India and its people with images showcasing our ethnicity, costumes, festivals, culture, heritage and lifestyle. In that arena, one can look for the exhibit titled *DrishTi: 75 years of Indian Imagemaking* which will show the evolution of India and the process of image-making over the years right from the 1940s to the present. It will have works of 82 eminent photographers from the country who made a mark in genres like art, design, fashion, advertising, documentary, portrait and more. These include stalwarts like Raghu Rai, Altaf Quadri and Banddeep Singh amongst many others. Moving on to another set of images—one that celebrates the journey of culinary specialities of India,

IPF will display the *Rice, Salt and Meat and Spice* exhibit. It explores the hyper-local story behind *Biryani*—a famous rice and meat dish from Hyderabad—from grain to plate through the lens of city-based photographer Kishor Krishnamoorthy. He tells us how he captured the dish that Hyderabad and the whole world relish. "We travelled across the Telugu-speaking states, from places like Warangal to Kalwakurthy, and Kakinada to Guntur—to cover the source of the raw materials used in *Biryani*. We discovered that each location had its own speciality with an ingredient. It was fascinating to document the process of making from source to plate." Some of the other noteworthy exhibits include *Heritage Trails* which explores the work of students from KVS in Telugu states on the rich cultural heritage of India.

Learn from the masters

Photography aficionados can attend insightful workshops from the mavens of photography like Srinivas Kuruganti, Vineet Vohra and Gulnara Samoilova. Srinivas—a Delhi-based photographer—is known for his award-winning coverage of environmental and health issues. He will conduct a two-day workshop in visual storytelling and tells us what it will entail. "The workshop will examine various elements of storytelling. The participants will collectively work on building a compelling visual narrative through existing photographs that they bring to the workshop. There will be discussions on different ways to develop and expand on an idea and how to approach a story with an emphasis on editing and sequencing." For art and fashion lovers, IPF has notable visual artist, filmmaker and photographer Manoj Jadhav who will hold a three-day workshop on fashion and portrait photography.

Women power

This season, there will be two displays solely dedicated to showcasing works of women photographers from India and abroad like Lopamudra Talukder, Dimpay Bhalotia, Roshani Shah, Sandra Cattaneo Adorno, and Ximena Echague, among many others. Lopamudra's photographs especially grab our attention for their social commentary on gender issues. She tells us about one of her photographs that shows widows in Vrindavan celebrating the festival of *Holi*. "Hindu marriage is all about colour but all that disappears from a woman's life when she loses her husband and becomes a widow. Even today, many of them dress in white, cut their hair short, and stay away from society. However, during *Holi* in Vrindavan, the plain life of the Indian widows becomes a riot of colour. At this time, these women celebrate as if there is no tomorrow." With that, the images from IPF stay in our memory.

From November 18 to December 19 at various venues in Hyderabad.
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