



Word's worth

Based on a research paper by Yale student Nitika Khaitan, Godrej India Culture Lab is looking at performance poetry in various languages, speaking to 40 poets in the city. The event will see young talent push boundaries in performance poetry

→ perform

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WHEN 20-year-old Nitika Khaitan, an undergraduate at Yale, majoring in the Humanities, began her research of culture trends in Indian metro, she found the subject of the spoken word, and the way it is performed using a variety of mediums, interesting. She came to Mumbai for a month-long internship with Godrej India Culture Lab where she has been researching performance poetry forms. It was during Parmesh Shahani's (Head, Godrej India Culture Lab) four-month residency at Yale that Khaitan heard of the work the Lab has been doing.

"When I heard about the variety of subjects that the Lab was working on, I checked if there was an opportunity to come and work with them," shares Khaitan. "When I started my research, I found it exciting that the term 'performance poetry' had different interpretations, and that Mumbai's poets were giving it a contemporary twist with innovations in both, form and structure. It still has traditional influences from diverse backgrounds," she explains. The study looks at works in four languages: Hindustani, English, Marathi and Tamil.

Khaitan speaks of how forms of entertainment have changed over the years. "Most urban centres are big enough to house different kinds of entertainment, including stand-ups, mushairas, theatre and all others." The event will also



(Above):
Tamaasha
Theatre by
Sunil
Shanbag;
(left)
Lokshahir
(balladeer)
Sambhaji
Bhagat

include various artistes who use poetry in various forms to express themselves, be it new-age techniques like remixing Folk music, using tamaasha theatre or using modern rap music.

Watch out for these artistes

Preeti Vangani: One of the most prominent figures in poetry slams around the city, Preeti Vangani recently published an anthology of poems with three other women poets. She will perform her viral poem 'Validation,' which reached over half a lakh views on YouTube.

Ramneek Singh: A spoken word poet, Ramneek Singh is known for his activist poetry, which melds free verse and Hindustani. He'll perform three pieces on violence in his homeland Jammu, the injustice of 377 and Independence Day.

South Dandies Swaraj: This is an acclaimed multilingual, Hip-Hop group comprising artistes Sean YKV,

Kashmir and Tamil. The group will rap a medley of pieces on sexual violence and issues in contemporary Mumbai.

Tamaasha Theatre: Started by noted theatre personalities Sunil Shanbag and Sapan Saran, Tamaasha Theatre will put up an excerpt from their critically acclaimed show, Blank Page. The piece blends music, theatre and movement to infuse life into classics by Nissim Ezekiel and Namdeo Dhasal.

Sambhaji Bhagat: Maharashtra's legendary Sambhaji Bhagat, is a Dalit activist and revolutionary balladeer who inspired the National-Award winning film, Court. He will perform Marathi powadas on communalism and gender-based oppression.

ON July 22, 5 pm
AT Auditorium, Gate 2,
Godrej Industries,
Vikhroli (E). LOG ON TO
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Nitika Khaitan

