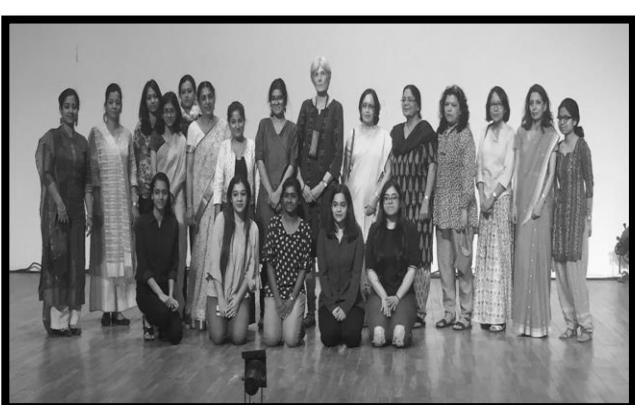
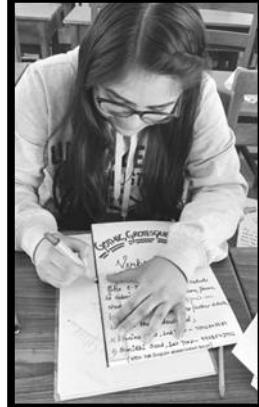


# VERBOS INCENDIUM

5<sup>th</sup> Edition

IMAGINAIRE



**VERBOS INCENDIUM**

**ISSUE NO.:5/18**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
MATA SUNDRI COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**

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## Voices

My grandpa says I have the voice of my mother.  
That it's so similar that he can't make out who is who  
That it picks on his ability to distinguish  
-which has weakened with time  
That it plays tricks on his consciousness  
and boggles his mind.  
That it's almost as if mom and I  
have become an inseparable entity  
As if, I am her and she is me  
and we are one, apparently.

But I should immediately let him know  
that it's me on the line  
Have mercy on his *Alzheimer's*  
And remember he is pretty senile

He says our voices have started sounding so much alike  
It makes him want to come see us  
And makes me wish that she was alive.

- (Sukhjot, Second Year)

## The Law

I look back at things to find them changed

It's futile to expect them to remain

We claim ourselves to be our boss

Only, from law of nature, we find us at loss.

We mortals tried to control all

Tried to understand the inner, the outer withal

Only one remained, that would not comply

To the arrogance and pride, of the human mind.

The seasons are under its firm control

The spring and the winter both obey it alike

They alternate each other without a murmur

They too realise with what man is encumbered.

Man switches from this to that

In less than sometimes, what he calls, a minute

As soon as he achieves what he wished for, finds

The other end green and himself arid.

This, I decipher, is the reason for our state

Nothing stays and lasts in this place

For if it did, it were doomed to sink  
For we degrade anything that for a longer time we keep.

Let's understand this law of nature  
And let it not fade from our perception  
To ask for it seems in itself ironic  
Cause what we contend calls 'change' the only 'constant'

- (Varsha Anil Nair,  
Second Year)

## WHAT'S POPULAR: EATERIES IN DELHI UNIVERSITY

Delhi University is among the most renowned universities in India, which is why it is difficult to make it to a reputed college in 'DU'- as it is called more conveniently. However, if one does get admission in DU, it is like a dream come true. Everyone wants to look impeccably stylish for obvious reasons (ahem ahem SELFIES!). Funnily enough, the one feature that is shared by every student is that he/she is always hungry. You eat and you eat but nothing seems to satisfy your cravings. But it's not about eating anything you lay your eyes on, it's about eating quality food. Most of the students in their starting days prefer canteen food (after all, it's the nearest spot *facchas* can rush to). Whether it's the mince cutlet of St. Stephens College or the mutton dosa of Delhi School of Economics or the super tasty rajma rice of Ramjas College, students are never bored of their canteen food.

Not just canteen food, facchas are also fond of nearby popular restaurants and fast-food outlets. Hanging out with your college friends in Kamla Nagar market or Hudson Lane is incomplete without tasting their food. You may find many popular food joints in the university's north campus. You will not find a single north campus student who has never tasted the famous food of the famous outlet, 'Tom Uncle's Maggie Point'. South Indian café is also visited by many. Also, you may find 'The BIG Yellow Door' in north as well the south campus.

Apart from the north and south campuses, one may find popular food joints in off campus colleges of Delhi University. The cuisine trend at Mata Sundri College is popular among the sundari's of Mata Sundri. The yummy and healthy canteen food is enjoyed by all the students. Even if you get up late and miss your breakfast due to early class schedule, you may enjoy the tasty chhole bhature, rajma rice, pav bhaji in the college

canteen. Also, the college being centrally located makes it easy for the students to explore Connaught Place. We may find a few students continuing with their school trend of bringing lunch from home for unarguably, as cheesy as it sounds, nothing really can replace homemade food.

- (Khushi Gupta, First Year)

## Familiar Ache

She stands at the window sill  
Her thoughts, as intricate as frills  
Outside the window she sees  
A plethora of humans, cluttered like bees  
Despite watching so many people,  
She is unable to be at ease  
What is it that she is searching for?  
Tranquillity, silence or peace?  
Every now and then, passes a gusty wave of strangers  
Constantly reminding her of her anonymity there

It was a matter of few minutes, car went out of control  
Why the h--- did mom at that very moment check the troll  
Did I fail to read the omens which were several  
Or was it a pure coincidence that I was reading Ruskin Bond's *The Funeral*

Believe it or not-  
It is a bitter reality, she thought  
It has been two years now  
Every day before the idol of Ganesha she bows  
Unable to accept the truth, she weeps and cries  
Regretting her stubborn decision; on her bed she lies

Hers is a strong inclination towards a damaging vice  
But her father is determined to offer the psychiatrist, a handsome price  
An innocent and young soul, depressed and lost  
What they had to pay on that mundane morn was really a high cost.

- (Binish Humayun, First Year)

## Nature

The fresh breeze swarms in the environ  
Melodious chirp taps the strings of my ears  
The dainty dawn spreads out its crimson wings  
And, the mighty sun greets me with a new day.

Thou awaken me with all thy bloom  
My mood-serene, my morning- enlightened  
All by thy grace  
Oh sweet nature!

The daytime, I spend aloof from thy lap  
Entangled in the hustle-bustle of this grave world  
Where all I smell is smoke and dust  
Huge crowd wanders around me  
Yet I feel lonely.

For the eve I desperately wait  
Crave and crave to be in thy embrace  
Oh sweet nature!

Now, I retire to the state of solitude  
And thou, dear nature, are my sole companion here  
The fading hue, oh how it melts my gaze!  
Thou-so kind, send the twilight breeze to refresh this soul

Those rich green leaves, sway gently in my welcome  
Till dawn, I would see them bathed in dew  
The dusk mounts giving way to nocturnal bliss  
And I whisper, "Oh sweet nature!"  
I wish to stay beside you till eternity  
For thou are the panacea for all my woes.

- (Laghima, First Year)

## Black Panther: The Movie

*“A tidal wave of change and inspiration”*



(Official movie poster)

**Black Panther**, directed by **Ryan Coogler** is a movie of ‘*Marvel Cinematic Universe*’ and is truly a marvel in itself. Featuring an all-black cast, the piece of art has effectively stirred the whole world not only because of its choice of actors, but also due to their commendable performance.

The plot follows the story of a king, *T'Challa*, who after the death of his father rightfully ascends the throne of his technologically advanced country, *Wakanda*. The movie revolves around the struggles and conflicts he has to face in order to become a true and a just king for his people.

If the plot wasn't interesting enough, I have further mapped out the various reasons that make this movie different from its fellow works within the marvel franchise.

### 1. Casting

The main attraction of this movie is that it is unabashedly Afro-centric. Whether it is the cast, the Director, or even the Costume designer, the movie has been made entirely by coloured people. Considering the prevalent white dominance in Hollywood, this movie comes across as not only a surprise to the viewers, but also brings with it a feeling of pride for its African viewers for getting the attention and appreciation they deserve within the film industry. The movie has clearly redefined one's definition of what a 'superhero' should be.

## **2. Morality or power?**

The movie explores T'Challa's dilemma of whether to hold one's position, or to go out of one's way and help those in need. As a just king, T'Challa struggles to maintain the security and assurance of his subjects, but when he realises that the country can help the world outside with what it has, is where the real dilemma begins. *Wakanda* turns out to be a reservoir of a strong element called '*Vibranium*', which can help the people outside their country. Pressed by his moral conscience, T'Challa ultimately decides to lend out a helping hand, an act through which he loses the faith and support of many of his followers, resulting in the country being divided into two parties- those who support the king and those who oppose him. However, such opposing does not stop T'Challa from doing what he thinks is morally correct.

Through this act, the movie teaches us that the path one may resort to can differ from society's expectations of what is right, but that doesn't conclude that the path one has decided on is wrong. It's important to have confidence in our own capabilities and trust on others so that we can undertake what we want to do.

## **3. Depiction\_of\_African\_Tribes**

The movie beautifully depicts the life of tribal people living in Africa. It captures the earthly and the homely feel of any tribes, which is the gem of Africa. It also ensures that audiences will have their eyes opened to an embarrassingly underrepresented culture, as Coogler has done intensive research to take inspiration from cultures of South Africa, the Basotho people of Lesotho, and the Dogon people of Mali, to make the film as authentic as possible. The use of articles ranging from costumes to weapons directly inspired from the native tribal culture of Africa only adds to the legitimacy of the work.

#### **4. Women Empowerment**

What makes the film more exciting is its representation of female characters. The movie not only features powerful men in suits, but puts an equally strong female cast that charms the audience at first glance itself. *Shuri*, the sister of *Black Panther* is a technical genius and is in charge of designing the most technically advanced gadgets of Wakanda. Another fascinating character is that of *Okoye*, a strong female commander in charge of protecting the king himself. And not to forget the female protagonist herself, *Nakia*, a confident and strong headed woman who clearly can distinguish the rights and wrongs despite what others opinionated of. Portrayal of females in such a positive light on the big screen reflects not only a change in the mind-set of society about women, but also gives girls a role model to look forward to in their world of fancy. These women are representative of all that a woman aspires to be- strong, confident, and free. They are independent of their male co-leads and clearly do not fit within the traditional role of “damsels-in-distress”.

#### **5.”More things connect us, than separates us.”**

This is the dialogue spoken by King T’Challa at the UN Meeting in the movie. And this saying really touches the heart. It calls out to everyone to fight together the evils in this world and help each other.

King T'Challa, forever changed by Erik Killmonger (his cousin who wanted the throne to himself), finally understood that the poor and black people who suffer endlessly from prejudices and powerful, greedy people need every help that they can get. So he sets out to provide his resources and help to people all around the globe.

## **6. The Evils of the world**

This movie doesn't shy away from showing the dark side of the world by depicting 'slavery' and 'human trafficking' at the very beginning of the movie.

The movie provides to its viewers the effects of colonialism on its victims and rebels against the thinking of the world regarding underdeveloped countries. *Wakanda* here signifies the strength and resilience of an African nation that firmly has its future in its own hands. Writer Ta Nehisi Coates' vision of the powerful isolationist nation plays a part in dispelling racist Western narratives that Africa is somehow inferior to the rest of the world. Instead, the movie supports world peace and unification by T'Challa's act of helping the world through the resources of his own nation.

- (Sonali, First Year)

## Cost of Peace

It went up in flames, all of it— monstrously; setting fire to  
Every minuscule part of what tried to escape and live  
Leaving behind only peace— who could have known how  
Villainous it would seem; years of toil spent in seeking it  
And none present to welcome its pompous arrival  
Oh peace! How cruel you are? Arriving at the hill of silent din.  
Dark flaky embers today lay where stood a monument once  
Through the waxing and the waning  
Of oceanic waves and thunder strikes, it stood tall and proud.

Like an imbecile wood-cutter who cuts the branch he's sitting on,  
Like an inexperienced hunter and gatherer who didn't know  
That striking stones together would give birth to fire—  
Few bits and pieces of this now-gone haven of mine struck  
Against one another; each one trying harder than the other—  
Making destructive movements that none stopped to care about  
Making loud, squeaky noises putting God's thunder to shame  
Highlighting every bruise that should've instead been tended to  
Rejecting the weary appeals of reconciliation, incessantly  
Making it hard to believe, hard to breathe, hard to be free  
The fire spares none, and it all came undone! Who lost, who won?  
Who cares? The world took notice of fire when it was discovered first

For who doesn't stop to admire a show? But the ashes are delightfully ignored,

No matter whose they are.

- (Prashansa Luthra,

Second Year)

## The Sins



Lethal Comeliness



*Indolent Garfield*



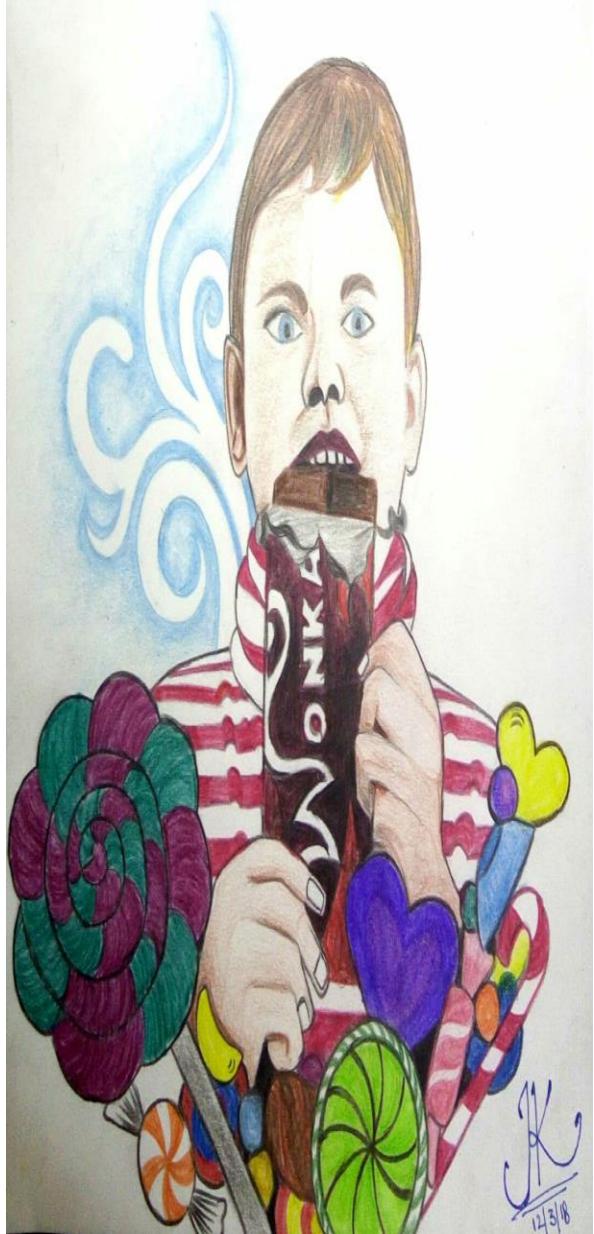
JK  
6/03/18

*Achilles' redress*



JK  
1/03/18

Boracitry



Prince of Pride



*Learus' Outfit*



*Cordousness*



- (Jasmeet Kaur, Third Year)

## A White Dove In The Noon

Darkness emerge slowly onto the night,  
Just like demons roaming in light,  
and never drowning in sunlight.

Where, oh! White dove, would you fly away in this sky?  
Yet, you are gone every morning, every night...  
But every silent noon, I catch your sight.

The noon of summer is so silent  
That, it scares my heart!  
I have been in serenity of the night.  
I have walked with demons of the light.  
The mysterious noon is so reflective white  
Glimpse of a white dove, I do catch,  
But only for a while...

I walk home backwards; I don't glance at the watch  
A cracked mirror hangs on my dusty wall.

Every noon, I come home, feeling all wrong  
I look up in my mirror and realize.  
Every noon, I've been there all along  
And,  
Somewhere in time, the white dove once tried to fly.

- (Shruti Gupta,

First Year)

## The Wanderer

I see the devils disguised as priests.

I see the rapacious attend the feast.

But I am just a traveller looking for peace.

I see the world think in monochrome.

I see them living life by the tome.

For loneliness and dejection are its syndrome.

And I too am a wanderer searching for home.

I see them hungry for attention; still they shove

Away all their love.

Ironically affection is what they pray for, from the gods above.

And just like them am I, a nomad begging for love.

But I will be forgotten, if I just wander about.

I will have nothing, if I just search around.

So let me be a settler instead of a wanderer.

So let me do something and be a conqueror.

So let me built a home where I feel secure.

So let me built a heart full of love, fervour.

- (Sonali, FirstYear)

# City Walk: The National Museum of Modern Art



## ➤ In The Seeds Of Time

The five of us, after our visit to the National Museum of Modern Art, decided to write about the paintings in the museum which captured our attention and fascinated us the most. The Rajput miniatures, Company miniatures, paintings by Thomas Daniell and Tilly Kettle were some of the works which made us curious.

Miniature paintings are colourful, handmade paintings which are, as the name suggests, small in size. The most important feature of the style is the intricate use of brush which renders them unique. The colours used are naturally extracted from minerals, vegetables, precious stones, indigo, pure gold and silver.

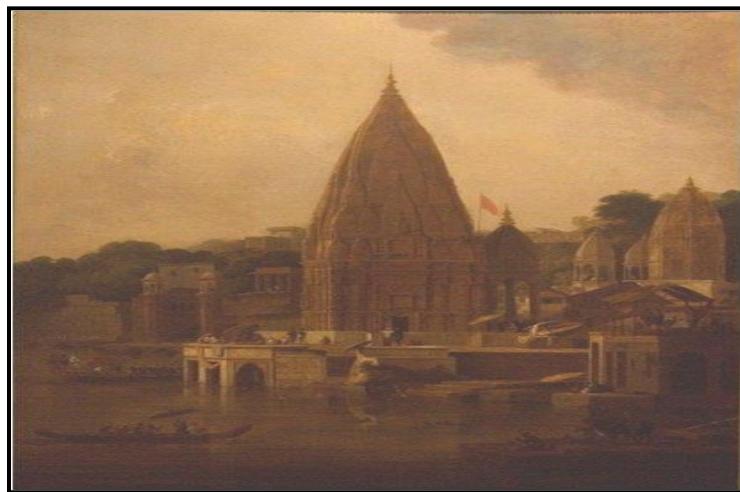
The Rajput miniature paintings developed tremendously during the 18th century. The themes often included a feudal society - aristocratic and war-like clans continually in conflict with each other. Such paintings were born out of struggle against the invaders. The most common theme of miniature paintings in India were composed of the Indian Classical music codes called 'The Ragas'. Other common and important themes were instances from the great epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, landscapes and humans.

The Company miniature paintings were slightly different from the Rajput miniature paintings in that they were painted in a wider manner. The paintings were a hybrid of Indian and European style of paintings. Original styles were drawn

varying according to the regions of stay of the patrons. The trades, the castes and costumes of India were represented for the travellers.

It was in the 17th century that the Europeans began trade with India. As the trade flourished, India being a rich and productive country was brought under the British control and was made a colony in the mid-18th century which led to a lot of socio-economic changes in our country. It was with the British control over India that artists like Thomas Daniell and Tilly Kettle arrived in India to explore its beauty. They recorded Indian life and presented to the people of England visual images of the land through their paintings which they so-far didn't have the luxury of.

Thomas Daniell was an English landscape painter who painted Orientalist themes. He toured India for seven years and captured the landscape, people and the architecture of the country. He converted his on-site sketches into finished water colour and oil painting on reaching London. Below is his painting titled 'The Manikarnika Ghat'.



Tilly Kettle, too, was one of the best portrait makers of the time. He painted the exotic scenes of Indian life. One of the most famous of his works was that which represented a scene of dancers before a temple depicting the wonderful Indian ornaments with the rhythmic dance moves of the dancers. Below is his work titled 'Dancers':



What one finds most amazing in these two artists is the life-like beauty of the portraits. Their works are so realistic that one may for a moment tend to disbelieve that they are just works of art. Another thing which is exciting is the detailing used by them. The paintings are a proof of how keen they were in their observations. Both use 'oil on canvas' technique of painting which along with dynamic brushwork is a western form that helped them achieve "the illusion of volume and space on a flat surface, rich effects and tonal depth."

Such were our insights into these great artworks of the 18th century which we previously had no knowledge of. The visit proved to be of great use to each one of us in exploring some of the best paintings produced in our country.

- (Varsha, Second Year)

➤ Amrita Sher-Gil



(*Self Portrait* by Amrita Sher-Gil)

As we moved on from the enthralling relics of 18<sup>th</sup> century, we came across artworks made by women artists during 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, the section displayed the surviving works of just one artist, but nevertheless, the most excellent and iconoclastic woman painter of 20th century. Referred to as 'India's Frida Kahlo', Amrita Sher-Gil clearly left a compelling body of work behind for the observers to marvel at.

Her place in the trajectory of Indian Modern Artworks is unquestionably preeminent. The confluence of East and West is evident in her vibrant canvases—chiefly due to her mixed parentage and her art school background in Paris, where she was influenced by post impressionists like Gauguin. Sher-Gil's understanding of the traditional Indian art finds its expressions through her works, the subjects of which were highly domestic. Her works show deep engagement for her Indian subjects. Paintings like- *Bride's Toilet*, *Brahmacharis Three Girls*, etc. exhibit, through the pensive faces and languorous poses, her compassion for the underprivileged. This was a significant point in her artistic career where she engaged with the rhythms of the rural life in India, appropriating a way of life which was antithetical to her own. This can be seen in her works like- *Musicians*, *Haldi grinders*, *The Swing*, *Ancient storyteller*, etc. She chose scenes from everyday life and endowed it with a sense of poetry and melancholy.



Thus, her paintings were not only reflective of the common, but their mood as well as the ambience became a part of the subject within her eloquent strokes and exceptional colour palette. She was one of the most talented painters to have ever graced the Indian soil, truly an artist beyond compare. Neither sentimental nor bleak, her bold, vivid paintings of ordinary people, especially women, are now considered classics of both Indian and world art.

- (Sunidhi, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year)

## ➤ Benode Behari Mukherjee

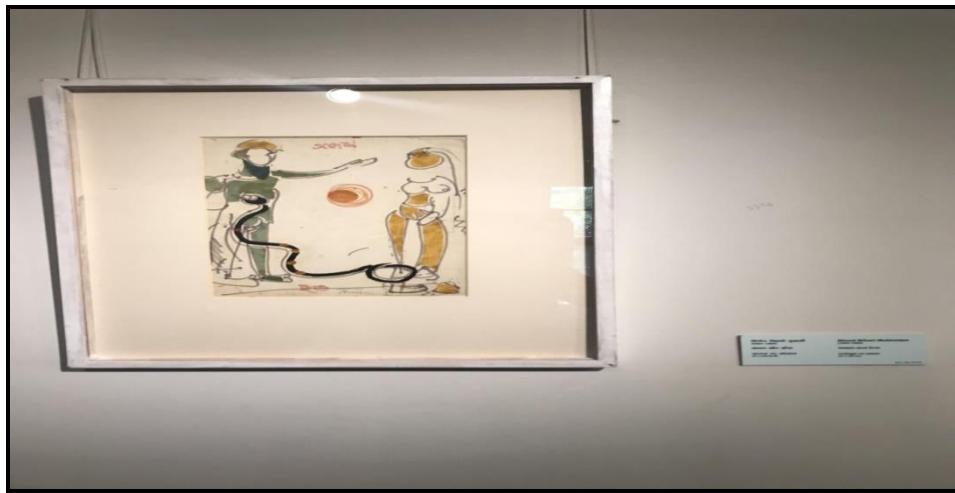
Benode Behari Mukherjee (7 February 1904 – 11 November 1980) was an Indian artist from West Bengal. Mukherjee was one of the pioneers of Indian modern art and a key figure of Contextual Modernism. He was one of the earliest artists in modern India to take up mural as a mode of artistic expression, and his murals

display a subtle understanding of environmental and architectural nuances. BB Mukherjee was a student of Nandalal Bose at Kala Bhavan (Santiniketan) from the age of fifteen. While being deeply influenced by his teacher, his art was entirely personal. Unlike his contemporaries art was not a political tool for Mukherjee. In spite of failing eyesight - which eventually led to complete blindness at the height of his career - Mukherjee was a prolific artist who worked as a painter and a muralist. Numerous paintings depict the rural landscape around Santiniketan in styles that owe a debt to the Japanese art while retaining an original and individual expression.

Following are paintings titled 'Birbhum summer landscape' and 'The Palm Groves' respectively. While the vastness of the desert in the former painting gives it a *sublime* touch, the tallness of the palm groves in the latter heightens that sublimity.



After losing his eyesight in 1957, Benodebehari retained his creative urge by making drawings, small sculptures, paper-cuts and prints. Following are some examples.



The above painting titled ‘Adam and Eve’ depicts their encounter with the serpent who persuaded Eve into tasting the forbidden fruit which would then lead to their banishment from the Garden of Eden.



This painting titled ‘Fisher Woman’ looks astonishingly perfect in many ways. From the limbs and the torso of the woman to the fish in her hand, the colours are so apt and the configuration is so accurate, that it doesn’t look like a blind man’s work at all.



The above painting, although untitled, looks like a man carrying the weight of water pots on his shoulders.

BB Mukherjee's genius is reflected in his paintings. The fact that a person like him could draw without seeing takes us back to the time of **John Milton** who despite his inability to see could bring an epic poem like *Paradise Lost* to life by reciting it to his daughter and asking her to jot it down on his behalf.

The life and work of this genius was also the subject of 'Inner Eye', a film by Satyajit Ray.

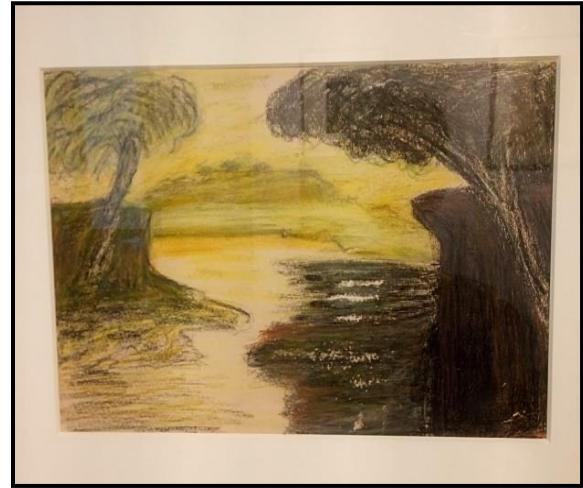
-(Sukhjot, Second year)

## ➤ Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was born in an affluent Bengali family. He started drawing in his sixties which is considered to be an age in which people start retiring.

His brother knew all the techniques and tricks of the paint brush. But Rabindranath Tagore did not have any experience in this field. From an early age, he used to draw scribbles at the back of his notebook. These were the reflections of his imagination and lacked any proper technique. Instead of adopting prevalent styles of painting Rabindranath Tagore developed his own style which was free from contemporary rules. Painting, for him, was more about deep seated emotions such as fear, anger or joy, and this can also be seen in his painting. Some of his paintings highlight the psychological aspects of human existence which may startle and unsettle the viewers. This was the time when there was turmoil in his life. His old age was creeping at the

door and many of his family members were dying from diseases. Below are two of his paintings titled 'Fantastical Figure' and 'Landscape' respectively.



The painting called 'Two Face' brilliantly uses light and shadow through scribbling and portrays a sad dark face alongside another light slightly smiling face, emphasizing that we have both light and dark within us and they always come in pair.



(Two Faces)



(Figure at the Window)

Similarly 'Figure at the Window' and 'Lady with the flowers' reflect his thoughts on the question of ageing and death respectively.

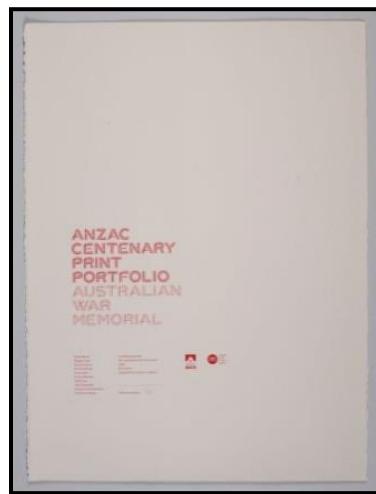


(Dancing Woman)

But the painting 'Dancing Woman' presents a strong powerful imagery through the visual of a woman dancing with flaming torches. He has shown his artistic power in painting too although he lacks refinement and perfection, he make it up for it with overflowing emotions and personalizing his painting.

- (Sonali, First Year)

## ➤ ANZAC



*Anzac is an acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, and is observed in the two countries on 25<sup>th</sup> April every year.*

The introduction by Dr. Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial, for the portfolio reads:

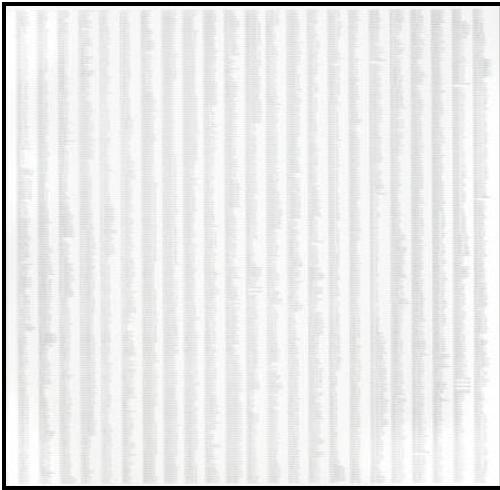
The events of the Great War have passed definitely from living memory into history. It was in an attempt to bridge this gap between history and memory that the Australian war Memorial commissioned the Anzac Centenary Print Portfolio

Its establishment was particularly felt necessary considering the isolation of those at home. The geographical distance between the battlefield of the First World War and the familial dwellings of the participating soldiers was huge. This meant that their families had little idea about what really went on during the war. So, artists from the two nations were called upon to represent the shared history of the War and its centenary. It facilitates a conversation of the modern viewer with the past— one that brought glory to some but only at the immeasurable cost of lives, on all sides.



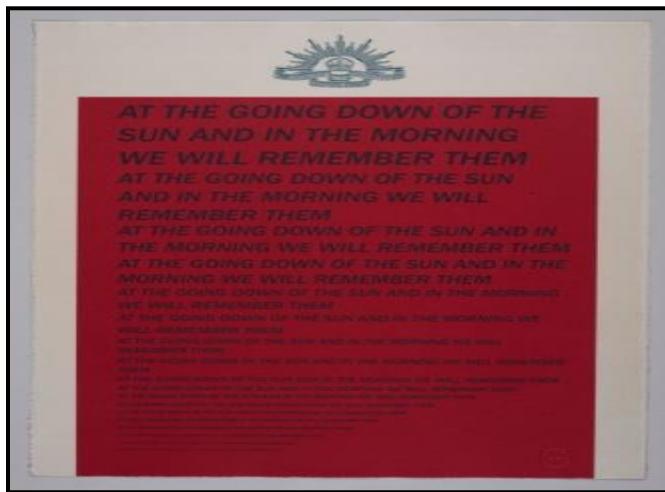
*And the last remnants memory destroys;* Sangeeta Sandrasegar

Sandrasegar's is a female perspective on the war— the impact on domestic and conjugal lives of people which is oft ignored, for all the lights are thrown on the number of missiles launched and number of men killed. She shows a Female Relative Badge, which was issued to wives and mothers of soldiers on active service, which might have become an object of everyday existence to her, but isn't really. The everyday-ness of the badge attempts to normalise the gruesome war, where she had little idea of her husband's whereabouts. The letter in the art-piece is a record of the responses that her enquiries received.



*Survivors' Roll of Honour; Fiona Jack*

Without the use of any colours, using simply black and white, Jack has made a list of 108,920 names—of survivors. How ironically un-simple it is! She said, “they hadn’t made the ‘ultimate sacrifice’ their experience was beyond anything I could imagine ... yet none of them were on any national roll of honour for their lifelong sacrifice”. Though one feels the urgency to read through it all— who would, really? It aches to look at it.



*Invisible sun (the other side); Mike Parr*

The above posted print reiterates a message. The visual aspect perhaps points to how we all begin with remembering our lost loved ones earnestly, and gradually our memory, our experiential accounts turn into historical detached discourses.

However, the presence of this art piece here is a strong indicator of the efforts of a select few who strive to ensure that the posterity retains an empathetic connection with the bygone.



*Untitled*; Daniel Boyd / *Untitled*; John Reynolds / *At a place not stated*, Sriwhana Spong



*Reasons*, Helen Johnson / *Bury my patu*, Dr Brett Graham / *Ngaliya barwon Gami (our great-uncle)*, Megan Cope

We noticed obscurity, emptiness and unclear exhibited expressions in all of these prints; as if the artists had much more to showcase, but for the limited frame they

had to function within. Or the obscurity could be our own minds'; our inability to stand in the face of these overwhelming images; inability to acknowledge how real it is; inability to comprehend it in its full force. None of these pictures show a real battlefield or blood and gore. Yet, these are even more telling, for it takes in its purview the aftermath— the painful acceptance of it having happened, and the equally painful refuge in the knowing that it is over.

Anzac, or Holocaust, or Kargil, or Syria— ignoring the causes and results— amongst others, are stains on the history of human race— the one race that chauvinistically takes pride in being rational. But what use shall that rational faculty be of, if we use it only to create wars that ultimately kill us?



*Anzac*; Shane Cotton

-(Prashansa Luthra

Second Year)

## Dark

it's dark inside  
I feel you come finally to bed  
your hands rushing to find their  
favourite parts of my flesh  
you move closer and smell of whiskey  
that is too hard like your touch  
my body smelling of jasmine wants to withdraw  
my flesh no longer yells for you  
your wet tongue limps: the cigarettes  
finally cutting its speed  
I turn to answer you, hoping to look  
into your eyes and ask you about your day  
and share a few gossips that  
I have been dying to spill out  
but your lips grab mine before I can stop  
and honey I have been trying to tell  
you for months now that your lips  
taste of her.

- (Ayushi Shridhar,  
Second Year)

## First Love

Eyes met  
Hearts collide  
There was a spark that I could not deny  
Fell in love, in the blink of an eye.  
My whole world changed  
From warm sunny day, into a stormy one  
You played all your cards right,  
You made me complete,  
The way you looked at me  
Made me think, I was the one you need.  
Little did I realize  
It was the game of cards  
And not for the hearts  
You won, I hereby declared  
I gave my heart into the hands of a player!

- (Nandini,

Third Year)

## Life of Man

Life of the man is an arrows flight

    Out of darkness into light,

    Out of light into darkness.

From cheeriness to cheerlessness

In hustle and bustle to gain some muscle

    Sometimes in scuffle and muffle

        From affection to hatred

        All these are stages of life

Life of the man is an arrows flight

    Out of darkness into light,

    Out of light into darkness.

- (Manpreet Kaur,

Second Year)

## **BLUE WHALE**

My heart started beating rapidly. Although I knew who it was outside that door, I was afraid.

“Who is this?” I shouted.

“It’s me.” said the voice outside the door, “Why are you not opening the door?”

“Tell me if you bought what I asked for.”, I confirmed again.

“Yes, I have the extra blades for your paper cutter. Now please open this door.”

I opened it at last and closed it immediately after mom entered.

“Why on earth were you playing that game?”, she asked.

“What game? I was not playing any game. Who told you that I was?”, I grew restless again.

“Weren’t you, when you were testing whether I bought you your blades or not.”

“Oh, that!”, I heaved a sigh of relief, though momentary. “Give them to me, I need to complete my project. ”, I said and took the blades out of the bag and left the hall.

“Dinner at 9 Sam!”, she called out after me but received no reply. She was anxious for some time because I always answered her questions and replied to whatever she said, but today was different.

Upstairs in my room alone, I switched on my laptop. *SAMEER OBEROI* it read. I typed the password- \*BLUE\_WHALE\*.

The laptop screen turned blue and then red. A chat box opened in the centre of the screen. The name of the sender was not there. The message read-

*You are running late to complete your task. If you do not accomplish it in another half an hour, we will find you.*

I checked the time. There were still seven minutes left. I immediately took out the blades and carved an image of a whale on my left hand with it. Blood trickled down all over and stained my clothes but not a single tear dropped from my eyes. I was numb to it. I did not have to carve each and every line. Many were already there, as a proof of challenges completed earlier.

I clicked a photograph of my hand and sent it to the anonymous sender who had messaged me.

The reply said, “*Master is happy, now. Prepare for the next task, you will get a partner for it, someone exactly LIKE YOU.*”

The last two words, in bold, made me restless. How could anyone know? I tried to hide it from the world, yet the master knew. I waited to find my answers from the person I was to meet.

I spent my time waiting for a message from my anonymous partner. It was 3 a.m. when I finished watching all the violent videos sent by the master. As soon as I finished, a new chat box opened on the screen. This time it wasn't unnamed. The sender was Alex Fernandez.

*“Hi! No time for introductions. Meet me at the beach in half an hour. I will be waiting. We have to complete the last task together. [P.S.: make sure no one sees you]”, said his message.*

My heart started beating faster. It was 3:15 a.m. and I had never gone out of the house at this hour. But I knew I had to. It was a ten minute walk to the beach. I put on my jacket, made sure that mom was asleep, and then took the opportunity to sneak out through the back door.

It was too cold outside. I felt my body freeze. The whale on my hand started biting me. It had turned blue due to the cold. I started running to warm myself. When I finally reached the beach I checked if anyone was watching. There wasn't even a single soul present there.

I entered the gate and saw a figure walking near the shore. He had a well built body. Height almost equal to mine though the chest was a little broader. The moonlight, which fell directly upon his face made him look like an angelic figure. The scene before my eyes was so pure and serene that I could have watched it all night long. I wanted to take it all in.

He was walking from one end to another, slowly, in the full radiance of the moon. Maybe it was him murmuring a familiar tune, or it was just me imagining it. Whatever it may have been, I was happy. After a long time of restlessness I breathed, breathed evenly.

He stopped abruptly, and looked directly at me with his pale face. The reflection of the ocean water made him look so beautiful and confident. That one moment, I felt, was enough for me to change my plans of fulfilling what the next few hours of my life demanded from me.

Suddenly, I realised he was waving at me. I walked towards the shore. Not even for an instance did I take my eyes off him.

“Hi, Sameer. I’m Alex. ”, he said and shook hands with me.

“Sam,” I said, with a tremble in my voice.

“Okay, Sam. You must know what our last task is for Blue Whale?”, he said enquiringly.

“I do. ”, I murmured. “But why did we get a partner for it?”

“So that we can watch each other die. ”, he said simply.

I could not bear it in that instant. I could have killed myself easily, as I already knew I had to, but the thought of watching him die hurt me so much that it became hard for me even to breathe.

“We both do not know how to swim”, he continued speaking, “we have to walk deep into the ocean together, walk until the water is above our heads and stay there until our lungs have no air left in them. Then Blue Whale will take us in its possession.”

He said all this too proudly. It was as if he felt fortunate to die. He looked far beyond the ocean and smiled while he imagined the moment.

“It’s a sin for you, you know, committing suicide is forbidden in Christian religion”, I said abruptly, “you won’t even get a grave if you do this.”

“Oh! A grave?”, he sighed, “tell me Sam, do I need one after the Blue Whale takes me in?”

“I don’t want the Blue Whale to take you; I don’t want you to die!”, I shouted.

He kept watching me silently for some time and then asked me to sit down with him.

“You know Sam, ”, he started speaking after a while, all this time looking beyond the ocean, “I saw you in this neighbourhood a few months back and I have liked you since then. I always wanted to come and talk to you but you never did notice me watching you from across the roadside. You were new in this city and no one had any idea about what kind of a person you were. Then one day I saw similar marks on your hand while you were in the grocery store with your mother. I was sure that you too were a part of Blue Whale. I have no idea how the master came to know about us but I was finally happy that before dying I got a chance to at least talk to you.”

The last line caught my attention. I pulled him closer and our lips met. Neither of us spoke anything. The waves fought with the shore and moved back and forth. I was hoping it could be just us for a while. I could convince him to give up his obsession with this game.

I had been losing a lot of chances to live my life happily. I did not want to lose this one now.

I woke up rather calmly. I did not realise that I fell asleep. It felt like I had wanted to sleep since a long time now, and I finally did. What I saw beside me was an impression of Alex's body on the sand, not him. Beside it he left a message for me:

**SAVE YOURSELF**

**I LOVE YOU**

I did not know where he had gone. I did not even wish to know. Although he had left me, yet I knew he did not. I had a reason to live now. Live to wait for him. And I did. I did live and I did wait for him.

It has been 4 years now. My mother had come to know about me sneaking out of the house and when I returned home, she saw the marks on my hand. She decided to move away from that place. The Blue Whale could not find me.

Yes, I did not try to find Alex. There wasn't a way. But I still love him, love him with my whole heart. Sometimes this love smothers me and my heart drowns in a bottomless sorrow.

Although my mother saved me from it, I am still caught in this puzzle of memories because of Alex. I try to erase those marks from my hand with the water of the beach I stand upon. The moments on the beach are forever mine now. I can feel them. I can feel the water crashing my feet and retreating. That night is forever. Alex is forever. I can remember them. It's easy. All I have to do is close my eyes.

- (Sakshi Bansal,

Third Year)

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For information regarding our next issue, please stay tuned to our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/verbosincendum/>

Feedback and suggestions for improvement will be more than welcome on: ejournal17@gmail.com.

