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Coffee and Cartoons

An unconventional combo



Shyama Prasad Dey sitting at his coffee shop

Source: Instagram

Saptaparni Sarkar, BA Sem V

I pity our generation, which has to have their hearts broken or fall in love to discover their artistic roots. How many of our friends have turned into lovesick poets once they started dating? Almost all of them (including us)! While I am not against the idea of strong emotional stimulation triggering our artistic endeavours, I have recently started to admire the people whose art is not conditioned to emotional, social, physical, or psychological changes. From them, art is the oxygen sustaining their lives. Being a bong girl brought up by literature-loving parents, I love exploring several well-maintained galleries and theatres during the weekends, taking perfect snaps of breathtaking paintings and photography exhibitions. However, I have been oblivious to the fact

that sometimes a roadside shack can set precedent for struggling yet carefree art, which the posh galleries often lack. All thanks to my knack of scrolling Instagram like a pro, I discovered a small roadside shack transformed into a coffee shop owned by a man creative enough to create genuine buzz across social media. From comic strips to artwork adorning paper cups and posters, Shyama Prasad Dey's shop is a kaleidoscope of creativity, nestled just outside the Tallygunge metro in the City of Joy, Kolkata. Besides delectable brews, Dey's small shop, decorated with embellishing hand-painted posters and calligraphy, serves inspiration to the youth about his struggle to sustain his life and his art. A seasoned cartoonist and sketch artist, Dey, while trying to make ends meet through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, redirected his skill and passion to run a coffee shop outside

one of the busiest metro stations in Kolkata, infusing each cup with love and art. For passersby, the modest coffee shop has transformed into an unconventional art gallery. The fun and quirky caricatures sketched on paper cups are offered for sale by Dey to anyone who is into collecting artistic souvenirs for themselves or their loved ones. I visited this place on February 14th of this year. Besides entertaining a few couples with his humour, I spotted Dey lovingly draw a few cartoons on paper cups for a blogger cum art patron. The middle-aged artist is proud of his struggle and more than happy to talk about it with anyone ready to sit with him, take a few sips of steaming beverages, and listen to his story. I will be soon returning to his shop with my friends for an extended conversation about Bengali culture, coffee, and cartoons. And needless to say, from now on, I will look out for artists in the most humble settings waiting to be discovered by us.

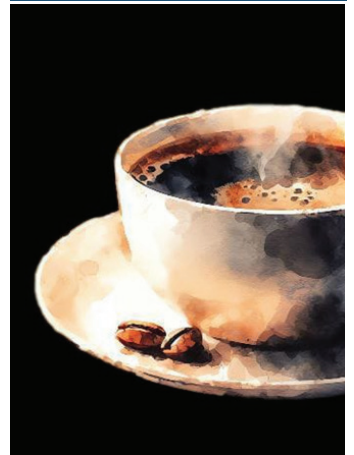


Sketches on paper cups by Dey

Source: Instagram

Artistic fact

"An artist is not paid for his labor but for his vision. Every human is an artist. The dream of your life is to make beautiful art. To send light into the darkness of men's hearts - such is the duty of the artist."



Quote of the Month

“

Who sees the human face correctly: the photographer, the mirror, or the painter?

”

~ Pablo Picasso

Are Artists Mortal

**“Scriptures remain immortal,
Gambling with death;
To stay alive and free.
Artists lose, but art strengthens.”**

Swastika Roy, BA Sem 2

Our society is built on the foundation of art, but do we ever appreciate the ‘movers and shakers’ who actually contribute their entire life to weave this art?

An artist has the calibre to bring about a period of renaissance or a period of downfall in a society. There can be an optimistic or a pessimistic transformation due to the artist's work, but what actually keeps them alive even after their death is their artwork. Their ideology and philosophy become a part of our society which consequently gets collected in the museum of minds. Remembrance leads to attachment-attachment with ideas, with insights and most importantly with souls.

Ideas live forever. They might be rusty but unforgettable. Hence, artists have the capability of presenting ideas through art. Another very vital perspective to be noted regarding art is that “Art can build solidarity or even antagonism”. It depends on us how we perceive it. Art is not restricted to paints, brushes and canvases only. It has a much more holistic perspective dealing with governance, poetry, culinary, activism and more. It can be negative too, such as the art of conning people, hacking data for illegal uses and even scams. Definitely, these can be depicted as cynical art which brings about downfall in our society.

Let us get into the depths of the various forms of art: -

The Art of Poetry

Poems are a source of entertainment in today's contemporary society. In the age of new media, there are few who get educated and entertained by reading poems. These literary stanzas might have been written by age-old poets but

their essence still prevails in our society. For instance, William Wordsworth's Daffodils, Tennyson's Crossing the Bar and Robert Frost's Birches have left traces in our academic curriculum. These poems teach life lessons. These pave a way towards experiencing life from a completely different perspective. They might have answered the call of death but their abstract concepts have still been a part of our society.

The Art of Painting

Paintings showcase emotions. The strokes on the drawing sheets are not mere splashes of paints but are recurring patterns. These patterns describe the artist's philosophy in a dynamic way. When paintings pass on from one generation to the other, their meanings change. People's perceptions change and hence the meaning of the paintings is bound to change. What remains static is the artist's ideology behind the painting. For instance, Leonardo Da Vinci's The Last Supper captures a very vital scene from the Gospel of St. John's. It subtly showcases betrayal (because just after the scene Jesus was betrayed by one of his disciples named Judas) which is still prevalent in the present social landscape. Salvador Dali's The Persistence of Memory has an incredible precision while depicting the sphere of our subconscious mind. Later Psychology threw light on the working of our subconscious mind. Hence, the artistry and ideology still hold relevance in our society.

The Art of Governance

Governance might sound too political but maintaining a government needs skills which eventually paves its way towards art. The art of weaving the government can be optimistic or pessimistic but



Source: Clicked by Sujata Sen

eventually it is an art. Why do we remember Adolf Hitler so well? It is only because of his cynical art of dictatorship. Yes, it was oppressive but his art till today keeps him alive in our minds as a cruel leader of Nazism. Hence, there were numerous such politicians who have left behind their legacy through bruises in the system or through proper developmental ethics.

The Art of Activism

Activism has been a part of the society since the abyss of time. The struggle for human rights to bring about betterment in the social index can be termed as activism. The art to protest non-violently for spreading awareness among the masses plays an integral part in the contemporary times. Activists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton have left behind their legacy to march towards equal rights for women. In the current scenario, activists like Malala Yousafzai and Angela Davis have carried out the legacy to fight for gender equality. The philosophical thought processes left behind by the primitive activists are being carried on by our contemporary female activists. The struggle towards development and equality persists!

The Art of Architecture

Architecture serves us history in a platter. The intricate terracotta works, murals, marble carvings, glass paintings and many more

artistic creations rise above the crowd showing off its art. The artists might be anonymous to most of us but their art thrives by being an inspiration to modern day architects. For instance, according to our factual knowledge the Taj Mahal was built by Shah Jahan out of love for his wife, but the main architects were Ustad Ahmad Lahori along with his labourers. The exquisite marble carvings are an inspiration to numerous artists worldwide. Another reference that can be made in this context is of the Colosseum. It was made by the Jewish slaves, who were overseen by Roman architects and engineers in the reigns of Vespasian and Titus (Vespasian's son and successor). Till today Roman churches are built by taking inspirations from the architectural styles of the Colosseum.

The Art of Culinary

The art of cooking had some unknown artists or rather cooks who had invented the age-old recipes. Delicacies like Shukto, Mochar Ghonto, Kochu Shag and Aam Tel had foreign influences but possessed an Indian touch of authenticity. Till today the art of cooking these delicacies are prevalent in every Bengali household. The inventors of these delicacies might have been dead or anonymous but their art till today flows through the veins of every cook from the nook and corner of the world.



Source: A.I generated

sessed an Indian touch of authenticity. Till today the art of cooking these delicacies are prevalent in every Bengali household. The inventors of these delicacies might have been dead or anonymous but their art till today flows through the veins of every cook from the nook and corner of the world.

Artists have to be extremely brave to introduce a new form of art in a community or a society as it may lead to social acceptance or mass scale rejection. With great power comes great responsibility- to influence masses and to carry on the legacy of each and every artist in the international sphere. What we can do is to explore new perspectives of art and even support other artists throughout. An optimistic artist is hidden in every person. We just have to find it through self-discovery. Therefore, to conclude

“Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn’t really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while.”

Conjunction of Expression and Culture:

An In-Depth View of Belly Dancing

**Debayan and Siddhant Verma,
BA Sem 2**

From being a symbol and or practice of fertility and femininity to being famously incorporated into Bollywood’s dance numbers – belly dancing has evolved quite a bit. May it be the music, clothing and everything in between. As such, we have interviewed a ‘belly dancer’ to discuss the cultural history of it, their journey in this field and influences present here that inspire them.



Swastika and her belly dancing group

Our interview with Swastika began with the question of how their own journey began in this field. “I started with it (belly dancing) when I was 17, right after graduating from high school. I saw this YouTube video from banjara school of dance, which is one of the premiere schools of dance in India. It (banjara) introduced belly dancing to the country. I went down the rabbit hole of binge-watching videos and discovered intricacies and nuances of the artform and it drew me in. And, the rebellious phase of

every teenager led me to start it even though society looked down on it. And, that led me to start it.” On the question of styles of belly dance they enjoy and participate in, Swastika mentioned about the umbrella term of ‘belly dance’ alongside their preferred styles. From Beledi to Shaabi and Khaleeji and how each style originates from the Middle East and possesses distinct performances, garments, and rhythms.

Cultural influences also play an important role in Swastika’s dance journey, with a particular affinity for the Shaabi style, known for portraying the lives of common people in Egypt and conveying social commentary through dance.

Going forward, they also address the misconceptions surrounding belly dancing attire with the ‘bra and skirt’ which are a part but, not the primary representatives they are made out to be. I.e. how in Khaleeji, the attire is an oversized overdress known as Thobe Nashal. With this, they challenge media stereotypes, emphasizing the importance of respecting the art form. They stress the significance of learning and understanding belly dancing before crafting a unique style of garment for performances.

They go on to talk about how the influences of fellow artists like Meher Malik and the style of ‘bellywood’ (a fusion of belly dancing and Bollywood), Debapriya Das and Damini Sahay, who are in oriental style of belly dance, alongside community support that has culminated into a crucial aspect in Swastika’s personal development. The intrinsic nature of the belly dancing and \



Swastika Roy during her rehearsals

being part of the community has also helped overcome body image issues, fostering confidence and self-acceptance. And in their words, “After sometime in learning belly dancing, it didn’t matter to me how my body looked lesser or bigger but rather helped me feel more confident with how I am.”

Despite societal taboos, Swastika recounts challenges faced as a performer, from the initial reluctance of loved ones to venues where they were performing imposing restrictions on perceived “vulgar” content.

Their words help shed light on the evolving acceptance of belly dancing in society, clearing the air of the misconceptions about its origins and purpose.

In the field of dancing, it is also quite important with the choice of music that is decided upon. Speaking upon this, Swastika confessed their love for Arabic music despite not knowing the language. Further, they talked about the importance of knowing the music and learning while advising against immediately jumping into Bollywood music.

With a place riddled with such misinformation and misconceptions, we asked Swastika about what they want people to take away from their performances. "The first thing is that it is a very intrinsic thing for the performer and is meant for the expression of oneself rather than the pleasure of traditionally, men watching it. And, that there is more to it than what people usually think about it and the styles of it that are present."

And, with a rather paradoxical way to end the interview, Swastika helped to inform us what they do to prepare before a performance. E.g. rituals or personal superstitions to follow before performing. They mentioned their practice Zagareet before performing. It is a form of ululation which is a loud trilling sound and is done in marriages, funerals for respect etc. And, in their words is a "war cry" when done together and is very lively thing that helps charge them up before a performance.

Thus, with this interview Swastika emphasizes the intrinsic nature of belly dancing, aiming to break stereotypes and encourage a deeper appreciation for this ancient art form. The interview unravels the myths surrounding belly dancing, showcasing the challenges faced by performers and emphasizing the need for respect and acknowledgment of its rich history.

OH MY CAL

Oishika Nandy, BA Sem 2

From every Ghosh, Mitra, Mukherjee, Talukdar and Roy.
Some call it bold and beautiful and some call it sweet and coy,
This article is my take on my city, I hope you can relate and enjoy.
Every part of the city is grand, every street tells its own story.
Every brick in The Writer's building shows off its undying glory,
Every table at the Indian Coffee House has its own history,
Every stair at the Indian Museum conceals some unknown mystery.
Every stair at the Indian Museum conceals some unknown mystery.

The fairy is a witness to all the sceptical talks at the Victoria Memorial,
A prayer is delivered from every bench of the St. Paul's Cathedral.
The ghats of Ganga still look aesthetic and surreal,
The South Park Street Cemetery commemorates every soul's Holy burial.

The mornings here start with Indian raga or Rabindra Sangeet,
We still discuss Neruda and Marx at almost every family meet.
Every member in the room can actually feel the intellectual heat,

However, every political quarrel ends with a 'Rosogolla' or any other sweet.

Every wall outside the Calcutta University has the SUCI or SAARC graffiti,
Pasta isn't given much importance when the table is occupied by 'Daab Chingri'.
We still look over our shoulders whenever we visit the National library,
Deep down there we definitely prefer 'Oh! Calcutta' to the grill of 'Sigree'.

Some of us still believe that our architecture is better than Rome's,
During Christmas, one rarely wants to miss Flury's or Nahoum's.
Every Mohan Bagan- East Bengal fight finally ends with a shalom,
Every bench at Rabindra Sarovar makes us feel like we are at home.

Many people say that Kolkata is a metropolitan city,
An urban habitation, looking grand and pretty.
However to me every corner of 'Cal' seems special and breathtaking,
To me...Kolkata isn't just another city, it's a lovely feeling.



Source: Clicked by Abir Mallick

The Intimacy of Near Touch

Mohul Sen, BA Sem 4

I felt the bed sheet crumpling beneath me. No, I didn't open my eyes. Because that'd be the end of the delusion I was feeding myself. There wasn't any other way. There wasn't supposed to be actually. Delusions and imaginations running wild- it was the only straw of hope and life that I could hold on to. My body? It is burned every night. Because it's theirs. Maybe everyone's whose weight has ever suffocated me. But my mind? It was mine. Or maybe that's an illusion too. They say, the mind is a dangerous place, it's the one that has the power to destroy lives, bodies are just physical mementos- but I think bodies can give you the most painful death, ever. I'm dead, my body hasn't just been assigned a coffin yet. My mind works just fine. Or maybe that's an illusion too.

Touches don't matter to me anymore. My body's gone numb from all the deaths it survives every night. But often, on a breezy afternoon, when I feel a familiar warmth enveloping me, I wonder, is that when my mom touches my pictures with her bare fingertips? The sweat beads on my forehead smell uncannily like her tears- salty and crushing. And every time, the weight of my numbness pervades, clouding my vision. I'm tired of feeling so numb, relief exists- I find it when, I'm cut. My mom's fingertips slip away as I endlessly anticipate the arrival of a coffin. And then I opened my eyes.



The intimacy of near touch

Source: Clicked

MOVIE RECOMMENDATIONS

Gangoobai

The story is about an elderly maid servant who works hard to achieve her dream of an extremely expensive Gara sari and changes the lives of people she interacts with while in Mumbai to buy the sari. The film was premiered at MAMI 2012, in the New Faces in Indian Cinema section; the South Asian Film Festival in Canada; the Hanoi International Film Festival in Vietnam and the IFFI 2012.



Source: Google

Antrum -

The Deadliest Film Ever Made) is a 2018 Canadian horror film written and directed by David Amato and Michael Laicini. The film is divided into two parts: an opening and closing frame narrative in the form of a mockumentary and a feature film. The documentary purports to tell the story of Antrum, a movie released in 1979 that supposedly has deleterious effects on those who watch it; the bulk of the movie is allegedly the only known print of the

film, which has itself been altered by an unknown third party.



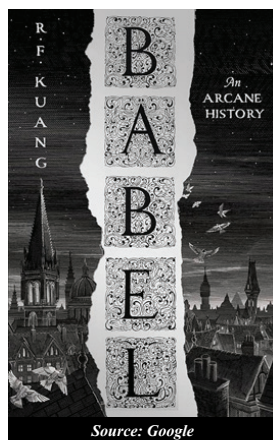
Source: Google

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Babel by R.F. Kuang

Babel is set in an alternative-reality 1830s England in which Britain's global economic and colonial supremacy are fueled by the use of magical silver bars. Their power comes from capturing what is "lost in translation" between words in different languages that have similar, but not identical, meanings. Silver bars inscribed with such 'match-pairs' can increase industrial and agricultural production, improve the accuracy of bullets, heal injuries, and more. To harness this power, Oxford University created the Royal Institute of Translation, nicknamed "Babel", where scholars work to

find match-pairs. The plot is focused on four new students at the institute, their growing awareness that their academic efforts maintain Britain's imperialist supremacy, their debate over how to prevent the Opium War, and the use of violence.

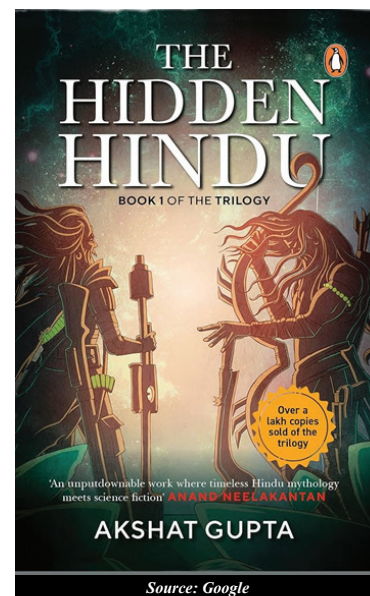


Source: Google

The Hidden Hindu Trilogy by Akshat Gupta

The Hidden Hindu is a series of books by Akshat Gupta that blends science fiction, adventure, and scriptures. The story follows Prithvi, a 21-year-old who can remember events from before he was born, as he searches for Om Shastri, a middle-aged Shiva devotee who was captured over 200 years ago and taken to a high-tech facility on an isolated Indian island. During interrogation, Om Shastri claims to have witnessed all four yugas (Hindu epochs) and even participated in the Ramayana and

Mahabharata.



Source: Google

Movie Review: Laapata Ladies

Dhriti Majumder, BA Sem 2

Laapata Ladies a movie that is much more than 'just a movie'. A beautiful adaption from Biplab Goswami's story "Two Brides", it unveils the deep rooted patriarchy and brings a much needed refreshing twist to the contemporary world of cinema. In a cinematic landscape dominated by movies which has always taken a gender down to uplift the other, this movie subtly balances and glorifies both genders and their lucidity. The story takes place by going around 23 years back in time so it seems like an old fashioned tale, but is actually so invisibly modern and relevant to contemporary times and for years and years to come.

Set up in Nirmal Pradesh, a place hypothetical by name yet very similar to every rural scenario of the time, the story revolves around a misadventure of two young brides that get separated

from their husbands in a train, short after their wedding. This short miscommunication leads to a series of unexpected events and sends both the lead women Phool (Nitanshi Goel) and Jaya (Pratibha Ratna) on a journey of immense self discovery. Phool's husband Deepak (Sparsh Srivastav) was a character which provided utmost warmth and calmness to the narrative. He mistook his wife to be someone else, as the train was filled with same attired brides with a veil on their faces, this felt like a genuine error on his end and he tried his level best to undo it by finding his wife and also help the other bride, Jaya, to return home safely to his own husband. So as Jaya descends the train with Deepak thinking it to be her husband, Phool remains inside the train where she knew not a soul. She gets off the train to find her husband nowhere.

Being a young girl who's naive

and so unaware about the world, she starts panicking for her life but gets accompanied and accepted by three peculiar yet heart warming characters who are even though so different from another, create a safe space for Phool to learn her individuality and understands that a Man is not all a Woman needs to survive in this world. Especially the role of Manju Mai (Chaya Kadam) was a epitome of self independence.

She was firstly every hesitant to let phool stay with her then later started to sympathizes with her and took her in and even gave her a chance to earn her own living by working at her stall in the station. Jaya on the other hand disguised herself as Pushpa Rani so that she didn't have to go back to her toxic husband who was rumoured to be the murderer of his first wife. Jaya's husband Pradeep married her just for the dowry and was a pathetic man at that. He defines everything that's wrong in the world. A man who abuses power, belittles women to an extent that almost can take their life and has no respect for any individual other than himself. Jaya wanted to pursue organic farming as a career and was slowly selling off her wedding jewellery to save up money for her college fees which she would later run off to.

Meanwhile all this, an interesting turn took place with the occurrence of Shyam Manohar (Ravi Kishan). He started investigating this case in greed of illicit money from both the families and came off as an arrogant, power abusing, corrupted police officer. Jaya's lies overshadowed her and she got caught as Shyam Manohar untied the entire scenario and called Pradeep to take her wife back. Jaya confessed to everything and realised, her crime was that she dared to dream in a world

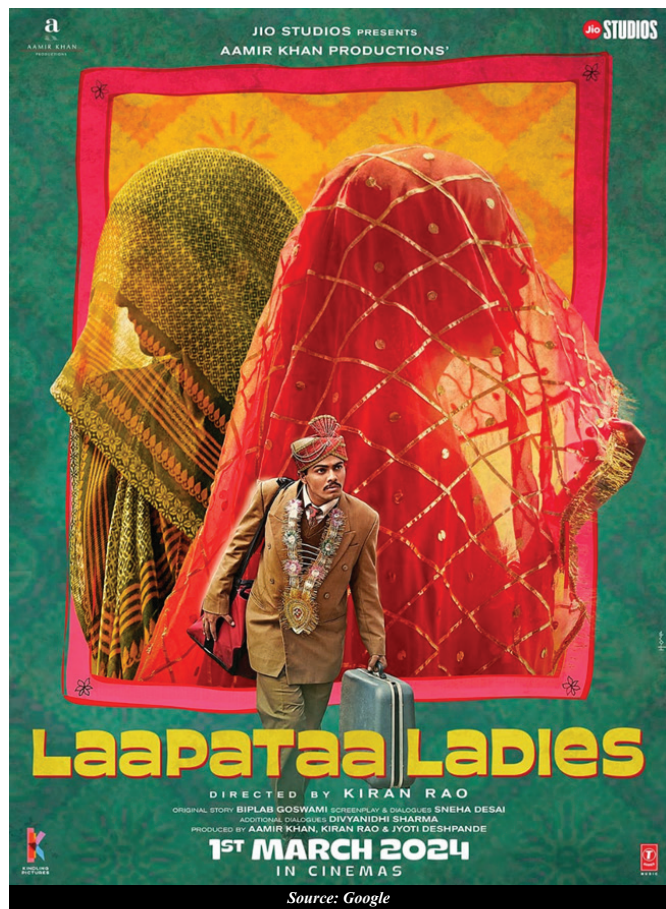
where not everyone has the privilege of doing so. Pradeep came, and in his



Source: Google

arrogance, he threw a bundle of notes on Manohar's table and got ready to take his wife with him as if she were his property. Pradeep slapped Jaya in the police station, and even Shyam Manohar and his colleagues were shocked that the man believed that he was untouchable. The Climax took a thrilling and heart filling turn when Shyam Manohar turned out to be Polar opposite of a character which was portrayed throughout the movie. He told off Pradeep for his crimes and chased him out of the police station. Both the girls got their happily ever after as Phool was reunited with her husband Deepak, and Jaya went off to college in Dehradun to study organic farming. The symbolism of ghonghat in this movie is so strong, the irony of them knowing that a veil is what hides a person's identity yet doing absolutely nothing to uplift that veil and treat women in a equal manner.

In the end both the girls remove their veils, both literally and metaphorically to assert their freedom. This was a true Feminist film as it showed that feminism is not about always wanting to go out to work and be independent but it can also mean to raise a family and build a home. It's about that CHOICE.



Source: Google

World through the lens of a camera



Source: Clicked by Ritabrata Bhandary

Sharanya Roy, BA Sem 4

The world through a camera lens isn't a mere reflection of reality; it's a carefully curated interpretation. Like a filmmaker framing a shot, our viewpoint shapes the narrative. The camera doesn't merely record the world; it interprets it. Like a prism refracting light, a director shapes reality through the lens, revealing facets invisible to the naked eye.

Consider Darren Aronofsky. In "Requiem for a Dream," his camera plunges us into a gritty, nightmarish world of drug addiction, using frenetic close-ups and distorted angles to convey the characters' psychological torment. This is a world of raw emotion, devoid of comfort. Conversely, in "Black Swan," the camera glides gracefully through the world of ballet, employing long, elegant takes to capture the dancers' meticulous movements and the stark beauty of the ballet itself. Here, the world is one of disciplined grace and obsessive pursuit of perfection.

These contrasting films by the

same director demonstrate the camera's transformative power. It's not a "passive observer" it actively shapes our perception. In "Requiem," the camera becomes an accomplice in the characters' descent, while in "Black Swan," it becomes a conduit to the dancers' artistry. Through these interpretations, the camera allows us to experience the world in a multitude of ways, fostering empathy for vastly different realities and emotions.

This ability to see the world through various lenses is intellectually crucial. It compels us to move beyond our own limited perspectives and engage with the richness and complexity of human experience. By encountering diverse viewpoints captured on camera, we challenge our assumptions, ignite critical thinking, and gain a more nuanced understanding of ourselves and the world around us. In essence, the camera becomes a tool for intellectual exploration, allowing us to delve into the depths of human experience, one frame at a time.

Artistic Freedom: Blurring the boundaries

Debdyuti Sarkar, BA Sem 4

Where do those people go? Those people, who do not like a stereotypical art form? Who decides whether you are an artist or not?

And are the only artists around us painters, singers, dancers and writers? We often become so inclined towards the art form we lose all kind of regard for the artist. We often forget that art is just a mere form of expression. We forget that the form of art does not define the artist but the artist defines the art. It is the artist who gives birth to the art form. What is an art form without the creator? Without the thought? Without the expression? Without the vision?

Is he not an artist who does not express? Is he not an artist who does not showcase? Why do we limit the freedom of being an artist with the form of expression? Is he not an artist who perceives society in a different way? What about the person who sees the light at the end of

a tunnel and not the leading lines perspective? What about the person who sees the sun and the moon in a long distance relationship and not just some celestial bodies? What about the person who cannot stick to the theme of the newsletter but writes so beautifully? Do we call him unprofessional or do we call him an artist?

When art can be subjective, why can't the definition of artists be subjective too? Can we even think close to the person who has experienced war? Can we express ourselves even close to the person who has never experienced love? Some boundaries need to be expanded; some boundaries need to be blurred. When there is no restriction on any art form, why must there be a boundary on being an artist? An artist need not prove his worth to the world. An artist must not wait for anybody's approval. An artist is still an artist without anybody's acceptance. Because in the end, who decides whether you are an artist or not?



Source: A.I generated

Prometheus's Flame Rekindled:

The Age of Social Media & Content Creators



Source: A.I generated

Siddhant Verma, BA Sem 2

In recent times, we have witnessed artists have a potential to grow in a manner that was not thought possible earlier. This can be directly linked to the emergence of the internet and through it, social media. This has grown quite prevalent in the last two decades or so. Initially with Facebook, followed nearly on a yearly basis by Reddit, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Snapchat and most recently, TikTok, which was formerly known as Music.ly.

Although all of these mediums of content in the new age have brought something of their own to the table which helped lay the foundation of as well as revolutionize pre-existing systems, perhaps the most significant change might be the introduction short form content and UGC or user generated content. This form of media, introduced via Vine in 2013 and also popularized by them, as seen with its 200 million active users in 2015. This new form of content, limited to a short span of time in which the creator had to capture and contain the audience's attention and entertain them posed quite a challenge.

In 7 seconds, it began and ended. This was quite the task for all the creators on the platform. But with perseverance and innovation, people thrived and made entire careers in which they still continue today, despite the shutdown of Vine in 2017.

This same method of content creation was adopted by TikTok followed by Instagram's adaptation of reels in 2020 due to the growing popularity of short form content. Alongside the familiarity of UGC and short form content, was the quarantine that followed with the rise of Covid-19. Although a tragic time, it also provided people with a lot of free time with which, a lot was dedicated to social media. This rise in popularity has followed through even now in 2024.

Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have popularized niche trends and revitalized dying trends. This can be seen with the advent of thrifting, fashion trends of the 90s and other decades being brought back to fashion, to niche interests going viral too with things such as health and fitness awareness, and even Pokémon cards, which are now evaluated to be worth thousands.

now evaluated to be worth thousands.

Artists and creators have been turned to opinion leaders of the general public and have also brought out (as mentioned prior) new and old interests to the masses. But this has not been without challenges of their own. There have been various drawbacks in these rather new set of careers. From things such as cyberbullying, real-life repercussions due to actions and thoughts displayed online and currently, the rather growing threat of artificial intelligence. These have served as unresolved issues and reasons of sabotage for the lives and careers of creators. Yet the persistence of emerging personalities and the want to create alongside the great-

ly improved accessibility of social media has allowed resistance in these drawbacks. With the slow but ever-growing recognition of creators on these platforms by governments, betterments in security and cyber laws have been implemented. This is followed by the general resistance on social media to Artificial Intelligence and its usage in creation of artistic expression has led for the further growth in people who attempt to 'go viral' and become the next big thing in the field they try in, proves the centuries long fight for humans in whatever they wish to create, through perseverance to those who wish to obstruct that.

Secularism: An introspection

Sagnik Bhaduri, BA Sem 2

The concept of Secularism inherent with Europe which is termed as, "Laicite"(i.e. absolute separation between the Church and the State) is quite distinctive as compared to the Indian concept of Secularism that connotes that the state should be equidistant towards any faith or religion, thus erasing the "prohibitory" aspect associated with the European notion of secularism.

Secularism has been innate to the Indian subcontinent which has been a fecund ground for several cultures and civilizations. In his acclaimed book, The Argumenta-

tive Indian eminent social scientist Amartya Sen writes about two major rulers i.e. Ashoka and Akbar laid the foreground for democracy by introducing concepts of rational reasoning and heterodoxy.

While Ashoka stated that in a discourse regarding a particular topic, the respective participants should have a constraint in speech that involves neither an extolling of one's own ideology nor severe condemnation of the other's school of thought.

Akbar's thought that the state should not interfere with the religious belief of an individual and his attempt to introduce the concept of Din-i-illahi which was a



Source: Google

was a congregation of multiple philosophical ideas to achieve peaceful coexistence and harmony with individual thought. Thus, the land of India with its divergent feast of socio-cultural

practices has always encouraged the concept of Secularism.

Blurring the Canvas: Artistic Freedom in a Boundless World



Source: Clicked by Shalmoli Ghosh

Chandrashekhar Chatterjee,
BA Sem 4

Where lines once held their rigid form,
Now colours bleed, a vibrant storm.

Artistic freedom takes the stage,
Blurring borders, turning page.

The sculptor's chisel meets the brush,
Stone and canvas, a vibrant push,
Where melody and verse entwine,

A symphony in words and line.

The dancer's leap, a poet's rhyme,
Defying boxes, defying time.
The camera's eye, a painter's dream,
Capturing light, a flowing stream.

No longer bound by form or name,

Expression dances, aflame.
From chaos, beauty takes its flight,
In the mingling of dark and light.

So let the genres intertwine, Let
voices rise, unique, divine.
For in the blurring, we find our
own, A tapestry where truth is
sown.

From whispers soft to thundering
beat, Let art's wild spirit be
complete.

For in the blending, we are free,
Embracing all that we can be.

So raise your brush, your voice,
your pen, Let creativity transcend.
For in the blurring, we find our
way, Where art's true freedom finds
its sway.

Nocturne Reminiscences

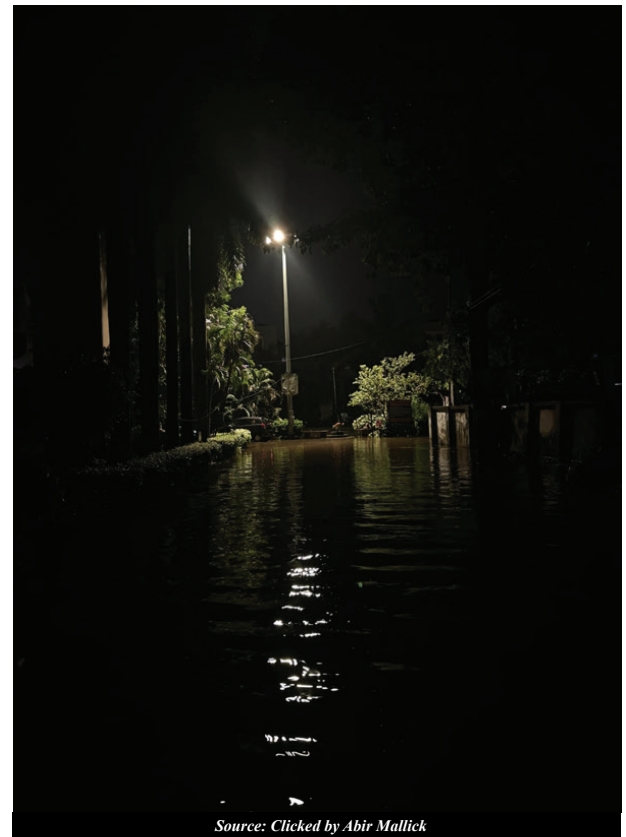
Sreerupa Das, BA Sem 2

Pitter-patter sounds the rain
Tapping away on the glass
The robes stick to me like the
second skin
My brown hair sprawled on
the grass

Semper Fidelis, you said
Semper Fidelis, you promised
Sweet nothings, I said; our
memories reminisced
Sweet nothings, my shatter
soul reminded

Pitter-patter sounds the rain
As it bathed the florets, new
and old
I chased you around,
mindlessly and in vain
Time and time, for you my
soul was nearly sold

Semper Fidelis, you said
Semper Fidelis, you said
again
You ill-fated, hell-hated
lewdster!!
With all eyes and no sight,
All it ever was, to be bound
by the game's meaningless
chains.



Source: Clicked by Abir Mallick

Artistic Freedom from NOA'S Perspective

Sohag Chatterjee, BA Sem 2

The blurring of boundaries between the real and virtual allows for new forms of artistic expression, where artists can create immersive narratives and transport the audience into their artistic vision.

Artistic freedom is a concept that is often discussed in the world of art. It is a fundamental aspect of a creative process. Artistic freedom is the very idea that artists should be free, or simply must have the right to create whatever they want, without any limitations or boundaries. It allows them to push the boundaries of what is considered traditional or acceptable in their chosen medium. Boundaries can be blurred through artistic freedom, it is neither fixed or permanent, nor made. They evolve through time and with time.

Artistic freedom allows artists to tap into their creativity in a more profound way and when they are free to create without boundaries, they are able to explore new ideas and techniques that they may not have otherwise considered. Embracing artistic freedom allows artists to express their true selves and their unique perspectives. This can lead to a greater sense of personal fulfillment and satisfaction, as they are able to create work that truly resonates with them.

Embracing artistic freedom can lead to a more diverse and dynamic artistic multiverse. When artists are free to create without limitations, they are able to explore a wider range of themes, styles and techniques. This can lead to a more vibrant and exciting art scene, with a greater range of perspectives and

ideas being represented.

Achinoam Nini, also known professionally as Noa, is an Israeli singer-songwriter, percussionist, poet, composer and human right activist.

Noa's artistic freedom is deeply rooted in her personal journey as an artist. Growing up in a family of musicians she was exposed to various forms of arts at a very young age, hence allowing her to develop unique perspective and a deep appreciation for creative expression. Noa's artistic freedom is characterized by her willingness to break boundaries. Throughout her career she has pushed boundaries and challenged societal norms. Noa has often challenged conventional notions of beauty, gender and identity. Through her thought provoking series she has shattered stereotypes and opened up important dialogues about social issues. For instance her controversial series, "Beyond the Binary" explores the fluidity of gender and challenges the binary construct that society often imposes. By pushing these boundaries, Noa encourages viewers to question their own preconceived notions and fosters a more inclusive and accepting society. Noa's dedication to artistic freedom empowers individuals to embrace their authentic selves without fear of judgment or rejection. Her boldness in expressing her own vulnerabilities and struggles through her artwork creates a safe space for others to do the same. By sharing personal stories and experiences through her art, Noa encourages viewers to confront their inner demons and find solace in self-expression

boldness in expressing her own vulnerabilities and struggles through her artwork creates a safe space for others to do the same. By sharing personal stories and experiences through her art, Noa encourages viewers to confront their inner demons and find solace in self-expression

Noa's art has the power to spark meaningful conversations and bridge gaps between different communities. Her ability to communicate complex ideas through visual imagery allows for a universal understanding that transcends language barriers. For example, her installation, "Voices Unheard" addresses the issue of systematic racism and prompts viewers to reflect on their own biases and prejudices.

One of the most significant influences on Noa's artistic journey was her willingness to embrace the unknown. She approached each new experience with an open mind, allowing herself to be shaped by unexpected encounters and serendipitous.

From a personal standpoint, artistic freedom allows artists to express their selves and without fear of judgement or criticism.



Source: A.I generated

Blood's Inheritance

Anwesha Goswami, BA Sem 4

Blood runs deep,
And is certainly thicker than water,
But does someone's ego outweigh
A mother's tears any better?
Does the love and nurture of childhood
Fade away later?
Will differentiating between a girl and
a boy
Portray them any greater?
Is really the blood
Any thicker than water?
So, the war was on,
And the son was gone.
Cold but against our own,
Nobody to rely on and moan;
The years old ancestry,
Was the topic of a mockery.
The pride that was inhabited;
Got everybody defeated;
"Oh! It's a misfortune!", everybody said,
But how could they let the
miseries fade?
The unbreakable love of mother and son,
Injustice to the dead and good was done.
What's the point of the story, you ask?
No happy ending and no unveiling of
mask,
It's not about proving a point you see,
It's the story of a family.
Hence, now as you see the fates leap,
The blood runs deep,
Is definitely thicker than water
The sooner you realise it, the better.



Source: Pinterest

Post Pandemic Career

Prospects in Media Research

Dr. Nitesh Tripathi, Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication

Summary- Media Research would gain prominence as an area of study in future as human beings would start integrating on a deeper level with the media technologies and platforms. In such scenario, their effects are going to amplify which would invite attention of intellectuals, academicians and researchers across the globe

About the Writer- Dr. Tripathi is an Assistant Professor in Department of Mass Communication, St. Xavier's University, Kolkata. He has completed his PhD in Journalism and Mass Communication from Banaras Hindu University. His areas of interest include-Media Psychology, New Media Studies and Audience Research. He has more than 30 research publications to his credit.

Keywords: Media Research?? Is that a Thing??? Yes!! This is the question every scientist, engineer or for that matter every person would ask who has not heard about Media Studies as a discipline of academics. The scientists think that they are the one who are making important contributions to the world and betterment of humanity (and winning Nobel Prize!). For them Einstein, Newton, Tesla, and Galileo are the ones who made this modern world possible. But you can't blame them entirely for this misperception. The field of biology, physics, and chemistry has immensely contributed to the development of human civilization. Be it Industrial revolution, invention of machines and other lifesaving or life enhancing technologies, or basic understanding of the universe- all has been possible due to these disciplines. The

very idea that media could be researched would make people frown as they think of media as just a form of entertainment. But media platforms and technologies have lots of impact on our society and hugely affects and modifies human behaviour. If you don't believe me, ask all the companies around the world that are spending billions on advertisements and their reception among the audience to know how people react after watching their ads.

Background and History of Media Research- Since beginning of the humanity, communication played a pivotal role in survival, expression of needs, emotions, and exchange of information. Then later need arose to communicate on a wider scale- be it in terms of expansion of trade or colonization process, or spreading of religion. This became possible due to the earlier forms of Print Media- scrolls, papyrus, and books such as The Bible. Later newspapers and journals came. They helped in increasing the awareness of the general public regarding social issues and in many countries sowed the seeds of revolution (Karl Marx's book-The Communist Manifesto that led to rise of Communism) or demand of independence from the Colonial rule. In the 20th century, newer type of mass media i.e., Radio, a form of Electronic Media came up which became a major source of news and also a tool of propaganda as governments used it to convince people to follow what they said. It was used even for spreading fake news (The War of the Worlds broadcast by Orson Welles).

Another addition to Electronic Media was the Television which

hooked the audience and made them addicted to its various programs. The television began to be called the "Idiot Box" due to zero value addition in terms of knowledge and information. It was felt that such content in turn made the heavy viewers of TV "idiot and dumb" and hence the term. Apart from this, the media researchers also grew concerned regarding impact of portrayal of violence on TV and its impact on the viewers. George Gerbner did research on this and gave Violence Index. Albert Bandura did Bobo Doll Experiment to demonstrate how children are getting affected by television viewing. He gave the concept of Social Learning Theory- i.e., people learn new behaviours by observing from the media. Even research of psychologist Alfred Kinsey changed the orthodox American society and brought Sexual revolution in media content in an era when Hay's Code (a form of self-censorship) was enforced to control depiction of sexual content in films. In the field of mass communication, next big thing came when both the power blocs

were at a Cold War and US feared a nuclear attack from USSR which led to invention of the Internet (and this later led to the Information Revolution). In today's media scene, the smartphones, Internet and the Social Media together known as the New Media, have become the platform for convergence and are causing big disruptions, revolutions, and significant changes in the world's order. And that is why they have become a hot topic for research among the Media Researchers.

Various dimensions of Media Research- Media research as a field has emerged due to combination of psychology, communication, management, marketing, anthropology, economics, and social science and hence its research is truly interdisciplinary in nature. communication, management, marketing, anthropology, economics, and social science and hence its research is truly interdisciplinary in nature. This helps in explaining lots of everyday phenomenon and solving



Social media

Source: Pinterest

issues or points of contention. Media Research encompasses efforts to gain knowledge about mass media audience or the media platform itself. There are innumerable dimensions and possibilities as far as Media Research is concerned. When the companies want to know the effectiveness of their ads so as to increase sales and revenue, they go for Advertising Research. In Public Relations, if there is a need to establish goodwill among the Internal and External Publics, research is needed to choose the right media for a particular public and also share the appropriate message/communication. If a particular Radio channel, newspaper organization, news website, or television channel wants to increase their popularity and drive readership/listenership/viewership, then also it becomes necessary to study the media and its viewers in depth. Media Psychology comes to the rescue when companies or media organizations want to understand the behaviour/attitude and needs of their audience/consumers. In Film industry, directors can win Oscar or Golden Globe Awards if they do extensive research on the story and the characters of their films (Look at films of Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, Christopher Nolan, Quentin Tarantino, and James Cameron which earn millions of dollars and have a huge fan following due to realistic portrayal). To add further, let me tell you that this is just the tip of the iceberg. Media Research can also be used to- manipulate people into buying an unnecessary product, influence voters to vote for a tyrant/corrupt leader, or create mass hysteria with just one lie. Even in general if we forget Media Research for a while, research is required to carry out various endeavours related to mass media. For instance, while pursuing Journalism, journalists need to be a good researcher if they want to unearth a scandal/scam or expose a corrupt/atrocious

politician or win a Pulitzer Prize (Yes!! Nobel Prize is not the only prominent award). Bofors Scam, Watergate Scandal, 2G Spectrum Scam, Coal Allocation Scam, and Boston Sex Abuse Scandal have all come to people's knowledge due to journalists who did in-depth research to uncover the truth.

Impact of Mass Media- Mass Media since its beginning has been used for both doing good or causing harm. Hitler used radio to spread his propaganda of Anti-Semitism and Nazi ideology among the common people which ensured his rise to power, created hate among general public against the Jews and pushed the humanity to a Second World War. On the other hand, people across various Middle East nations came together and used Social Media to raise their voice and create awareness regarding the autocratic rule that ultimately led to Arab Spring. Media is just as powerful as fire. If tamed and put to proper use, it can become a baton that would lead humanity to a better future. But if left unchecked/uncontrolled, it can become a wildfire and engulf entire humanity by causing chaos. If this seems an overstatement, then let me elaborate. Judicious use of mass media has created awareness among people regarding an issue /superstition /taboo, empowered several sections of society that were earlier excluded from mainstream development, helped in raising voice against injustice, and saved many lives through health communication.

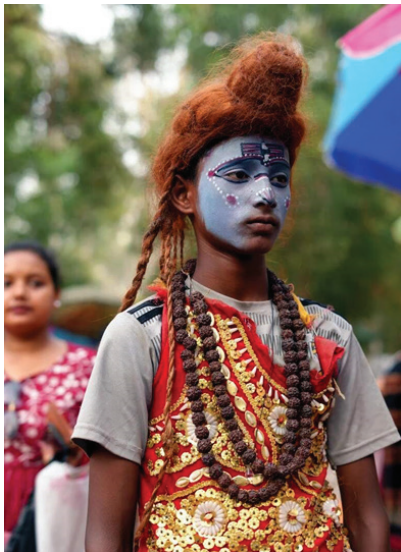
But there is another side of media which is ugly. Circulation of WhatsApp message causing a riot or incident of mob lynching, Sharing of Social Media posts leading to mass hysteria or mass hoarding of certain items, or one tweet of an influential personality (Elon Musk off course!!) leads to freefall of stocks of a particular company in the share market are few instances that prove the

widespread harm that media can cause. Presently we inhabit a world where one post sends the whole world into frenzy, online trolling pushes a person into depression and sometimes even suicide, one fumble and the celebrity becomes a meme, Fake News spirals into loss of lives, billions of dollars are lost due to cybercrimes, and trivial hashtags and challenges make people risk their lives in order to earn few likes. The world has become very unpredictable and its unpredictability could be attributed to the virality of a message that gets blown out of proportion and leads to unintended yet disastrous consequences. Only Media Research can help in understanding such chaos and come up with possible solutions.

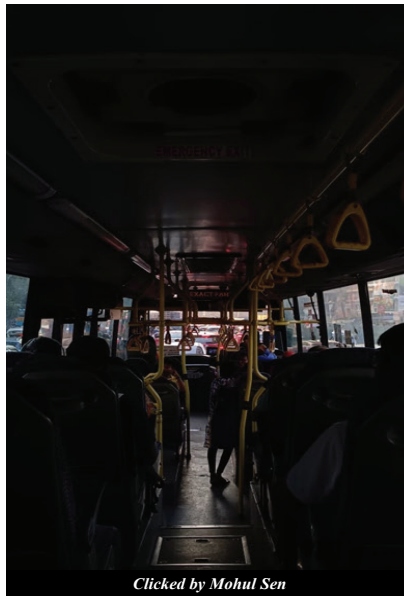
Importance of Media Research-

Today we all are living in an Alvin Toffler's third wave Post Industrial world (the first wave being Agricultural Revolution and Second wave being Industrial Revolution) which is also known as Information Age. But this Information Age has come along with Too Much Information (TMC) and misinformation also. The struggle in present times is to differentiate between- fake and real, truth and lie, and virtual and real. As artificial intelligence makes virtual much more real than reality itself and morphed content looks much more believable, there is a need to learn and spot the difference between them and also understand implications of this in real life. That is why today, meaning of literacy is not just limited to reading of books but also includes media and technological literacy so that you do not easily fall prey to cyber fraud or fake content. As media amplifies messages and effects, we need to study it so as to come up with strategies to contain it and cope up with it. Various concerns have cropped up recently such as- pervasive use of media technologies, people

of all age especially children getting addicted to Social Media and their digital devices, mindless and blind copying of online trends among teenagers and youths, and psychologists confirming Nomophobia and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) as real phenomenon affecting many. These are some of the burning issues of today which were not present few decades earlier. They are very pertinent and need immediate answers and solution. Questions such as- "Why netizens follow every trend blindly?" "Who is a troll?" "Why fake news becomes viral?" "Why people believe whatever they read online?" can be answered only through media research. Media Research helps in- understanding mass media better, identifying and understanding negative effects of mass media technologies/platforms, and developing media literacy content. Media has the potential to bring another Arab Spring and can unite people for a common cause in a world full of diverse opinions. And so, there is a dire need to investigate the nature of mass media along with studying the audience in depth in order to understand its impact. Now tell me don't you feel media research is necessary? Research is an effort that requires lots of human power and hence "the more, the merrier". I urge students who have inclination towards research to join this interesting and very much relevant field. To conclude I would like to end with a quote (with a twist) that I read somewhere which goes like this- Science tells how to clone a dinosaur but Social Science tells why it's a bad idea... To this I would add "and Media can manipulate you into thinking back that it's a good idea!!!".



Clicked by Debarpita Ghosh



Clicked by Mohul Sen

Ethereal Moments



Clicked by Ritabrata Bhamdary



Clicked by Soumil Ghosrjh



Clicked by Shalmoli Ghosh



Clicked by Sohini Das

Achievements

Disha Roy: Our newest sensation in SXUK, she is making her Bollywood debut alongside Sonu Sood & Jacqueline Fernandes in the film Fateh that is to have a theatrical release later this year. A pride of our institution, she has pursued modelling since a long time along with holding a wonderful academic re-



Disha Roy, BA Sem 4

cord. She's the epitome of "the sky is the limit"

Mohul Sen & Eshita Shukla: From formulating business strategies, emergency PR moves & marketing unique products, they took the competition head-on bagging the second position in "Silent Cities: A PR & Marketing Event" in X-Verse 2024. With a



Mohul Sen and Eshita Shukla, BA Sem 4

knack for rapid problem solving & Quirky methods to solve problems, this team flourished at what they do best.

Debdyuti Sarkar: Managing an event is no small feat, but this bright lady right here has made it possible with her sharp management skills and quick-wit. With sharp precision & a wonderful presence of mind, her wits have given the other



Debdyuti Sarkar, BA Sem 4

competitors a run for their money leading her to bag the second position in "Unregimented Paladins: A Best Manager Event" in X-Verse 2024.

Swastika Roy: Photographs capture memories to make them stay forever & this lady right here won the second place in "Mosaic: A Photography Event" at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. The magic captured by her lens enraptured the judges. With a splash of magic & life in her photograph, she has done a commendable job.



Swastika Roy, BA Sem 2

Debarpita Ghosh: Filmmakers are the ultimate dreamers. They dream worlds into the screen and this lady right here took the first step towards creating a trailer projecting our surroundings, making us proud by winning the 2nd position in Eutopia'24- The Literary Fest of UEM. Donned in passion and creativity, she has won the hearts of all the film stars.



Debarpita Ghosh, BA Sem 5

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