

## Press Note:

### Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 – Day 5

**Event:** Book Launch of Laura McPhee’s ‘The Home and the World – A View of Calcutta’ followed by a discussion with Kalyan Roy, Joanne Joria and Madhurima Sinha

**Kolkata, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2015:** Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 hosted the special book launch of photographer Laura McPhee’s *‘The Home and the World – A View of Calcutta’*, which captures and distills the remnants of the colonial Calcutta in her photographs of the contemporary city. The author was in an engaging conversation with **Kalyan Roy**, Professor of English in New Jersey on sharing her experience and insights of capturing the city of joy through the lenses of her camera. The book was launched by Chief Guest, **Joanne Joria**, Director American Center, Kolkata. The opening comments and moderation was done by **Modhurima Sinha**.

This exquisitely produced book features a selection of McPhee’s works made in and around India’s former capital. Her camera has captured some extraordinary domestic architecture (particularly the 18th and 19th century houses of the zamindars of North Kolkata) and tells the story of past and present, of the evolution from colony to independence and beyond. It gives a glimpse of courtyards, living spaces, temples, and altars as both vestiges of the past and elements of contemporary urban existence. McPhee’s images sensitively penetrate the surface to show the blurred boundaries between social classes, the blending of public and private life, and the resonance between India and other parts of the world.

#### **About the author:**

**Laura McPhee:** Laura McPhee is an American photographer. McPhee considers her lifework is to "look at and understand the language of a place". Her work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Getty Center, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among many others. McPhee is a Professor of Photography at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design where she joined the faculty in 1986.

#### **About the Panelists:**

**Kalyan Roy:** Kalyan Ray is currently a Professor of English in New Jersey. His poems and translations have appeared at the US and India; some have been anthologized. His novel

Eastwords was adopted by several universities and colleges in Asia and the US as a text in courses on Post-Colonial literature. His new novel No Country is about the Irish and Indian diaspora. He has published several books of translations of contemporary Indian poetry into English, including City of Memories, which has a Preface by Allen Ginsberg, and Emperor Babur's Prayers and Other Poems by Sankha Ghosh.

### **About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF 2015):**

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) is Kolkata's pioneering literary festival. Instituted in 2010 by the Apeejay Surrendra Group and its heritage Oxford Bookstore on Park Street, AKLF grows out of the bookstore's round involvement with books, writers & publishers. In the six years since Kolkata saw her first literary festival in AKLF, literary festivals have mushroomed across the country, but AKLF stands apart with its unique identity as the only one with a now 94-year-old bookstore as its nucleus. AKLF offers an atmosphere of warm, welcoming intimacy, favors depth over size, and includes a variety of subjects from history to the environment. AKLF also celebrates Kolkata's magnificent public monuments and heritage sites as settings for Festival events and eminent literati and cultural stalwarts from across India and overseas join the festival scheduled every year in the second week of January. In 2015 AKLF explores literature as part of our tangible and intangible heritage, a theme that runs through several sessions of the festival. AKLF focuses on younger writers, newer voices and fresh audiences in its ongoing attempt to build an audience for books and reading. Prominent personalities attending will be Hanif Kureishi, Naseeruddin Shah, Charles Allen, John Elliott, Mohammed Hanif, Leila Seth, Michael Buckley, Upamanyu Chatterjee, David Davidar, Shekhar Gupta, Shashi Tharoor, Asish Nandy, Ramachandra Guha, Kishwar Desai, Nabaneeta Dev Sen amongst several others. There are some firsts in AKLF 2015. A heritage literary walk, a literary 'adda', a Young Adult lit fest for high school students, a bloggers' meet, a children's book fest crammed with activities, even a standup comic for the college crowd and a leadership training session for young teens on importance of character, karma and Individual Social Responsibility™. Add to that our signature heritage site evenings at The Indian Museum, National Library, Victoria Memorial, Lascar War Memorial, in-depth discussions, top of the line authors, thinkers and performers, and you have a literary experience not to be missed. And all absolutely free for Kolkata and her culture-loving audience.

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