

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival presents 'Is Kolkata still the cultural capital? A Debate

Kolkata, 13th January, 2013: Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2013 on its closing day hosted an afternoon literary session along the eastern bank of the Hooghly on the grounds of the majestic Lascar War Memorial. The majestic monument was witness to special readings by novelist Sreemoyee Piu Kundu and well known translators Chitrlekha Basu and Arunava Sinha on the city of Kolkata and culture. The comprehension was followed by a gripping debate on Kolkata as the cultural capital by a panel of renowned personalities featuring writer and filmmaker Ruchir Joshi, filmmaker Q, journalists Antara Dev Sen, curator Prateek Raja, social activist Ratnaboli Roy and singer-composer Neel Adhikari.

Presented in association with Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (INTACH), the debate highlighted the rising questions on the changing culture of the youth of Kolkata, the future face of the city and its fading rich heritage. The four sided Lascar memorial erected in the memory of the 896 Indian seamen who lost their lives in the great World War I added a very special appeal and flourish as the venue.

About the panelists:

Antara Dev Sen

Antara Dev Sen is a journalist born in Kolkata, the first daughter of Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen and writer Nabaneeta Dev Sen. As a senior editor of Hindustan Times; she went to Oxford University on a fellowship from the Reuters Foundation. On her return to Delhi, she started **The Little Magazine** as its founding editor. The magazine predominantly publishes articles on literary themes relating to South Asia. She has also written **India, The Eternal Magic**.

Ruchir Joshi

Ruchir Joshi is a writer, filmmaker, photographer and columnist for The Telegraph, India Today as well as other publications. He is best known for his debut novel titled **The Last Jet-Engine Laugh** (2001). He is also the editor of India's first anthology of contemporary erotica **Electric Feather: The Tranquebar Book of Erotic Stories**.

Neel Adhikari

Neel Adhikari is a popular Kolkata based musician and music composer who gave up a promising advertising career to pursue a career in music full time. Neel and Steve Chandra Savale of Asian Dub Foundation are working together for a song in Q's new film "Tasher Desh".

Q

"It arrived in the form of words, out of anger, and a sense of desperation and hopelessness," says Q about the inception of his provocative break-out feature film **Gandu**, a story of disaffected youth spiced with petty crime, angry rap music and explicit sex. A French cultural magazine, Les Inrocks, calls the film "anti-Bollywood par excellence." Q - whose real name is Kaushik Mukherjee -- might be the first to prove that it is possible to make profitable movies while operating entirely outside the confines of the film industry.

Prateek Raja

Prateek Raja is a gallerist. Along with his wife Priyanka, he set up Experimenter, a young gallery which launched its programme in April 2009. The genesis of Experimenter lay in the urge to exhibit the challenging work of artists who are constantly pushing the boundaries of their practice. Prateek has curated shows and is actively involved with arts practice and theory in India.

Ratnaboli Roy

A trained psychologist and mental health activist, Ratnaboli Ray is working to transform India's state mental institutions, which are little more than holding cells, into centres of modern, high quality professional care. She also wants to create a system for reintegrating released patients into their home communities. She has worked in poor neighborhoods to create a positive image of people with mental illness. Ray was elected to the Ashoka Fellowship in 1999 for her work.

About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) 2013:

A Community initiative by the Apeejay Surrendra Group, the annual literary festival hosted since 2010 in Kolkata is the first international literary festival in Kolkata, a city celebrated for its intellectual depth and cultural heritage. An array of special curated discussions, performances and some of the finest literary events are scheduled for the fourth edition from 9th- 13th January, 2013. A noteworthy literary and cultural representation from across India and overseas will be seen at the Festival, amongst the finest minds from India and overseas. Prominent personalities attending will be Ramachandra Guha, William Dalrymple, Shyam Benegal, Pavan Varma, Yasmin Ali Bhai Brown, Amit Chaudhuri, Leila Seth, Manil Suri, Ruchir Joshi, Onir, Urvashi Butalia, Shobhaa De and Tishani Doshi and several others. Events are scheduled at significant cultural and heritage venues across Kolkata like National Library, St John's Church, banks of Hooghly, Lascar Monument, and at India's finest and most loved 92 year old iconic bookstore- Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata. Amongst the many highlights is Festival's collaboration with the Tibor-Jones South Asia Prize to recognize and encourage new and emerging writers in the South Asian region.

For event videos & pictures Log On to <http://www.aklf.in/>

For media related information, please contact: Perfect Relations
Priyanka 9830369257 | Ranita 9836288008 | Aditi 9038735705