

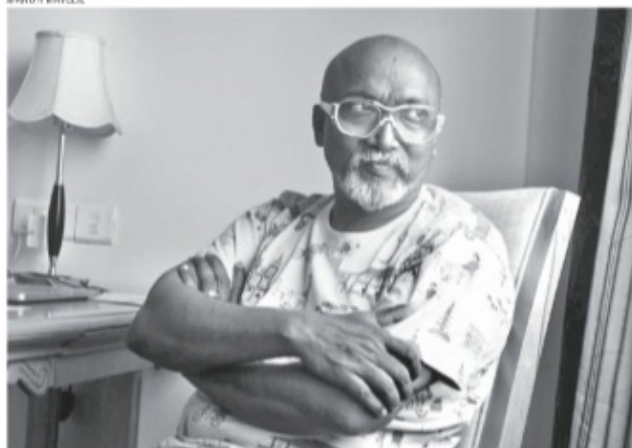
YEAR-END SPECIAL

2019 20 The Culture Power List

The definitive annual list of the most influential figures in Indian cultural is here. Through their work and philosophy, these men, women and a child have impacted the way India perceives and experiences art, crafts, dance, music, literature and fashion. Many achievers are absent in this list simply because the judges chose only pathfinders who made landmark contributions this year. Therefore you will not find Bharti Kher or Amitabh Bachchan, but will read about Kiran Nadar and Rohit Bal. Many of them are perennial forces such as writers Amish and Amitav Ghosh, while new faces like Vivian Fernandes and Lydian Nadhaswaram stand for changing India in contemporary times. Yet what unites them all is a common passion and commitment towards native cultures, revival, osmosis between then and now and universal empathy for the marginalised. And some political pizzazz too.

ART & CRAFT | LITERATURE | PERFORMING ARTS | DESIGN | FASHION | ENTERTAINMENT

MANU MAVILA



BOSE ARTACHARYA KRISHNAMACHARI

Because as the founder president of Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB), he made art a common experience from an elitist financial asset—more than six lakh people visited the exhibition last year. He is responsible for putting Kochi on the world map with KMB—last year he was made a director on the board of the International Biennale Association (IBA), a global body of organisers of such art festivals. The importance of being Bose Krishnamachari was evident in his inclusion in the powerful art magazine *ArtReview*'s '2019 Power 100' list that features the year's most influential people in the global contemporary art world. The end of the year saw the independent artist and curator come back with a solo exhibition after a gap of nine long years, named *The Mirror Sees Best in the Dark*. It was his only project following his mobile museum project, *LaVa* (Laboratory of Visual Arts) held between 2006-2011. Like many successful artists, Bose is an experimentalist which makes him a power player on the art scene. At Gallery Espace's newest exhibition, *10 Chairs*, Bose and artist-designer Alex Davis pooled their minds to create a chair described in Braille on canvas. At the Kochi Design Week held from December 12 to 14, Bose was tasked with creating art walls in the city. "Art is life, it gives you freedom. It's like a healing balm. It makes you aware of who you are," is his mantra.

CHILDHOOD AMBITION
To be a doctor

BELIEF
When you create art, you create your own philosophy

COMPLAINT
India has a severe shortage of art museums

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THE KURAN
MAGAZINE2019
20The
Culture
Power
LIST

ART & CRAFT

NISHANT
THE LINE MAN
SALDANHA

Because he is the first Indian artist to have brought illustration public recognition as an art form. A jury of Sudarshan Shetty, Dayanita Singh and Mario D'Souza awarded Saldanha an Artist's Grant at Goa's Seventy Arts Festival 2018. His work was part of the show, 'Turns, Metaphor, Memory', held in old Goa. Saldanha also features in the annual Best American Comics' 2019 edition—a much-coveted spot for an illustrator. The icing on the cake was the request by the famous illustrator Jillian Tamaki to design the end pages of the book as well. And he did it with 'Mr Good Guy', his villainous creation in an artistic exploration of the forces of good and evil, the staple core of all comics stories. The impact of these recognitions goes beyond honouring a young artist; it establishes graphic illustration as an accepted genre in publishing. The training he received from Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design (London), and the School of Film/Video at California Institute of the Arts (Los Angeles) has given the young Goa artist the advantage of applying contemporary thought processes and artistic techniques. His work will now be seen at the 'artist-driven' Goa Open Arts Festival in mid-February—a new multi-arts festival that focuses on community building, local impact and awareness about social issues in the state.

FUN FACT
Meets fountain pen and Photo-shop

KNOWN FOR
• Mr Good Guy, the villainous protagonist of his comic
• Illustration style mixes hand-etched and digital

EXPERIMENTS
• Matisse-style paper cutouts



INSTAGRAM

JEAN-FRANÇOIS
THE DELICATE THREAD
LESAGE

Master embroiderer Jean-François Lesage this year brought together 30 brands and eight galleries at the art and design fair, Le Cabinet de Curiosités. Inspired by the pre-modern museums of the 16th century, the fair had embroidered rooms and contemporary design, promising an immersive experience. One of such rooms took inspiration from the 19th-century Kandala House near Chennai that he owns. The son of the legendary French haute couture embroiderer François Lesage, he decided to look beyond the comfort of his home brand and establish his own embroidery unit. In the late 1980s, a young Lesage arrived in India on a spiritual quest. Hearing its call, he found himself as a 19-year-old explorer in a dingy Varanasi neighbourhood where traditional embroidery kasargars lived. Enamoured of their skills, he returned in 1992, but this time with the intention of establishing an embroidery atelier, independent of the famed House of Lesage. The result was Vastrakala, which produces exquisitely embroidered home products for different parts of the world. His French sensibilities compliment Indian craftsmanship at Vastrakala. He is today one of the most sought-after experts with the talent to create pieces that pay homage to the combination of French sophistication and exotic Indian crafts.

FUN FACT
• Collaborated with Christian Louboutin on the iconic shoe, Naughty Queen Mary Antoinette, in 2009, of which only 36 pairs were made
• His Chennai home has eight dogs, a cockatoo, all kinds of chickens, fishes, turtles and exotic birds

KNOWN FOR
• Desire to look beyond ordinary norms of correctness
• A stickler for context
• Envisable art and design collection

TOP PROJECTS
• Restoration of Louis XIV's crown for the Louvre
• Making draperies for Rashtrapati Bhawan
• Embroidering the king's bedroom at Versailles

BELIEF
Embroidery is a universal language and Indian artists have the expertise to take on giant projects head-on

LAILA
CRAFTY LADY
TYABJI

Because her vast experience as the country's most eminent craft activist is helping young Kashmiri Jewell workers into entrepreneurs: as was the vision of the late Gandhinagar economist LC Tyabji who wanted to 'do something for the youth of Kashmir who were becoming stone peddlers'. This year, she introduced 'Kashmiriart' to the South with an exhibition at Bengaluru. Tyabji is one of the founders of Dastkar, a Delhi-based non-governmental organisation working for the revival of traditional crafts in India, and has been at its helm for almost four decades now. She is the driving force behind Dastkar's Narmada Festival held across India; this year at Nature 2018, craftpeople showed over a 100 different skills and traditions using indigenous technologies, natural colours, motifs, and materials. From working with Chikan workers of SEWA Lucknow, Lambani tribals in Karnataka, Art, mirror-work and Kantha craftspeople in Kashmir, Kutch and Bengal, this Padma Shri awardee has helped resuscitate the second largest sector of India's economy: handicrafts. In 2016-17, her Sati Diary initiative on social media celebrated the six years of elegance like nothing else before it. Tyabji embodies a post India—a self-confessed Lurpene Dehli who is equally at ease in a Delhi drawing room as at an artisan's hut in Gujarat. This dozen of the crafts, who was born a few months shy of being a Midnight's Child, studied art in Berdoo and Japan, and worked as a freelance designer in textiles, graphics, interiors and the theatre. Dastkar holds one exhibition each year; the quality of the products has only been on the rise since its inception. She is the founding trustee of 'Commitment to Kashmir or CtoK', started in 2012. Under her guidance, and despite the recent crisis in Kashmir, she has managed to build her crafts base from five craftsmen to over 20 now.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Her parents helped create the design and emblem of the Tricolour
- Can ride a motorbike
- Needs 10 minutes to get ready
- Gives away 10-15 saris a year
- Crafts and embroiders her own handbags

NOW HER MOMENT

Came to Bombay in 1949 from Belgum, where her father was India's first ambassador. She spoke only French but switched to English to avoid jokes at school.

WARDROBE FUNCTION

Pharans, ankalis and long kurtas with Lambani, Kutchi and Chikan embroidery done by herself

ADWAITA
PPP PROGRAMMER
GADANAYAK

Because he leveraged his position as the government's custodian of Indian Art through public-private partnership (PPP) at the Venice Biennale to bring the Indian story on the world stage. At the Biennale, the Indian pavilion's theme was Gandhi whose 150th birth anniversary was celebrated through the works of artists who worked with the Mahatma such as Nandalal Bose. Gadanayak wants to accelerate PPP in Indian art like at Tate and MoMA. The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) held an exhibition of Biju-Varma's work in South Korea and China. His aim is to bring out all the old works languishing in the dusty storerooms for public viewing; almost 80 percent of the NGMA's collection had never been exhibited. Now it's around 30 percent. The director is trying to familiarise art to the public starting at the school level. Since his mandate is to promote art education, the NGMA regularly invites art teachers from various colleges to explain their challenges. Next on the agenda is to educate government school principals on the importance of art education in schools, for which he is ready to offer support. The NGMA plans to invest in skill training with studios for printmaking and ceramics for the first time. Keeping in mind the Modi government's focus on the Northeast, Gadanayak is currently looking at NE artists to exhibit at the NGMA, which will soon open a branch in Tripura in co-operation with the state government. He designed the granite sculpture at the National Police Memorial in Delhi. The evolution of the Jaipur House in Delhi which houses the NGMA was completed on his watch. The Centre showed its appreciation for the dedication of Gadanayak, the gallery's first Director-General to be given a three-year extension.

PHILOSOPHY
Art is not just for artists. It is also for the people.

REVELATION
There are male and female stones. Female stone is used to make sculptures of the male form since women are stronger, and the other way around for female sculptures, which boast detailed embellishment

QUIRK
Mother's Nature worship led to his passion for stone sculpture

CAPITAL CLAIM
Designed the granite sculpture at the National Police Memorial

EMBARRASSING MOMENT
Amal Patekar's demand to disband NGMA's advisory committee was shouted down at an official meeting



NALINI MALANI

SHERO OF THE CANVAS

INFLUENCE
The Partition of India, which planted the crisis of displacement in her art

LAUNCHPAD
For 25 years, she worked out of a studio in Mumbai's Lohar Chawl, which later became her reuse

WHAT NEXT
Exhibition in Spain in 2020 at the Miro Foundation

ART SPEAK
• Her works are politically charged
• They often explore themes of violence and loss
• It employs strong focus on women, the marginalised, the displaced and the powerless in society

Because she is the first art activist who brought Indian women painters into the limelight as serious voices on their own. This year, the Mumbai-based Malani became the first Indian artist to be awarded the annual Joan Miró Prize, which is given to a contemporary artist whose works deal with themes similar to those of the Spanish Surrealist. Her international standing has made her a force in raising awareness about the negatives of the nationalist narrative sweeping the world. She feels an individual must take responsibility for the collective. Malani is acknowledged for her 'long-standing commitment to the silenced and the dispossessed'. Her family moved to India when she was only a year old after Partition. Malani has worked across genres—wall drawing, installation and shadow play, multi-projection works and theatre. She made her debut in the world of art at a time when very few women artists were being talked about. Her art feminism came to the fore after participating in a group show called 'Through the Looking Glass', which focused solely on women artists in 1979. The group subsequently organised five more shows from 1987 to 1988. Her works, some dating back to 1960s, retain the fierceness and rawness which is as relevant to today's conflict-driven world as it was before.



KIRAN NADAR

GENEROUS COLLECTOR

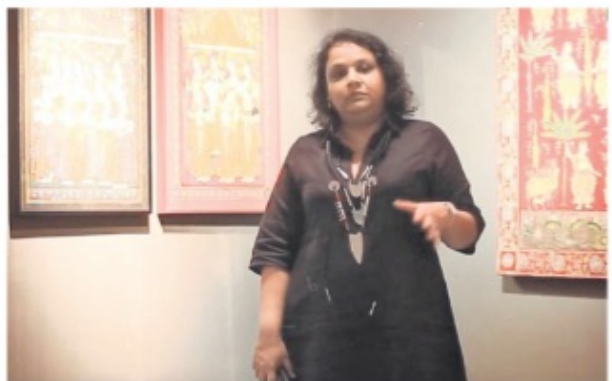
Because she promotes the new museum going culture among the Indian public by establishing India's first private Museum of art, which exhibits modern and contemporary art from India and the subcontinent. The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) gets around 10,000 visitors every year. This year, the KNMA opened the art season by exhibiting 'Common Course', a collection of 500 artworks, and few loans from artists and artists' estates—a humorous record of caricatures, satire, poetry and political commentaries of four modern artists. The gallery held a special exhibition of 250 architectural projects of well-known structural designer Mahendra Raj to expose visitors to new construction materials, novel patterns and textures, and low-cost materials. Nadar started the KNMA with her own impressive personal collection on display; she owns more than 5,500 pieces of modern South Asian art. To educate the public, the KNMA invites accomplished artists to teach both adults and children about art curation, students workshops, art appreciation courses and symposiums explaining new art forms and techniques. The non-commercial, not-for-profit gallery's curated art walks have helped bridge the understanding gap between artists and the public.



PRAMOD KUMAR KG

SERENDIPITOUS CURATOR

Because as the curator of this year's Serendipity Arts Festival, India's first multi-disciplinary art festival, Pramod Kumar KG has brought together Indian traditional disciplines from food to textiles as affordable products. He is the managing director of Eka Cultural Resources & Research, India's only museum consulting company and the founder-director of the Anokhi Museum of Hand Printing at Jaipur. Passionate about age-old Indian textiles and their revival, Pramod will examine the creation and making of Bengal's famous Jamdani fabric at this year's Serendipity Arts Festival. Jamdani, before finding its way to Serendipity this year, has been enjoying a revival mostly thanks to his efforts; it is famous for both its cotton version and saris. Anokhi Museum of Hand Printing collaborates with individuals and institutions to manage and organise their cultural resources and commitments. Set up in 2006 to address the growing need for a professional organisation within the culture and heritage industry, Eka aims at providing expert services that add quality and excellence. Pramod has been creating content with tailored solutions for a diverse range of cultural activities, including the promotion of cultural tourism in India with focus on indigenous work and the performing arts.



POOJA SINGHAL

IN KRISHNA'S SERVICE

Because she single-handedly revived the dying Pichwai art by giving it contemporary language without compromising on the traditional vocabulary of the craft. Singhal exhibited almost 50 works this year celebrating the revival of the 400-year-old art form, which translates Lord Krishna's life stories into wall hangings. Pichwai celebrates the deity Shrinathji, an avatar of Lord Krishna who is believed to be present at the Haveli of Nathdwara, Rajasthan. Born and brought up in Udaipur, Singhal is no stranger to Pichwai. When she started researching its history, she realised that the art was dwindling both in quality and quantity. This led to the launch of Pichwai Tradition & Beyond, which showed over 400 contemporary Pichwai pieces at the Delhi Art Fair this year. Singhal believes the best time for traditional art in India is now, because it has become aspirational for the new urban collectors. She understands that while the older generation grew up on Pichwai, the younger generation craves contemporary spinoffs. Her success lies in bridging the generation gap in Pichwai appreciation by balancing the rules of revival, survival, commerce, creativity and mass.

PAID ON THE BACK
Named in Forbes' annual list of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women 2019

LOVES
17th century Indian miniatures

SOBRIQUET
Maharaja of the Indian art world

OWNS
Over 5,500 pieces by modern South Asian artists

DID YOU KNOW?
She is a top bridge player who represented India in many world championships. Last year, she and her team won the Gold at the Commonwealth Bridge Games in Australia and a Bronze at the Jakarta Palembang 2018 Asian Games.

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THE GLOBAL
MAGAZINE

2019
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Culture
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LIST

ART & CRAFT

CULTURE FACTOID
Was the first director of the Jaipur Literature Festival and has authored Posing for Posters: Royal Indian Portraits

GOAL
Identify and create key linkages to boost cultural activity

PORTFOLIOS
• Co-director of Mountain Echoes, the Bhutan Literature Festival
• Was editor, India, of the Textiles Asia journal

DAKU

INDIA'S BANKSY

Because he is the anonymous rebel who uses graffiti art to expose partisan values. Though he is one of India's most prolific street/graffiti artists, Daku has successfully remained faceless in his decade-long career. "Once the world knows who Banksy is the GAME is OVER!" is his tribute to the provocative 1970s British street artist who never revealed his real name. Under the outline moniker, Daku hopes to take over and re-purpose public spaces to spread his message in English, Devanagari and Urdu. This year at the Hyderabad Design Week, his question mark installation made with three lakh upcycled plastic bottles salvaged single-use plastic waste in Hussain Sagar lake. In his early years, Daku was nabbed by the police for spray painting public walls. From then on, he has kept his identity a secret. His art is intensely political; during the Anna Hazare agitation, he drew 'Blind Nation' which showed a blindfolded protester who did not understand what the Lokpal Bill was about. Another time he punned on his own name by drawing a Louis Vuitton bag on a wall beside a garbage dump which he titled Audo (garbage).

RELIEF
• Traditional art must reinvent itself and appeal to the younger generation
• It is not necessarily only for traditional homes

HIGH POINT
Presented India's largest Pichwai exhibit (with over 400 works) in Mumbai

GOAL
Creating a business model to sustain Pichwai

WILL NOT
Work on metro stations because it is a symbol of modern progress

WHY THE NAME
Like traditional 'dakus' robbing villages, graffiti artists 'rob walls' without permission to 'own' the space by turning them into public spaces

STARTED OFF AS
A sign painter in Gujarat, who studied typography in Art College later

GOPS
Cops caught him and his five-member team painting walls and fined them ₹50,000 each. They got off with ₹1,000 after much negotiation.



Contributed by Madhu Datta Yadav

SUNDAY | DECEMBER 29, 2019

AMITAV GHOSH

LITERARY HISTORIAN

Because he is the daring literary explorer of India's uncharted and lost frontiers. One of the country's most celebrated writers in English, Ghosh made history as the youngest and only Indian English writer to get the Jnanpith Award—India's highest literary honour. His *Bos* trilogy, which deals with the opium trade between colonial India, Britain and China is being adapted by Shikhar Kapur as a tele series. The low-key Ghosh, along with Salman Rushdie and Jhumpa Lahiri, was one of 300 signatories of the PEN America statement requesting the Modi government to reverse its decision, revoking the Overseas Citizens of India status of writer Arundhati Roy, who had authored a lead story in *Time* magazine calling Modi 'India's divider in chief'. Fifteen books down the line, his recent novel, *Gun Island*, which deals with climate change and human migration, landed in bookstores this year. Born in 1956 in Kolkata, Ghosh studied at Doon School in Dehradun with Ramachandra Guha, Vikram Seth and Karan Thapar for contemporaries. His work largely examines the diaspora, displacement and our complex relationship with identity. Though Ghosh writes in English, he constantly draws from the vast imaginative resources in Bengali literature. The Padma Shri winner is a powerful social media force in creating awareness that the Earth is hitting back at us; very hard for man's transgressions.

HUMBLEBEE
Lived in the servant quarters of a Defence Colony (Delhi) house

GUILTY PLEASURE
Gourmet cooking

LIT WEAPON
Wrote first two books on a small typewriter

SIMILARITIES
The Sunderbans and Venetian lagoons

VANITY
A Van Dyke beard

APT DESCRIPTION
"He is a sailor among novelists."
Gopalendra Gandhi

SHAMIN QURISHY



ARUNDHATI ROY

DISSIDENT DIVA



Because her persistence in being a perennial nuisance to the powers-that-be makes her the best-known champion of lost causes, loved by the Western liberal media. Born Susama Arundhati Roy, she won the Man Booker Prize in 1997 for her debut novel *The God of Small Things*. This year she published a collection of essays titled *My Seditious Heart*, which protests the authoritarian system's control over creativity, intellectual freedom and self-belief. *The Doctor and the Saviour* arrived in bookstores this year too. Roy is the standard against which what-the-patriotic-Indian-must-not-do can be measured; she would eloquently against the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir. Some of her passions hover near the pale border of idiosyncrasy—she is an intellectual for all seasons and subjects. Love her, hate her but you can't ignore her. Roy's public stances on nuclear weapons, globalisation, neo-imperialism, environment crisis, support for Kashmiri separatism, criticism of the Narendra Modi-led government have made her controversy's favourite child. She had addition charges filed against her, too. Roy said in an interview that she has issues with the word 'activist' and for her, writing encompasses everything.

GAMUT GIRL
Full-time writer, baked and sold cakes in Goa, aerobics instructor, artist, and actor

INFLUENCER
The God of Small Things is part of curriculum at various colleges and universities

FAVOURITE BEATLE
John Lennon

PAWSOME MOMENTS
Owens two dogs, both strays she rescued

GROUSE
Returned National Award for Best Screenplay in protest against social and religious intolerance in India

THE LEGEND

DEVDUIT PATTANAİK

Because he makes the scriptures and legends accessible to the ordinary man. In 2018, the speaker, illustrator and author partnered with American yoga teacher Matthew Rulli to write his latest book, *Yoga Mythology: 64 Asanas and Their Stories*, with the disclaimer that "this is not a book on the practice of yoga" and "uses various yoga postures as inspiration to leap into the world of Hindu mythology with occasional detours into Jain and Buddhist mythology". All the five books of his were this year's bestsellers. Through comic books, talks, television series and columns, he is credited with giving the New Age reader bite-sized doses of mythology. Pattanaik believes that his medical background enabled him to stay engaged and analytical, and separate the root cause from symptoms while explaining the stories. He believes that the biggest challenge is to change people's conventional views on Hinduism, since most Indians follow the colonial version of Hindu mythology. Unperturbed by bouquets and brickbats, he claims, "writing clears my thoughts, refines my ideas, makes me calm and focused". Pattanaik, with over seven lakh Twitter followers, was anything but calm recently. In a social media meltdown, he called a woman who disagreed with him: "Chup chusai, Jai Shree Sat. Lomha mirchi band hue EYE!" Not funny at all.



FUNNIEST MYTHOLOGICAL TALE
That God is male

BEST ADVICE
Write for passion, fame and limelight

TOUGH NUT TO CRACK
Chinese mythology

MYTHOLOGY IS
•One god equals intolerance
•No god equals nihilism
•Many gods equal pluralism

WRITE TRICK
Claims and organizes his cupboards to tackle writer's block

WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

NEW WHITE MOGHUL

Because he is the most powerful Indian literary figure along with Namita Gokhale at the helm of the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) they founded along with Sanjay Ray. Since 2006, he is the JLF director. Authors crave to cultivate him and publishers would love to have him on their lists. The journalist-turned-historian has made a career out of British India even more than Clive. At the lower end of this year, the bookstores were packed with *The Anarchy: The East India Company, Corporate Violence and the Pillage of an Empire*, his latest milk product of the genre which was hailed by critics and readers as another seminal work in the oeuvre. In December, he curated in London the "Wallace Collection for Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company", comprising 100 works of Company Painting commissioned by the East India Company to Indian artists to portray the firm, fauna and scenes of 18th and 19th century India. His muse is where he has parked himself for over three decades—New Delhi, with a sprawling farmhouse he owns on the outskirts of the city. This year, he showed that he was not just a writer but a photographer as well. Vadehra Art Gallery put on show "The Historian's Eye", an exhibition of black and white photographs which chronicles the people and places he met and saw in the two years spent researching *The Anarchy*. It includes a small selection of photographs of modern-day Pakistan. While many historians question the authenticity and veracity of the information in his books, they have grudgingly admitted that it is Dalrymple who made Indian history colourful, easy and accessible to the youth and to the West without distorting facts beyond recognition.

FAVOURITE DELHI HANGOUTS
Mezrauli Archaeological Park, a circuit around the Jama Masjid and Darba Kalan

INSTAGRAM PROFILE
Gauthier, kabouter bait, and general badfartmouth

SECRET WISH
To attend regular meetings in Zafar Mahal. Wants a whole new block of flats there demolished tomorrow

COLLECTION
Decorative brass heads



ARUN KUMAR



AMISH TRIPATHI

THE MYTH MAKER

Because he tapped the superman potential of Indian mythological heroes and got paid for it. The pioneer of contemporary Indian mythological writing in English was appointed director of London's Nehru Centre, under the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in late 2018. His latest work, *Ravana: Enemy of Aryavarta*, is the third in the Ram Chandra series after *Son of Ikshvaku* and *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. His Shiva Trilogy is being made into a Hollywood film. It is the fastest-selling book series in Indian publishing history, while the second is the second fastest-selling book in a series. He is reportedly the best paid Indian writer and the first one to be given over ₹5 crore by an Indian publisher. His works have been translated in 39 languages. The credit for taking mythological heroes out of their staid niche and catapulting them into the imagination of millennials as action heroes goes to the banker-turned-writer. Ironically, his *The Jivans of Mahua* (Shiva Trilogy) was rejected by numerous publishers because they believed no one would read such books. It sold over 2.5 million copies. At Nehru Centre, his mandate will be to attract young people to recast Indian myths and legends.

FAVOURITE PROTAGONIST
Lord Shiva

BEST ADVICE
Be a good reader

NOW FACTOR
• All seven books have sold over 5 million copies
• Wrote most of his first book while commuting to work

'He is India's first Literary Popstar'
Filmmaker Shikhar Kapur

BELIEFS

- Never believe a writer who says he/she is apolitical
- Endurance and stamina are as necessary for writers as they are for athletes

MOTTO
It's my job, and I have to do it.

GREAT LOVE

ANNOYED
An Indian editor asked her to soften her novel's portrayal of the army to align with the "current climate" in India.

BRAVE MOVE
Writing a Kashmiri novel without any knowledge of Kashmir and winning a prize

MANUSCRIPT



PARVESH NEGI



WARNING
Stable can also be
dangerously close to staid

BIGGEST GROUSE
Most book reviews are plot summaries.

FIRST BOOK SHE PROOF-READ
A novel by Shobhaa De

ONE BOOK SHE WISHES SHE COULD HAVE PUBLISHED
Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

Because she is the most powerful woman in Indian publishing. This year, she launched the popular children's imprint, Red Panda, after *Contest*, which publishes literary fiction and political nonfiction. She is the publisher of Westland Books, an Amazon-owned company. Karthika is the face who launched a thousand books; the editor behind bestselling writers such as Aravind Adiga, Anurita Puri, Anuja Chaudhary, Joy Joseph, Manu Joseph, Rana Dasgupta, Raghu Karanth, Rohini Mohan, Sarma Borejee, Vistayvanti Ghosh and more. Karthika started as an Editorial Assistant with Penguin, where she cleared an edit test she said sat for "a lark." She had moved from Kerala to Delhi to study for a PhD at JNU and also taught American Literature for a very brief period at the university. Her success comes from betting on emerging talent, the occasional graphic novel and poetry, which she considers her "guilty pleasure." She counts empathy as the most important element in a good editor and that there is no one kind of ideal writer, reader or text.



Because he plunked into the thriller genre in Indian tradition often called the Dan Diwon of Bollywood, Sanghvi ranks among India's highest selling English fiction authors. This year, two new titles—*13 Steps to Bloody Good Parenting* and *13 Steps to Bloody Good Health*—were added to the popular 12 Steps series, which include *13 Steps to Bloody Good Luck*, *12 Steps to Bloody Good Health*, and *12 Steps to Bloody Good Marks*. His next book, *The Host of Violence*, went to the top of the bestseller list. The series is a modern-day take on the sixth installment of the mythological "Bharat series." The entrepreneur writer juggles both careers, thanks to the efficiency he learned as a management graduate. After repeated jettisons, he self-published his first novel, which went on to break records. He believes that the only thing separating good writers from success is a stubborn and thick-skinned approach of not listening to critics. Sanghvi's books are a mix of genres: crime, thriller, action, science fiction, culture, philosophy, ecology, and sometimes science, next on his list is a crack detective novel.



Because he is the only bilingual writer who is a national literary sensation, Very Few Translators make it big in India but Perumal Murugan has not lost in translation. This year, his twin novel set, *Trial by Silence* and *Lonely Harvest*, was shortlisted for the JCB Prize for the autobiographical Ananda hit the book stores this year. With Murugan, translated works into English have come of age. In January 2014, Murugan had posted on his Facebook page: "Perumal Murugan the writer is dead. As he is no God, he is not going to resurrect himself. He also has no faith in rebirth. An ordinary teacher, he will live as P Murugan. Leave him alone." The statement followed the controversy that lasted for the better part of 2014 over his book, *Madhavantei*, which was translated into English as *One Part Woman*. Even as he went into self imposed exile, the literary world stood up in support arguing him to come back, to resurrect himself. Encouraged by a Madras High Court ruling in his favour, he returned. "Let the author be free to correct himself, what is best at. Write," — Murugan returned in 2017 with a poetry collection and then in 2018 bringing true to his style, his comeback novel about a black man, which shows a silent witness to the inequalities and violence.

BEARING bestseller credentials the *Small Town India* code and made him the darndest generation's favourite writer. This year's biggest selling English language novel in India has a high price tag. But it is worth the collection of essays and selected columns which he calls a manifesto for change. He flatters himself as the good natured intellectual of the Bumpy-Baldi crowd and is not afraid to go on about his own idiosyncrasies. *Small Town India* was chief guest at an ISBN event. It created a social media storm. India's favourite romance novelist is financially astute; he promises to invest in start-ups in segments that interest him. He is a former editor of cafe chain Zoraba. The 45-year-old father of a whole new genre in Indian commercial fiction self-published *Flow* (the Sunday Express bestseller of 2011) after many hard days. But he was not the favourite of the Indian Railways this year; a not-so-well-read railwayman boomed 'Moi! *Gilgonesc* in railway stations terming it too expensive.' Some of his books have been banned in America.

NEXT MYSTERY
A murder mystery

MOTTO
People may not say that Chetan is the best author,
but I want them to say Chetan is my author

FILMY FUNDA

Four of his books have been adapted into Bollywood blockbusters

FIRST JOB
Investment banker at Goldman Sachs in Hong Kong

Contributed by Medical Device Index:

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THE SUNDAY
MAGAZINE

2019
20The
Culture
Power
LIST

LITERATURE

INFLUENCES
Bengali, Kannada and
Russian writing

FUN FACT

- Compiled and published a dictionary in the Kongo dialect
- Is a herbalist
- First in his family to complete school

- Writing is both his weapon and solace
- Gandhi helped him in an hour of crisis
- Writing is a state of mind

FAMILY MATTERS
Loves to perform with half sister Yamini—they have the same father Raja, and their mothers are real sisters.

GIVE AND TAKE
Teaching Kuchipudi since she was a teenager. Has 100 students.

FAVOURITE BAND
The Garbage



VIR
DAS
HABITUAL
OFFENDER

Because he is the pioneer of Indian standup comedy who has achieved the ultimate dream of any Indian entertainer: making it big in Hollywood. This year, India's pioneer comedian Vir Das entered *Hot Star's* international pantheon with a significant role in crime serial *Whiskey Cavalier* where he plays the main protagonist, an American-Indian FBI agent—and it wasn't funny. He is currently filming two specials for Netflix. *Aftermath* made him the first Indian comic to have his own standup special on the streaming platform. International magazine *Variety* named him in the '10 Comics to Watch' along with Hasan Minhaj and Tiffany Haddish, which led to more shows on platforms such as Amazon Prime Video. *Aftermath* aired earlier this year. It is a cornucopia of fun that happens along his trips to London, Mysore, Jodhpur, Patna, Leh, and Kuzmarakom in the company of fellow comedians such as Suresh Menon, Shruti Seth, Anu Menon, Ashwin Mushran and others. Despite being an industry outsider, there is no path that Das hasn't joked about—Bollywood, comedy music with his Allen Chatter hand and new American television. And all just for laughs.

ONCE UPON A TIME
In 2007, Das decided to be a full-time comedian and created a DVD for *Battle of the Sexes*.

IT ALL STARTED WITH A JOKE
Established Weirass Comedy, India's first comedy consultancy company in 2010.

WHEN ASKED TO CHANGE HIS NAME
"Firstly, no. Secondly, if I do change my name I'm going with Mukesh Ambani."

QUOTABLE WORDS
If comedy offends somebody, do more comedy.

PARVATHY
THE INTERLOPER
MENON



Because she is one of the few women who are breaking gender stereotypes in the traditionally male-dominated dance form of Kathakali, Menon has played both male and female roles effortlessly for years. This year she was cast by filmmaker Shruhi Nambudiri in *Aharu*, a movie based on gender disparities in Kathakali where Menon depicts the role of Keshava in a key episode from *Anantachari*, an excerpt from the Mahabharata. The mother of two is best known for her portrayal of Duryodhana in all-female Kathakali presentation titled *Duryodhana Vishvas*. When she started off in 1975 at the Tripunthura Vaidika Kathakali Sangam, an all-women troupe of Kathakali dancers, they were just two or three women. Now there are 36 female dancers in her own troupe alone.

FAVOURITE ROLES
Ravana and Duryodhana

RECORD PLAYER
Over 2,500 performances within India and abroad

ALL IN THE FAMILY
Menon's sister learned Kathakali music while another sister learned to play chenda drums. Both are integral to Kathakali performances.

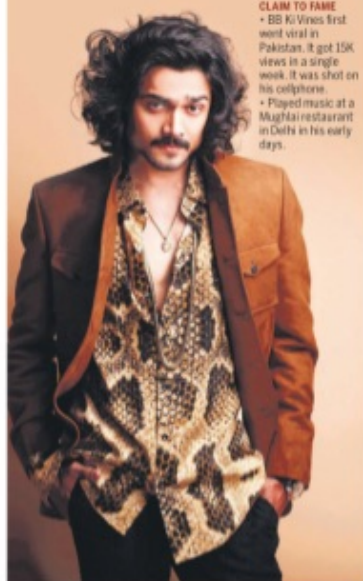
BHUVAN
ONE MAN SHOW
BAM

Because he is India's biggest YouTube star with the power to move conscience into action. In December, Bam released a video titled 'My Duty' to express his fury over the gangrape and murder of a veterinarian in Hyderabad. It passionately argued for sex education in schools. Music remains the comedian-performer's first love as he releases his singles 'Sang hoon tere', 'Safar', 'Rahguzaar' and 'Bus mein' to a million views. The YouTube channel BB Ki Vines (Bhuvan Bam Ki Vines) he started in 2015 has nearly two billion views and 15.9 million subscribers today. Its Facebook page gets nearly 30 million unique views a week. Unlike his YouTube competitors, Bam diversifies the content. Besides doing funny videos, he is establishing himself as a singer, actor and interviewer. He collaborated with international YouTube star Lilly Singh this year. He acted in a short film with Divya Dutta called *Plus Minus* last year, and recently bagged a Filmfare award for the same. He has over 30 brand endorsements—a feat similar to many a Bollywood star. From music to comedy to acting, this internet sensation is ailing it.

DODGING BULLETS
"Either video may stay or Bhuvan is likely to be alive."
Siva Sena threat

TOTAL VIEWS
2 billion

CLAIM TO FAME
• BB Ki Vines first went viral in Pakistan. It got 15K views in a single week. It was shot on his cellphone.
• Played music at a Mughlai restaurant in Delhi in his early days.



VIVIAN
GULLY BUOY
FERNANDES

FAN FOLLOWING
1 million subscribers

FIRST STEP
Was introduced to hip-hop by a friend who wore a 50 Cent T-shirt. His friends then wrote him a CD with 50 Cent, Eminem, Tupac Shakur, Big L and others.

■ Wrote three gospel rap songs and was inspired to adopt stage name Divine

■ The first Indian to appear on BBC Asia Network's *Tire in the Booth* segment after the success of 'More gully mein' released in 2016



Because he is the first Indian rapper to have a big-ticket movie hit inspired by his life. Blockbuster *Gully Boy* is based on the lives of Vivian Fernandes aka Divine and Naeed Shadi aka Naezy. The 28-year-old Divine's success has in his ability to connect with the small town and not-so-hip urban millennials, perhaps thanks to his experience as a youth growing up in Mumbai's chawls and one with the lingo. Public fascination with him continued beyond the film: In July *Gully Boy*, a documentary based on his life again, directed by Akshat Garg, was aired on all Discovery Channel platforms and followed by a digital release on Red Bull TV and his own YouTube channel. Gully has become somewhat a franchise: Divine launched Gully Gang Entertainment as a record label, Gully Gang Records to manage and discover Indian hip-hop talent. Expect live IP's like Gully Fest and exclusive Gully Gang merchandise. Artists have mastered the tricks of the music industry. Fernandes's company will also produce all inclusive content for artists and entertainment companies.

ANISH THE CREATIVE SUBVERSIVE GAWANDE

Because he upended conventional political protocol by launching The Pink List, a website naming queer-friendly politicians contesting the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The 25-year-old is the guiding light of the Dara Shikoh Fellowship, a Srinagar-based month-long arts and culture residency, which allows students from Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh to interact with scholars and creative personalities in the region through theatre workshops, short story readings around Sufi shrines, Kuchipudi performances inspired by Kashmiri mystic Lal Ded's poems and a contemporary study of Mughal miniatures. The Ivy League underdog, who studied how art, music, cinema and literature shape sexual identity, is bound for Oxford on a full Rhodes scholarship, which is given based on a candidate's global perspective.



WANTS TO CHANGE
Mumbai's apathy towards politics

QUOTE UNQUOTE
"We expect empathy from all corners of the country after any incident but won't take the time to stand up against NRC in Assam or communications blackout in Kashmir."

PERFECT DATE
A small round table on the beach with candles or pajamas and Netflix.

Because he is India's most influential standup comic who is unafraid to mock politicians. He handled Shashi Tharoor's witty performance in One Mic Stand, an Amazon Prime video series which features celebs who are not professional comics. The 30-year-old standup is the firebrand of Indian political comedy. In 2017, he made and uploaded an eight-minute viral video on YouTube in which he dissed the government and its cult of patriotism. His style of delivering droll punchlines clicked with viewers, and soon he was busy tickling the conscience of the nation. Kamra switched from a cushy advertising job to build his comic talents. When not touring the country or performing abroad, he hosts the popular YouTube chat show titled 'Shut Up Ya Kunal', where he invites netas, activists, and spokespersons from various political parties to talk about public issues. AAP politician Atishi, news anchor Ravish Kumar, student leaders Kanhaiya Kumar and Sheela Rashid soon found that the conversation was cut to funny instead of being laced with punchlines. When Chetan Bhagat knocked anti-CAA activists Kamra tweeted, "Maturity lies in not listening to you..." Bhagat was amused.

TIPPING POINT
Varun Grover, Sanjay Rajput, and Rohit Ram's Aisi Tasi Democracy inspired Kamra to venture into jokes on current affairs

HELTER SHELTER
His jokes on the current government led to Kamra being evicted by his land lady

FACT OF LIFE
Dyslexia makes it difficult for him to read even long emails or status messages. By his own admission, he has never read a book.

KUNAL
POLITICALLY CORRECT
KAMRA



GURU HIT MAN RANDHAWA

ALL ABOUT NUMBERS
Lahore is the first Punjabi song to cross 500 million views on YouTube

GARAGE BAND
Lamborghini and Harley-Davidson

PERSONAL STYLE
Desi waag

FASHION MO
Being invited to Milan Fashion Week by a top lifestyle brand to check out new fashion trends and have "some good food" in the city



Because he is the first Punjabi singer-rapper to bring the medium into the Bollywood mainstream and take it overseas by collaborating with American rapper Pitbull on the party anthem "Slowly Slowly" and featuring on his Latin pop song "Masive La Cintura," where Randhawa raps in Punjabi. He bagged the 2019 Dadasaheb Phalke award for the 'Most Trending Singer'. Despite the rise of Punjabi musicians thanks to Bollywood, Randhawa is not losing his spot on India's playlist: his Bollywood debut 'Suit' (originally a single called 'Suit' with collaboration of Sri Lankan-British artist Arjun) in the 2017 film *Humpty Medium* cemented him in the Hindi film industry. It was quickly followed with another catchy number, 'Ban Ja Rani' from *Thumke! Sulu*. Since then, the industry has come to love Randhawa and even though his rise seems to have occurred overnight, he was a name in the making for about eight years. The tracks 'High rated gabbu', 'Lahore' and 'Made in India' have over 800 million hits each on YouTube.

MAIDEN GLORY
The first Indian musician to get the Ramon Magsaysay Award (2017) for social inclusiveness in culture

MAKING A STATEMENT
Known for starting Carnatic music recital with a Marathi devotional verse instead of the traditional varnam

PERFORMING ARTS



TM MUSICAL DISSENTER KRISHNA

Because he is Indian classical music's best-known anti-caste rebel. In November this year, he translated the compositions of Sree Narayana Guru, Kerala's saint, poet and reformer, into Carnatic music at the 'Rachya-mud' concert held at Mumbai's Tata Theatre. NCPA, Krishna had previously done a similar experiment with Perumal Murugan's anti-caste verse, but on a global scale. The Chennai-based musician, commentator, writer and activist's Delhi performance was cancelled due to pressure from right-wing trolls who called him an artist who sings about 'Jesus and Allah' and is 'anti-India'. Whether as a Ramon Magsaysay Award winner or as the face of viral video 'Perumbolai', he has given Carnatic music its conscience. His passion is reflected in his books *Vidya Within: Carnatic Music - Pressing on an Inheritance*, *A Southern Music - The Karnatik Story* and more recently *Rachya-mud*. Krishna launched his own Carnatic classical music festival, the Uroo-Oloo Kappam Marghazhi Vitha, to challenge caste elitism in the existing Carnatic music system. Whether the dissent is against Article 371, mob lynching or the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Krishna is on the forefront with his artistic poems to protest.

DID YOU KNOW?
• Home-schooled
• Prefers YouTube to books
• Can play two pianos simultaneously
• Started music at age two
• Father Varshan Satish composed late Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalitha's funeral song

\$1 MILLION
Prize money won in US television show *The World's Best*



LYDIAN THE PIANO LITTLE MAN NADHASWARAM

Because he is the hope of Western classical music in India having won the \$1 million prize at American reality show *The World's Best* to ecstatic critical reviews. Chennai is the cradle of Carnatic music with an exception in the 13-year-old form of Lydian Nadhaswaram who is the first Indian teen to feature in the hugely popular *Ellen DeGeneres Show*. He is a multi-talented prodigy who can play the piano blindfolded, or simultaneously play two pianos, strum the guitar and play the mridangam. Trained by AR Rahman at the KM Music Conservatory, Lydian is a boy of the world: he and his sister listen to melodies on YouTube together, and are up to date on the latest music software. The two compose their own music, too. In April, he performed to a packed hall at the Jazz Foundation of America's annual gala *A Great Night in Harlem* at the Apollo Theatre, New York and in September with the Symphony Orchestra of India—Autumn 2019 Season in Mumbai.

Contributed by Kanchana Bosejee