

Life after 5PM

LIFE & LIVING

THEATRE:
FIVE POINT SOMEONE- PLAY

Galerie Third Eye presents Fiesta of Art, an exhibition of contemporary Indian paintings curated by Jasmine Khanna. Take a break from your busy life and check out these mesmerising works of art.

Venue: Galerie Third Eye, A-1, 2nd Floor Epsilon Office Block, Yemalur
Contact: 9845585235

EXHIBITION:
FIESTA OF ART



Chetan Bhagat's best selling novel *Five Point Someone*, will be brought alive on stage tonight. This play that traces the wonder years of college, friendship, love and grades is sure to stir your heart.

Venue: Ranga Shankara, Ramaiah Garden, JP Nagar VI Phase
Contact: 080 26493982

FOOD:
GELATO CAKES

Mama Mia presents an interesting combination of delicious ice creams and cakes. Savour delightful flavours like wild berries, chocolate marble, ferrero rocher, nutty butterscotch and more.

Venue: Mama Mia, Kormangala, Church Street & Indiranagar Outlets
Contact: 9844167547

MOVIE:
ACTION REPLAY

Experience a rutted ride that takes you back to the 70s with *Action Replay*, a comedy. This movie will acquaint you with the magic of retro, while ensuring that you laugh all the way back home from the talkies.

Venue: Fame Lido, 1/1 Swamy Vivekananda Road, Ulsoor
Contact: 080 25553262



Selvaprakash L

'And you, you are top-looking!'

When the girls grew weary of the limited possibilities of their life in Mira Road, they would want to get out, even if for a brief time, and every once in a while that meant heading to the red light district of Kamatipura. Apsara was never invited along and had she been she would have resisted: Leela's mother was enjoying her freedom by exerting herself as little as possible. She left Leela's bed only for BC - Bhagwan, Bathroom, Cooking and Customer. So Leela would dial in for Chinese 'wedge fry' and noodles and arranging the tin foil cartons on her mother's lap, says to her sternly, 'This time mummy, don't call if you get lonely. I'll talk to you when I come home, understand? And I'll come home when I'm ready.'

That Saturday was a special one; the girls had been invited to a birthday party. The evening's hosts, one of whom was a brothel madam called Gazala and the other, Leela's close friend Masti Muskaan, were known for their flamboyance and generosity, and the girls expected a blowout...

I had never been to a brothel and had no idea

what to expect. Gazala's was straight out of a film. Her brothel was a baggy, blousy monster with four storeys and two small windows that glared down like glaucomatic blue eyes. The interior exceeded my first impression. Drafts spun like tops. The stairs were uneven. The banister trembled like a bad knee...

Batting about were the hijra sex workers and they too appeared as though in a film. Maya's lehenga-choli, she told me, was from Chor Bazaar, a flea market nearby. The pearls she wore around her neck were a gift from a customer.

She had tucked a peacock feather behind her ear, and on her arms she had, just that morning, tattooed the name of her father dead of alcoholism, of her mother lost to HIV and of the sister who had run away from it all. Maya said these things to me in the same tone I would have used to describe where I had brought the clothes I was wearing. She didn't want me to commiserate. I asked her, she told me.

So instead I said, you look beautiful. She beamed. 'And you, you are top-looking!'

Extracted from the book *Beautiful Thing: Inside the Secret World of Bombay's Dance Bars* by Sonia Faleiro published by Penguin Books India

'Between a suitcase and a sofa'

Author Sonia Faleiro, in Bangalore to launch her book of narrative non-fiction *Beautiful Thing*, talks about being a good listener



Shrabonti Bagchi

"I love being around loud people, maybe because I'm not loud myself. Loud people are just so... grabby," says Sonia Faleiro, author of *Beautiful Thing: Inside the Secret World of Bombay's Dance Bars*, sitting in a spacious apartment located in a leafy lane off MG Road. It is a relative's house, and Faleiro is spending a few days here as she visits the city to launch her book at Crossword bookstore later in the day.

As a setting, it couldn't be more different from that of her gutsy, intimate book, which does just what it sets out to — and then some. While its primary setting is Mira Road in Mumbai, where the city's famous dance bars once did roaring business in entertainment,

drugs and sex before the great dance bar shutdown, Faleiro's story takes her to places each more seemingly inaccessible to people from the upper middle-class to which she belongs: Kamatipura, Aksa beach, the hill shrine of Sufi saint Haji Malang.

Yet, these were Faleiro's haunts for close to three years as she met and talked to bar dancers, bar owners, their families, pimps, auto-drivers who doubled up as middlemen, transsexual sex workers, brothel madams, bhais who supplied Dubai dons with girls from Mumbai... During these three years, she spent eight to nine hours a day with a bar dancer she calls Leela in the book, and Leela's story forms the skeleton around which the flesh and bone of this book is hung.

"When we write about any subculture we don't know that much about, we write from a particular viewpoint. We see these people as abused, exploit-

If you write about a certain kind of person, you should be ready to be lied to almost obsessively and you have to respect that. Being wide-eyed and naïve is not going to help

Sonia Faleiro, author

ed; their lives as sad and sordid. The reason I like writing books of narrative non-fiction is it gives me the scope to show that these are complete people, with full lives," says Faleiro.

Faleiro, who has been a feature writer with *Tehelka* and *India Today* and is currently a contributing editor at *Vogue*, was introduced to this sometimes revolting and sometimes uplifting world through a request to contribute an essay to *AIDS Sutra: Untold Stories from India*. Subsequently, she also contributed to the anthology *India Shining, India Changing* — her essay was about Mumbai's hijras. "After collecting so much ma-

terial, for a while I was unsure what story to tell. I showed a friend an early draft, and he said 'Leela is the story. You have to concentrate on her,'" says Faleiro.

It fell into place; after all, Faleiro had spent nine months in close proximity with Leela, recording her voice, making notes on her clothes and make-up, chatting with her mother and friends, sifting the truth from the many, many lies she was told by people who are sometimes compulsive liars. "If you write about a certain kind of person, you should be ready to be lied to almost obsessively and you have to respect that. Being wide-eyed and

naïve is not going to help," says Faleiro, who learnt in the course of her research that tough people open up to those they see as unflappable, those "who have the smarts."

To tell Leela's story with all the honesty and space it required, Faleiro had to edit herself out. As a writing technique, narrative non-fiction requires a certain emotional investment from writers as they stand witness to their subjects' lives. Recording that, and not one's own emotional responses, can be a challenge, confesses Faleiro, "but I'm good at it," she says. "My responses would be the same as the average readers'. What's the point of writing 'I went home and cried my eyes out'? This wasn't about me and how I felt observing Leela's life, it was about her feelings as she lived it," says Faleiro.

Gaining her subjects' trust meant being a superlative listener. "Bar dancers get enough

sympathy from others in the same situation, but then so many of them have similar stories. They have a desire to talk to someone who is sympathetic and objective. To gain their trust, I had to be something between a suitcase and a sofa," says Faleiro.

She also refrained from discussing her research, leaving even her family in the dark about its specifics. They are only now discovering the potentially dangerous places and situations she often found herself in. "I didn't want to tell bits and pieces of this story while nibbling on olives at a party. I didn't want this story to become a party anecdote," she says.

With that, Faleiro reveals the comfort with which she inhabits the various spaces in her life: Shobha De may launch her book at a glamorous evening in south Bombay, but for almost a year, her closest friend was bar dancer Leela.

Capturing the horror of the London bombings through dance

Conflict creates the core of dance performances by celebrated Indo-British dancer-choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh and her troupe

Shruti Goutham

The July 7, 2005 London bombings that brought London public transport to shambles during the morning rush hour, and its bearing on the South Asian community there, was the subject of a contemporary dance recital choreographed by Shobana Jeyasingh, artistic director and choreographer of the UK-based Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company. Chennai-born Jeyasingh's work is rooted in her experience as a British Asian, surveying the conflicts between diverse personal and cultural origins. Art by its very nature, feels Jeyasingh, is political and she describes her work as "political with a small p." "If you are a contemporary choreographer you can't help but reflect the happenings around you," she adds.

Jeyasingh's choreography draws upon various sources, including ballet, bharatanatyam and other contemporary ethnic dance forms.



Shobana Jeyasingh's troupe performed two choreographed pieces *Faultline* and *Bruise Blood* in Bangalore

This British dance group has toured internationally, performing at venues including New York, Seoul, Hong Kong. But this is their first time in India. British Council and Arts Council of England are the main sponsors of this India tour, and now having performed in Bangalore, the troupe will head to Delhi and Mumbai, presenting two productions *Faultline* and *Bruise*

Blood. "Faultline was inspired by Gautam Malkani's debut novel *Londonstani*, which is about disaffected Asian youth in Britain," says the dancer-choreographer. Additionally, "it also encapsulates the response to the tube bombings in London, which made for an uneasy aftermath for all young Asians, particularly males, as they were de-



monised." Performed to the backdrop of an electric sound score intertwined with music by Errollyn Wallen, sung by the classical Goan and now UK-based Soprano Patricia Rozario, this recital was composed as an attempt to portray a riveting picture of these turbulent tensions.

British Council routinely brings down British artists to facilitate cultural exchanges between Britain and

India, and as part of this exercise, says Charu Sapra of British Council, "Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company was brought down." Though this choreography showcases the horror unleashed by the London underground bombings, it has an international appeal, as it captures the dismay of terrorism, a global phenomenon.

Moving to *Bruise Blood*, the second piece, Jeyasingh says, "It is a music-led dance work based on American composer Steve Reich's 1960's composition *Come Out*." For *Bruise Blood*, the starting point was music. Jeyasingh met vocal performer Shlomo Kahn and discovered a shared interest in the music of Steve Reich. They were both stirred by this particular piece (*Come Out*), where he took a fragment of a recorded speech, doubled it up and looped the results. Truman Nelson, an American civil rights activist had asked Reich to write this piece to be performed at a benefit for the retrieval of the Harlem Six, where six African-American youths were arrested for committing a murder during the 1964 Harlem Riot, (a neighbourhood in New York city). Jeyasingh asked another composer Glyn Perrin, apart from Kahn to remix Reich's piece, "so this one is a dance with three different musical atmospheres," she adds.

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CIVIC SENSE
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BBMP office can offer parking

At Commercial Street, one can buy everything from garments to gold, steel and toys, but not parking space. On Deepavali, the street was lit up and there was enough noise to make this city deaf. This noise was not of crackers. It was the cacophony of honking vehicles.

Majority of those who were shopping at Commercial Street seemed like literates, driving flashy cars. They knew that one side of the road is meant for parking and that, there's a single line for traffic movement. Still, they honked and swore, triggering high blood pressure among fellow motorists.

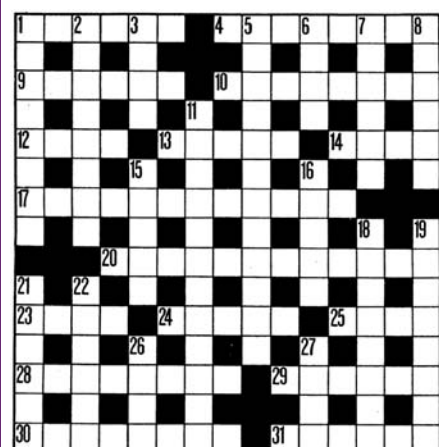
The parking space on Kamaraj Road can't take the load of Bangaloreans' fetish for cars and shopping. So, is there a solution to this problem? Not in the short-term, as apart from the traffic police, nobody else seems interested in doing something. If the administration is serious enough, it can make money and resolve the problem.

To create much-needed parking space, the city police department and the BBMP should take bold decisions and renovate their own offices, providing additional space for parking. The Commercial Street police station can house a parking plaza, while allowing enough space for the police station to function. The BBMP office on Dis-

pensary Road is huge and bulky. It is time that the BBMP cashed in on its properties. The civic authority should demolish its building and construct a multi-storied parking cum office complex. The BBMP has to pay for its follies and oversight. It did not enforce parking space on Commercial Street, but allowed its growth without a plan. It dished out commercial establishment licenses like it was *bhappuri*. Even *bhappuri* can induce indigestion and that's what has happened at Commercial Street.

We have been, in these columns, stressing on coordination between civic and police departments for planned development of Bangalore. The police department should also show initiative by asking the BBMP, or other such agency to stop any further commercialisation in such areas, which have already reached its saturation. The BBMP should also learn from private establishments, who allow parking for a fee. If one goes around Commercial Street, one will find many potential parking spaces. The BBMP should consider building a parking lot near Commercial Street. And for immediate relief, this shopping paradise should be made a pedestrian plaza. Vehicles should be banned on the road; allowing walkers to enjoy the sights and sounds of the street.

Cryptic Crossword 228



ACROSS

- 1 Split stick (6)
- 4 Spiteful woman urges one to discard sin (3-5)
- 9 Ploughed a mowed field (6)
- 10 Bird ablaze with love (8)
- 12 Work involved in making soup (4)
- 13 and 14 Across She helps mistress dress to brighten dismal day (5,4)
- 17 Metal fasteners held together by a thread (4,3,5)
- 20 The aim of equal education? (7,5)
- 23 A number set about forming an alliance (4)
- 24 Investment for ploughing back? (5)
- 25 A case for a sempstress (4)

DOWN

- 1 It's not simple to make up (8)
- 2 It's clear the girl has a cute wiggle (8)
- 3 A big fiddle (4)
- 5 Obviously it's not plain (5,7)
- 6 Moist yet may be on fire (4)
- 7 Old German destroyer still active today? (6)
- 8 They're known for

- insurance in the main (6)
- 11 Gave spot cash? (4,2,3,3)
- 15 Cut the number in custody (5)
- 16 Animals there's a market for (5)
- 18 Mythical king who never quite got what he wanted (8)
- 19 Figure how much property I'm coming into (8)
- 21 Revealing report about Rhode Island (6)
- 22 Northerner has an extra fish (6)
- 26 Side of fresh meat (4)
- 27 Has old-fashioned way of expressing it (4)

Solution No: 227

ACROSS: 1 Soaks, 4 Triples, 8 Aim, 9 Wholemeal, 10 Test run, 11 Orate, 13 Evince, 15 Etudes, 18 Owner, 19 Nursery, 21 Hurricane, 23 Spa, 24 Runners, 25 Speck.
DOWN: 1 Startle, 2 Admission, 3 Sower, 4 Thorny, 5 Iceboat, 6 Lie, 7 Solve, 12 Adressee, 14 Carmine, 16 Skylark, 17 Annals, 18 Other, 20 Reefs, 22 Ran.