

Brush with Sports

Artists and galleries are gearing up for the Commonwealth Games

VANDANA KALRA

THERE is no gold medal for the most marvellous oil painting at the Commonwealth Games, but artists and galleries are at work for the October event in Delhi. Some gallery owners are poring over private collections and pulling out the best of modern and contemporary art, while others have sent artists to their studios to come up with something new. All the while, in an ironic first for graffiti, the Delhi Urban Art Commission will get artists to draw them on the walls of Metro stations.

Marigold Fine Art will place towering metal sculptures of Mexican-Italian artist Lorenzo Quinn (incidentally, the son of actor Anthony Quinn) outside certain stadiums, and showcase Picasso sketches and Warhol acrylics.

Mukesh Panika, director, Religare Arts.i, says Kasturba Gandhi Marg will turn into an art street, with exhibitions at the British Council and the Max Mueller Bhavan. Among the 20 biggies who will be displayed at his gallery are N Pushpamala,

Subodh Gupta, Riyas Komu and NS Harsha. "The best of young contemporary India will be represented. The exhibition will reflect the role of artist as a mediator and interpreter," says Panika.

Since India is the clichéd fount of spiritualism, gallery owners are working around the theme to attract crowds. "Foreigners associate India with some aspects and art reflecting these would attract them," says Payal Kapoor, director, Arushi Arts, who has Kolkata-based artist Bratin Khan working on the theme of spirituality for a solo. A sculpture garden is being planned outside her gallery on MG Road, with installations of Arunkumar HG and Venkat Bothsa's kitsch fibreglass sculptures. India is also Kama Sutra poses and Khajuraho's licentious stone men and women, so Bhavna Kakar of Latitude 28 has artists reflecting on "Love is the Devil". This will be love in the modern times, by artists like Chintan Upadhyay, Farhad Hussain and Manjunath Kamath. A funny performance art will also be staged across the city, with Vadodara-based artist Siddhartha Karawal dressing



as a joker and travelling across Delhi with a cart of fibreglass donkeys.

Dhoomimal and Delhi Art Gallery put their money on the masters. "While travelling, people like to see works of artists who they have heard about," says Uday Jain of Dhoomimal Gallery, who will host an exhibition featuring M.F. Husain and F.N. Souza. "We cannot predict the sales, but there will be a lot of buzz and it is a good time to increase art awareness. The footfall will be high," says Ashish Anand, director, Delhi Art Gallery, whose biannual art show "Manifestations" will feature, again, the masters.

Lessons are lined up. Artists will hold talks at Delhi Art Gallery while work-



shops will be held at Arts.i and Dhoomimal. Jain will have guided art tours for Rs 500. The stopovers include Crafts Museum, National Gallery of Modern Art, National Museum and private galleries. And if original artwork is heavy on the pocket, take back souvenirs. Parul Vadehra promises additional stock of prints at Vadehra bookstore and Anand is designing memorabilia. At Art Alive Sunaina Anand is collaborating with authors for publications.

Looking for a literal link between sports and art? Anu Bajaj of Gallery Art Positive, has commissioned artists to depict sports in their art. "It'll celebrate the honour of hosting the Games," she says.

COME, PLAY

MARIGOLD FINE ART will place towering metal sculptures of Mexican-Italian artist Lorenzo Quinn outside stadiums, and showcase Picasso sketches and Warhol acrylics

DHOOMIMAL will have guided art tours for Rs 500

DELHI ART GALLERY will show the masters such as Souza and Husain, while Religare plans a contemporary show of 20 artists, including Subodh Gupta, N Pushpamala and Riyas Komu

SIDDHARTHA KARAWAL will dress as a joker and travel across Delhi with a cart of dead donkeys in fibreglass

IN AN IRONIC first for graffiti, they will be commissioned by the Delhi Urban Art Commission



Quinn: (top) Bratin Khan on spirituality and (left) Bothsa's kitschy sculpture

Thank You For The Music

ABBA Arrival, the longest-touring ABBA tribute act, will be in India this month

ANUSHREE MAJUMDAR

What do *Christine*, *Just The Way You Are*, *The Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert*, *Muriel's Wedding* and *Mamma Mia!* have in common? All these movies feature songs from ABBA, the greatest Swedish pop group and one of the super groups of the 1980s whose music influenced popular culture as much as The Beatles did. Like the Fab Four, ABBA has spawned scores of tribute bands that carry their music all over the world. The longest-touring ABBA tribute band, ABBA Arrival, however, are British and on the brink of their first ever India tour.

Sarah Cherry, Mark Pemberton, Darren Lapping and Natalie Brigham have been performing as ABBA Arrival since 1995. "Initially, all of us were performing as a band, singing different types of music. One night, we were performing a few ABBA songs and were told that we looked and sounded quite like the real group," says Cherry, who performs as Agnetha Fältskog and designs costumes for the group. The four then decided to come up with an "ABBA Tribute Show" and they've never looked back. While Cherry and Brigham (who performs as Anni-Frid Lyngstad) sing, Lapping (as Bjorn Ulvaeus) plays the guitar and Pemberton (as Benny Andersson) is on the keyboards.

Their love for ABBA goes back a long way. "During our younger years, we all saw ABBA win the Eurovision Song Contest in the UK and loved *Waterloo*, which was the winning



Pemberton, Brigham, Cherry, Lapping

song," says Pemberton who is responsible for "re-creating" the ABBA sound. Luckily, all the members bear a physical resemblance to the main group and have not had ego clashes that ended up disbanding the original four. "We have been performing together for 15 years, which is longer than the real ABBA were together," says Lapping.

The six-city India tour, presented by Seagram's 100 Pipers, will start in Delhi and Noida on April 16 and travel to Chandigarh, Dehradun, Lucknow, Hyderabad and Bangalore. "We're looking forward to performing our favourite ABBA songs, *The Name of the Game*, *Dancing Queen* and *Waterloo*," says Brigham. *Mamma Mia!* So are we.

For more information, contact: 41435183



OINAM ANAND

Meal FOR TWO: Rs 3,000

Address : E-12/70, Hauz Rani, (Opposite DLF Place Mall, Saket)
Contact: 9582317623

The food arrived quickly and we first dug into the Goan Sausage (Rs 350) which was a delicious affair except for an extra-vinegary twang. The Sarapatel (Rs 590), a spicy pork dish made with liver and other offal, was tasty, although it lacked that waltzing taste that comes only when the meat is let to soak in the gravy for a day or two, as is done in any Goan home. The Prawn Curry (Rs 670) was the highlight of the meal, the prawns curled up like well placed commas in a long-drawn sentence that was the silky, fragrant, coconut milk gravy. The Filetes Rechados (Rs 680), however, were too lightly covered with the "rechado masala" and didn't quite hit the spot.

The portions are not huge, although the complimentary salad is substantial. We were fussed over, the crumbs changed after each course, the crumbs dusted off the table. And as the fado singer hit the high notes, the Bebinca (or bibik as Goans like to call it) arrived. This famous layered dessert is made of flour, coconut milk and eggs in a clay oven. We were surprised to see a thin burnished sliver gleaming at us. For Rs 300, you would wish for at least one thick slice. It was detectable as Bebinca should be; we were told it was not made at Casa but flown in from Goa.

For those longing for anything Goan, this place would work, but we couldn't escape the thought that for the price of this meal plus a little more we could have flown to a Goan shack and had sarapatel as sarapatel should be and a really good slice of Bebinca.

The Bebinca Betrayal

Goan food arrives but doesn't quite hit the spot

SHARON FERNANDES

THREE candles hovered overhead, a few more dotted our table in the courtyard at Casa Portuguesa Restaurante at O Palacio in Hauz Rani. The vestiges of summer heat hung in the evening air, but a look at the menu — Grilled Prawns, Stuffed Pomfret, Filetes a Portuguesa, Lula Recheadas and Sarapatel — would have you longing to dig your toes in a sandy shore and to raise your face to sea breeze. We decided to go for foolproof Goan

dishes: no Salada de Casa can do what a Sarapatel does.

As a Portuguese fado played somewhere in the white courtyard, we were ready to sing out our orders too. But somehow the mystique died a quick death. For when we asked for Chourico de Goa, the waitress nodded and replied, "Yes, one spicy sausage." Maybe it is simpler to write down, but Filetes Rechados too was mercilessly turned into "a spicy fillet". Any Goan worth his or her salt knows that Sarapatel is Sarapatel, but that order too was

loudly written down as "Yes, one spicy pork sausage." Goa retreated quickly like a summer hallucination, but there is no point being fussy when a Goan meal awaits you.

In the flickering candlelight we took in the restaurant. It has two parts — a courtyard setting and air-conditioned indoors, which would be a great option as summer picks up. Set in an old haveli, the restaurant has a cosy ambience with white-washed walls, a banyan tree, a well maintained garden and small walkways with shiny mirror-embedded steps. It is easy to ignore the rest of crowded Hauz Rani behind the bamboo shades.

Wheel Deal

Websites help you find fellow travellers for car-pooling

DEBESH BANERJEE

COP-15 might have been a miserable failure, but there are little green thoughts in the city. One occurred to Ambrish Bajaj while travelling from his home at Sector 54, Gurgaon, to his office 7 km away at DLF Cyber City. He was caught in Gurgaon's nightmarish traffic when he realised that car-pooling was the way out. It would save energy and reduce the number of vehicles clogging the roads. It was just the kind of thing that Bajaj, a renewable energy consultant, would preach, but this time he decided to do something. He teamed with his colleague Abhishek Rajan and set up a website for car-pooling, *easy2commute.com*.

At websites such as *easy2commute.com*, *carpooling.in* and

poolmycar.com, you can find people who use the same route to work at the same time as you are and get together as a carpool.

Since its launch a year ago, *easy2commute.com* has 3,900 users from the NCR. There is no registration fee. To become a member, you will have to provide your corporate e-mail address and once the HR department of the website verifies the details, you are free to explore the site to find fellow travellers. "We function like a matrimonial site, bringing like-minded individuals together. Then it depends on their compatibility and understanding. They can decide whether they want to go car-pooling with someone or not," says Rajan, 30, who is part of a car-pool that travels from Gurgaon to Noida.



AMIT MEHRA

Kumar is starting Megacarpool.com in the NCR; Poolmycar has nearly 55,000 users across India

For Vijay Bhardwaj, head of administration of an outsource company, PKC, in Gurgaon, the 40-km commute from his home in Rohini meant high fuel bills and dreadful traffic. But for the past seven months, Bhardwaj has teamed with two others from his locality who travel in the same direction. "We alternate our cars, so there is no question of paying each other," says Bhardwaj, who is saving Rs 3,000 every month. *Carpooling.in* operates on the same principle as *easy2commute.com* and has carpools in Hyderabad,

Bangalore and Mumbai as well. *Poolmycar.com* was set up by IT consultant Vinay Arora, who moved to Delhi from Chandigarh two years ago. The website was a solution to his own commuting dilemmas. "Once the site was up, I found people in my neighbourhood willing to team up with me," says Arora, who claims to have 55,000 registered users from across the country. *Megacarpool.com* will be launched only in June, but claims to have about 1,000 members already. To join the website, you need to be a registered car owner and provide

valid identification documents and a proof of residence. "This is for safety reasons," says Kamal Kumar, a businessman in Greater Kailash I. His procedures are expensive. Once you become a member, you will be given a smart card and a GPS/GPRS-enabled touchscreen device that will be installed in your car for approximately Rs 10,000. He says once the service is operational, when a member needs a vehicle immediately, they can keep other users who are in the neighbourhood to help out. And reduce the carbon footprint.



