



# ARTS ILLUSTRATED



*Editor's note*

Criss-crossing lines  
On the inside of your palms  
Speak the language of infinity  
Old words for crushed souls, a soothing balm

And yet, between the said and the heard  
The remains of meaning exist  
Floating on the surface like lifeless bodies  
Swirling and tumbling through time's ageless tryst

It's telling (yes) of the world we live in  
Where updates and hashtags often set sail  
Through the open seas of virtual liberation  
Along with the 'like', a dog's incessant wagging tail

When beneath the burden of the eye  
Memories bump against identities  
That bump against invisible visible boundaries  
That slip and slide through multiple realities

To create a vortex throbbing with prejudice  
Drowning in (un)limiting categories  
And, dare we say it, themes  
Clutching on to the ends of stories

That reveal as much as they conceal  
That surmount as much as they defeat  
For if not for words, dead or alive  
How would meaning derive its rightful beat?

And when it does  
When it stops to pause and breathe  
The words, I mean  
Then to us, the dance of silence it bequeaths

Because first there was the word  
However sandwiched between the walls  
Of silence and thereof and hereunder  
Wordlessly pointing to truth's buried calls

Much as we discovered this issue  
Through, between, with and without words  
That between the said and the heard  
There also thrives a space, quietly shaken and stirred



'I paint with light,' claims Shailan Parker, while we look through his innumerable images on a large-screen Mac at his South Delhi studio, where you manoeuvre around photographic equipment and lights that seem to have taken over the space... stacked on the floor, on the podium and hanging from the ceiling.

Parker began his career as a professional photographer over 35 years ago. He is an alumnus of the National Institute of Design (NID, Ahmedabad) where he trained in Visual Communications, and continues his association with the institute as a guest faculty member. Product photography is at the core of his practice, and Parker is recognised for his ability to design and craft visuals around client briefs. While it may seem like a mundane professional requirement, it has allowed Parker the creative freedom to project the best visual of an object in a controlled studio environment. His resourcefulness leads him to apply this learning to his artistic works. He takes hours to *set up the stage*... placement of the object, working with multiple sources of light and reflection, adjusting the angles and controlling the intensity of the lights. Just as the painter decides which colour and

how much of it should be applied on canvas, Parker controls his imagery by orchestrating the lighting. This is fundamentally different from capturing what exists or is available for anyone to take notice of. Parker *creates* his images.

For this issue as we begin our fifth year, we chose an image of a found silk-cotton flower. Half dried and almost disintegrated, it would normally never attract a second glance. Parker gives it a rebirth, a new voice, an emergence from the silence of the discarded to the silence of the revered. Enhancing the textures, accentuating the undulations, the image allows for a meditative gaze. The back cover is the same image in negative. It looks like a charcoal drawing of the rays of light Parker used to create his image in the first place. The work is consciously left untitled to allow the viewer an absolute and unbiased experience and interpretation.

The words of Georgia O'Keeffe evoke the appropriate emotions of Parker's artistic practice – '*If you take a dry flower in your hand and really look at it, it's your world for a moment.*'

Conceptualisation of the cover and text above by Rahul Kumar.



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Shailan Parker

## Editorial:



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He is a Fulbright Scholar with a Masters in Arts from USA. A Charles Wallace fellow and a recipient of scholarships from the India Foundation for the Arts and the Ministry of Culture (Government of India), he is an established artist. Retiring after 18 years of corporate life, he now curates art shows and residencies.



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Be it pruning her way through the written word or running a fine-toothed comb over the printed page, Sethu, with decades of experience in journalism and publishing, has found her happiness quotient.



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Bridget's expertise in human resource management, hosting skills and her attention to detail have helped in creating a healthy ecosystem for the arts in Coimbatore.



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Vani's love for art is visible in her perception of architecture. With a clear adoration for the evolving artscape that surrounds us, she also writes on art, architecture and cinema.



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With over twelve years of experience across fields, Felix understands the business of creating lasting relationships with clients.



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A creative director based in Dubai, Latheesh started his career with Ogilvy & Mather in 2003. Since then he has worked for agencies such as Wieden+Kennedy, Ikea Design, DDB Mudra and Wolff Olins. He was also instrumental in branding the first edition of Kochi-Muziris Biennale.



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Compassionate to a fault, Anu's cheery disposition stands her in good stead and lets her count many marketers as friends rather than clients.

## Contributors:



**Abha Iyengar** is an award-winning, internationally published poet, author, essayist, editor and British Council-certified creative writing mentor. Her published works are *Yearnings*, *Flash Bites*, *Shrayan*, and *The Gourd Seller and Other Stories*.



**Bharti Perwani** is an actor trained at the Madhya Pradesh School of Drama, Bhopal. She has worked with directors across India and has performed in several theatre festivals in India and abroad. She, now, shuffles between theatre and film as media of performance.



**Meera Rajagopalan** is a Chennai-based writer who has worked for publications in India and in the U.S. Her work tends to focus on the intersection of culture and identity, and she believes in ghosts.



**Siddhartha Das**, Columnist  
He is a designer and visual artist who uses culture for socio-economic change, and was the recipient of the British Council International Young Design Entrepreneur Award in 2009.



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Her published work includes fiction, non-fiction and poetry. It has also been part of choreographic projects and art installations. She lives and works in Auroville.



**Daniel Connell** lived in Jaipur for three years (2007-2010) and returns to India, North and South, every year. He is a practising artist, a PhD candidate at the University of South Australia and teaches at the Adelaide Central School of Art.



**Rehana Munir**, Columnist  
She is a Bombay-based writer/editor. She set up and ran an independent bookshop for a few years, has run cricket websites, and loves ginger tea, plotless novels and The Beatles.



**Archana Khare-Ghose** is a senior arts journalist based in New Delhi. Presently, she is the Global Editor of the Blouin Artinfo monthly art newspaper, and BlouinShop, a quarterly lifestyle magazine, published by New York-based Blouin Artinfo Corp.



**Gautam Bhatia**, Columnist  
He is a Delhi-based award-winning architect, artist, and writer. Besides a biography on Laurie Baker, he is the author of *Punjabi Baroque*, *Silent Spaces* and *Malaria Dreams* – a trilogy that focuses on the cultural and social aspects of buildings.



**Shakti Maira** is a critically acclaimed artist-philosopher from India. He has written extensively on art and design, including two books – *Towards Ananda: Rethinking Indian Art and Aesthetics*, and *The Promise of Beauty & Why it Matters*



**Suzanne McNeill** lived in India for seven years, first in Chennai and then in Delhi. She has now returned to Scotland where she works as a freelance writer and graphic designer.



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She is an Associate Professor of Fashion Design at Columbia College Chicago and the author of the book *Indian Fashion: Tradition, Innovation, Style*



**Lata S Singh** is a self-trained actor in Mumbai, particularly influenced by Ariane Mnouchkine's work. She made her Bollywood debut with *Gulaab Gang* (2014). She has also been featured in various commercials.



**Sharmistha Saha** is a director based in Mumbai. She has studied theatre at the Freie Universität in Berlin and at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU, New Delhi. She has also worked at the Odin Teatret, Denmark with Eugenio Barba and his team.



**Suzanne van der Borg** Half-Italian and half-Dutch, Suzanne considers her mixed heritage a privilege that is reflected in all her works. She lives, works and writes from Edinburgh, Scotland.



