

**KNMA Launches Its Inaugural Theatre Festival at Sunder Nursery,
Exploring "The Power of Vulnerability"**



From L - R *Notion(s): In between You and Me*, Savita Rani, Delhi; *Be-Loved: Theatre, Music, Queerness & Ishq!*, Tamaasha Theatre, Mumbai and *Vali Vadha* Theatre Yaksha, Udupi

[Link to press pack](#)

New Delhi, 3 October 2024: The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) is proud to announce the launch of its inaugural **KNMA Theatre Festival**, an exciting new initiative from its Performing Arts department. Taking place at the historic **Sunder Nursery in New Delhi from 14 to 20 October 2024**, this festival marks KNMA's debut in the contemporary theatre scene.

KNMA Chairperson and Founder Kiran Nadar said, *"The inaugural edition of the KNMA Theatre Festival is a pivotal moment in our journey to expand into the realm of contemporary performing arts. This festival not only showcases the richness of India's diverse cultural narratives but also creates a vital platform for dialogue around pressing societal issues through theatre. As we move toward establishing dedicated performing arts spaces in our new museum, this festival represents our commitment to fostering a deeper connection between the arts and the community, enriching Delhi's cultural landscape in the process."*

Curated by Bengaluru-based actor, director and filmmaker Kirtana Kumar, the inaugural edition of the festival will focus on the role of contemporary theatre in addressing current societal vulnerabilities, including class, religion, location, gender, and sexuality. The theme of the inaugural KNMA Theatre Festival is, **'The Power of Vulnerability'**.

The festival will open on 14 October with the performance of *Beesu Kamsale*, a ritualistic and acrobatic folk form in Kannada associated with the worship of Lord Malé Mahadeshwara, and practised by men of the Halu Kuruba community in the fields and forests around Chamarajanagar and Mandya, near Mysuru. It will be led by Sri M Lingaiah and presented by Karnataka Janapada Kamsale Kalavidara Sangha from Bengaluru.



A total of **13 plays will be staged over six days**, in English, Hindi and other regional Indian languages and dialects.

The opening performance will be followed by a puppet theatre production, *The Nights*, that reimagines tales from *One Thousand and One Nights (The Arabian Nights)*, in English and Hindi. Directed by Anurupa Roy, it will be presented by Katkatha Puppet Arts Trust.

The line-up of the festival is as follows:

October 14: *Beesu Kamsale, The Nights*

October 16: *Beesu Kamsale, Love and Information*

October 17: *Portal Waiting, Talki Via Bengaluru*

October 18: *Project Darling*

October 19: नज़र के सामने / *Before Your Eyes, Bhaagi Hui Ladkiyan, Enchanted Walk, Be-Loved: Theatre, Music, Queerness & Ishq!*

October 20: *wepushthesky, Notion(s): In Between You & Me, Enchanted Walk, Vali Vadha*

In addition, the festival will include a workshop, a lecture demonstration, and a symposium, fostering discussions among performance theorists, students, and practitioners. This structure aims to create a dynamic space for collective reflection, with performances integrated into the symposium to extend their impact.

The symposium on the theme, 'The Power of Vulnerability' will navigate the phenomenon of post-pandemic contemporary Indian theatre through an open, interactive space for theatre viewing, conversation, Q&A and focus group discussion. Speakers include **Dr Anuradha Kapur**, former director, National School of Drama; **Vivek Madan**, Mumbai-based theatre actor, producer and founder-director of Bhasha Centre; **Dr Abhilash Pillai**, director, pedagogue and scholar of contemporary Indian theatre; **Dr Amanda Culp**, dramaturg and performance historian specializing on the theatrical after lives of Sanskrit drama; **Dr Brahma Prakash**, writer, cultural theorist and assistant professor of Theatre and Performance Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University; **Dr Christoph Scheurle**, professor at the University of Applied Science and Arts in Dortmund (Germany); **Markus Kubesch**, theatre practitioner, researcher and a visiting lecturer at Mozarteum University, Salzburg; and **Deepan Sivaraman**, theatre director, scenographer, dramaturg and educator.

A hands-on workshop by **Dr Barbara Lutz** and **Dr Christoph Scheurle** for theatre-makers and all students of performing arts will be held as part of the festival.



This vibrant celebration of contemporary theatre expands KNMA's commitment to multidisciplinary artistic expression, building on the museum's established programming around different genres of dance and music such as the *Legacy Series*, *Centre Stage festival*, and *KNMA in the Park*.

This festival is open to the public, and tickets are available for purchase online on [insider](#).

Free entry for students upon pre-registration and presentation of a valid student ID.

Annexure I: Brochure with Curatorial Note and Detailed programme

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Notes to Editors

About Kirtana Kumar

(Guest Curator)

Kirtana Kumar is an actor, director, and film-maker based in Bangalore. Her films include the award winning *Guhya* - an exploration of Indian feminine sexual symbols and rituals. Her abiding interest is in creating new works with her company, Little Jasmine Theatre Project, with an emphasis on local forms, texts, visuals, sounds and ideas. She has received several awards including the MacArthur Fellowship and a New Performance Grant from India Foundation for the Arts for *The Wedding Party*. In India, she has curated and organised two national symposia on "Theatre Pedagogy for Young Audiences" for Ranga Shankara and on "Developing an Indian Dramaturgical Voice" for Jagriti Theatre. "Theatre in Times of Zoom" was an international online symposium she curated at the start of the lockdowns. In 2021, as artist-in-residence, by invitation of the City of Munich, she curated a theatre festival called "Global Karnataka". During this time, she also curated and conducted a series of conversations on Post-Pandemic Theatre. She works extensively with theatre in the social sector, and is a trustee of Women Artists Group. Her workspace is at Infinite Souls Farm & Artists Retreat. She recently wrote a book of short stories called *Bangalore Blues*.

About KNMA

Founded in 2010, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) is a pioneering private museum of modern and contemporary art in South Asia, with branches in New Delhi and Noida. The not-for-profit organization produces rigorous exhibitions, educational and public-focused programs, and publications. Through its rigorous and multiple programs, KNMA emphasises its commitment to institutional collaborations and support-networks for artists and creative communities, while extending its reach to diverse audiences. The museum houses a growing collection of more than 15,000 artworks from South Asia, with a focus on the historical trajectories of 20th century Indian art, alongside the experimental practices of young contemporaries. KNMA was established through the initiative of art collector and philanthropist Kiran Nadar and is supported by the Shiv Nadar Foundation. The new standalone building of KNMA is due to open in the next three to four years, near Delhi's Indira Gandhi international airport.

www.knma.in



Ongoing exhibitions at the Museum:

At KNMA, Saket

Two solo exhibitions

If We Knew the Point

Amitava

Magic in the Square

Mohan Samant

27 July 2024 - 30 September 2024

Curated by Roobina Karode

At KNMA, Noida

Purvae: Evoking Pedagogic Lineages

13 September 2024 - 15 December 2024

Curated by Avijna Bhattacharya

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