

One of India's most spiritually-minded cities is also home to avant-garde architecture, sustainable fashion and modern theatre.

**Meet the vanguards of culture changing the face of Puducherry in
Cultural Capitals: Future Legacies of India's Cities**

Live History India and Avid Learning present the tenth edition of **Cultural Capitals: Future Legacies of India's Cities** on Puducherry, an exciting series of discussions celebrating the historical and current legacy of culturally rich, diverse and important cities across India. On the panel are:

Artistic Director Adishakti Laboratory for Theatre Art Research, **Vinay Kumar**

Founder and Creative Director, Hibiscus Heroes, **Sowmya Parameswaran**

Architect and Urban Designer, **Devangi Ramakrishnan**

Founder and Curator of Aurodhan Art Gallery, **Lalit Verma**

In conversation with Deputy Editor, Live History India and Curator, **Aparna Andhare**

A timeless town, Pondi's azure waters attract a smorgasbord of talent, as reflected in our panel this evening. From theatre and art to fashion and architecture, each panellist has a very special story. While one has crossed state borders to make Puducherry home, another returned to her roots to make new strides with plant-based fashion. Still others are raising the bar of art and architecture with local communities.

Cultural Capitals is an exciting series of discussions that celebrates the historical and contemporary legacy of culturally rich, diverse and important cities across India. Its aim is to celebrate the wider swathe of India's great cities, their legacy and how they thrive as vibrant centres of culture. The city's that have covered so far include Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Kohima, Indore, Mysuru and Varanasi. The highlight is on varied perspectives on the cultural identity of these urbanscapes, and will be presented as informed by history, hidden stories and local insights through diverse lenses. The conversations are focused on restoring, reinventing and reiterating the legacy of these great cities.

And Puducherry is one such great city where literature and legend, song and spirituality, ordered geometries of the French-influenced seafront and the bustling Tamil quarter of the town centre all thrive side by side. Join our panel as they discuss the mood board of influences along the Coromandel coast and how cutting edge design and craft handed down for generations, thrive so seamlessly in Puducherry.

Event details:

Date: Thursday, 10th March, 2022

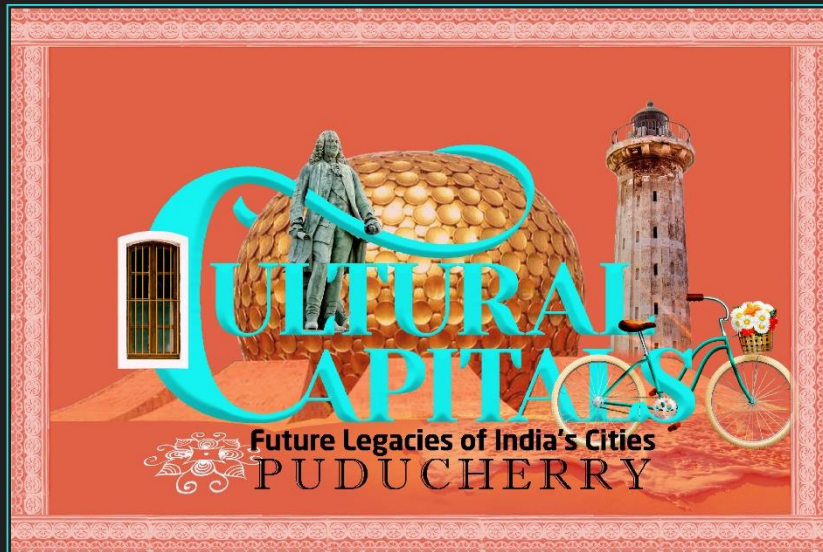
Time: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM (IST)

Format: Live Zoom Session

Register: www.avidlearning.in

Press Contact: Ayeshah.avid@gmail.com

#CULTURALCAPITALS



Literature and legend, song and spirituality, ordered geometries of the French-influenced seafront and the bustling Tamil quarter of the town centre - all thrive side by side in the city of Puducherry. And this is where we take you for the next edition of **Cultural Capitals: Future Legacies of India's Cities**.

A timeless town, Puducherry's azure waters attract a smorgasbord of talent, as reflected in our panel this evening. From theatre and art to fashion and architecture, each panellist has a very special story. While one has crossed state borders to make this city their home, another returned to her roots to make new strides with plant-based fashion. Still others are raising the bar of art and architecture with local communities.

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Verma**



Deputy Editor,
Live History India and Curator
**Aparna
Andhare**

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About Speakers:

Vinay Kumar is the Artistic Director of Adishakti leading the team in its quest for continued in-depth research, new performance creation and inculcation of Adishakti's methodology amongst new generations of actors. Primarily, Vinay is an actor who also a writer, director, light and sound designer, choreographer and composer. Currently he is also one of the most sort after teachers of performance craft. For Vinay theatre became a way of life since early childhood. Hectic street performances were the norm. School was too dull for him compared to the lure of the stage.

As he grew up, his involvement with theatre increased and he ended up directing actors much older than him. Feeling the need for some formal training, Vinay joined the School of Drama, Kerala where he excelled in Performance and direction. In the midst of this journey, he was working with a theatre group in Kerala which started collaboration with Veenapani Chawla. In his interactions with her he found that his own explorations were aligned with hers so began Vinay's engagement with Adishakti since its early years. To embellish the tools available to contemporary performers, Vinay along with Veenapani, started researching into the use of breath, voice and centres in the actors body. This led to the evolution of a unique performance methodology which Vinay shares to this day in his direction and his teaching.

Sowmya Parameswaran

After having spent 12 years working for big fashion brands in Amsterdam, I decided to move back home to Auroville, India in 2017. With my love for sustainable fashion and craftsmanship I revisited many textile towns & villages in south India. The ancient crafts were moving towards extinction and the land and rivers were filled with toxic chemical waste from the fashion industry. From this experience came the need, the inspiration to create a brand with Nature as a stakeholder & to celebrate artisans that are the custodians of plant & flower-based dyeing. In 2020 Hibiscus Heroes a sustainable plant based clothing brand was born in Auroville, Tamil Nadu, India.

Devangi Ramakrishnan is an architect and urban designer based in Pondicherry since 2014. Her professional experience includes design management of urban river-fronts, parks, and streetscapes, and community engagement projects in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Chennai, and Pondicherry.

In Pondicherry, her areas of work include advocating for the improvement of streets, public spaces, urban infrastructure, public transport, and heritage, providing project-based consultancy to local community organisations and state government departments and missions.

Since 2019, she is collaborating with the Social Sciences Department of the French Institute of Pondicherry on the AFD funded research project RUSE, studying the challenges of urban and socio-ecological resilience of the Pondicherry region. The overall approach of the project is to think together urban governance and the cultural and heritage economy against the context of large urban projects such as the Smart City Mission, examining its implications at the neighbourhood scale.

Lalit Verma did his schooling and graduation from the prestigious Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, India. Equipped with a command over several languages, exposed to different cultures and a Masters in Business Administration he joined the TATA s where he worked as a senior officer. With several years of experience in the Corporate world he returned to Pondicherry where he founded the Aurodhan Art Galleries, Hotels and Cultural events, a center to promote excellence. He was honoured by the Indian Prime Minister in the Parliament house in 2007 and then by the Director General of UNESCO at Paris in 2009 for his contributions internationally in the cultural field. Founder/Curator/Director of several art, music, dance and literature festivals. Two times President Alliance Francaise. Presently ideator/founder of the oneness through art by aurodhan.com. Curated over 2000 cultural and art events and promoted as many artists. Photographer with over 12 Solo shows around the globe including with Jean Dieuxzede in Toulouse and works in the collection of Mary Elen mark amongst others. The only Photographer from India whose works were auctioned by Hessinks a renowned auction house of Europe in 2021. Received several awards including the Lifetime Achievement award by the Chief minister of Pondicherry and the Viswa Ratna from TAPOVAN Paris.

Aparna Andhare is the Deputy Editor, Live History India, looking after programming for LHI Circle. She was, until recently, a curator at the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, the City Palace, Jaipur. Joining the Museum in 2017, she worked on developing a new gallery on transport, contributed to publications, had collection responsibilities, and handled outreach activities including social media. Specialising in art and architecture of early modern India, she has two master's degrees: Art in the Global Middle Ages (University of Edinburgh, 2017), and Arts and Aesthetics (Master's, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2012). In Bombay, she has worked on independent archiving projects, and taught and co-ordinated the Art Design History and Theory programme for the undergraduates at ISDI-Parson's Mumbai (2013-16). Aparna contributes to various publications on art and culture.

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