

Avid Learning presents our next Multipolis Mumbai discussion which will examine our city's urban identities and subcultures

For Immediate Release

Mumbai is a city like none other. India's financial hub is a melting pot for people from different religious, cultural and economic backgrounds. Due to this multicultural and cosmopolitan nature of the city, there are interesting stories waiting to be discovered at every corner. From the glitz and glamour of Bollywood, to the energetic hustle of the streets, Mumbai has influenced and created many identity groups that all cumulatively form the city's own urban identity.

As Mumbai has grown into a global city, western influences have trickled in, especially capturing the attention of the youth, thereby adding a whole new dimension to the cultural landscape of the city. Alternate identities formed in the city are often a mixture of local and foreign influences.

Despite being synonymous with business and money and the glitz and glamour of Bollywood, it is on the streets of Mumbai where some of the most raw, interesting and amazing stories are born. In Dharavi, hip-hop beats reverberate within the narrow, unassuming by-lanes of Asia's largest shantytown. Estimated to be home to over a million people, the slum is almost a city within the city. A microcosm of Mumbai, representing the ever-present hustle of the city. The impoverished youth have used rap and breakdancing as a form of socio-political commentary and a way to voice their life struggles as well as empower themselves.

Three years ago, Indian hip-hop was barely in the public consciousness. Now the genre is home to some of the country's rising stars and the subject of an upcoming mainstream Bollywood movie. How has a once small, barely recognised culture sprung to such prominence? Indian hip-hop shares traits with The Bronx's underground movement in 1970's New York and even the rise of grime in the UK, in that the music is relatively affordable to make – self-starters only need a microphone, a beat and a recording device – and its key players traditionally come from marginalised communities, primarily in urban centres. Slowly but surely, the Indian rap scene is brewing underground and many young artists are ready to step out into the spotlight and take centre stage.

The description of the discussion is as below:

NGMA Mumbai, Ministry of Culture, Government of India and Avid Learning present Multipolis Mumbai: Alternate Identities within the City, a discussion that examines the various identities that exist in the city and their role in the formation of subcultures.

Digital Media Entrepreneur (Co-Founder of Homegrown) Mandovi Menon, Director and Founder, FourbyFour Experiences Pvt Ltd. Nikhil Udupa, Artist and Rapper Sumit Roy and Producer and Director at VICE India Naman Saraiya will be in conversation with Author Arjun Gaid.

These experts will take a look at the creation and evolution of various social identity groups as tied to certain trends such as hip-hop music, breakdancing, skateboarding etc. in the city and the role they have played in the formation and shaping of prominent subcultures in Mumbai. They will examine the ways in which these social identities interact with various elements of the city and will deconstruct how these social identities dimensionalise the experience of Mumbai. These experts will also discuss how these various social identity groups use forms of artistic expression to raise awareness about prevalent social and political issues, as well as monetize their skills to reap economic benefits.

This talk will be part of AVID's **Multipolis Mumbai Series** that decodes the past while looking to the future and finding novel ways of engaging, interacting with and reenergizing the city that we love! The original nine-part series, which began in 2012, examined how Architecture, Music, Food, Theatre, Fashion, Environment, Literature, Innovation, and Film influenced and were influenced by the city. Our second iteration of this series, which began in 2017 attempts to renegotiate larger perspectives on the city, dig deeper and capture its essence and changing rhythms and nuances. In this second round we seek to plumb new depths and unearth more fascinating nuggets about our ever-surprising Mumbai! On our journey, we have explored how entities like businesses and brands, architects, historians and designers, artists and poets, women writers and female theatre stalwarts have influenced

our city. We have also explored how art technology and gaming, wildlife activism, philanthropy and maritime culture have played a role in enriching Mumbai's cultural fabric. We've also held workshops that looked more closely at iconic Mumbai architecture (namely Art Deco, Indo-Saracenic and Victorian Gothic).

Come explore Mumbai's exciting emergent urban identities!

Where: The National Gallery of Modern Art, Sir Cowasji Jahangir Public Hall, M. G. Road, Fort, Mumbai – 400032

When: Thursday, 11th April 2019 | 6:00 PM – 6:30 PM – Registrations and Refreshments | 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM – Discussion

RSVP: www.avidlearning.in/ (prior registration required)

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About the Speakers

Mandovi Menon is a creative director and entrepreneur who is passionate about using innovative storytelling to spark meaningful change. A writer first and foremost, she believes that expressing creativity freely, with integrity, is at the heart of a more inclusive world. In 2013, she co-founded and built the voice of Homegrown, a trailblazing youth media company that changed the way we speak to and about urban Indian youth. Under her leadership as Editor-in-Chief over the past 5 years, the platform earned a reputation for diverse, original storytelling, an authentic voice, pioneering curation of creative communities and a knack for being on the pulse of emerging subcultures across India. She also led several creative collaborations with leading brands, NGOs and independent artists during her time there. For her work in an emerging industry, she was featured on Forbes' 30 Under 30 Asia 2017 list and is regularly tapped as a credible resource on a wide gamut of topics that touch upon how youth culture and youth identity is evolving in India today. She remains consistently motivated by the potential of human curiosity, finding intersections between unlikely things, local food, creative communities and culture, and piecing together people's personal histories to find magic in the world around us.

Nikhil Udupa is a marine engineer by education, a music fan by profession, and a lifelong supporter of the independent music scene. He is the founder-partner of subculture think-tank 4/4 Entertainment and the non-profit Control ALT Delete. With stints in marketing and programming at Only Much Louder (OML) and MTV, Nikhil brings in 8+ years of experience and expertise in content, programming, and brand integration. He brings a fan-first approach to emerging subcultures, and believes in creating media agnostic experiences for the consumer. 4/4 Entertainment is a consultancy firm focused on designing, execution and monetisation of brand-led IPs in today's ever evolving content and experience landscape.

Alumnus of MSU Baroda, **Sumit Roy's** practice is firmly rooted in the mural tradition of the art school and its concerns with the local context. Yet, he reinvents this inherited aesthetic on his canvases in a language that is boldly inspired by global, mainstream popular culture. He speaks for a generation of urban cultural practitioners who grew up in the face of globalization and corporatization. The media landscape in India changed dramatically with the opening up of the economy, and the emergence of Star TV, and MTV, who in the early years appropriated entertainment from American media for an Indian audience. Confronting the reality of an industrialized nation while occupying the Indian context, Sumit Roy juxtaposes an aspirational visual universe and the cult of global stardom with quotidian sights and attitudes from his immediate locale. The same approach extends to his music, where he uses the subversive, trans-continental form of hip hop to articulate ongoing contemporary political anxieties in India. As an artist working with sound, text and image, he is able to tap into a range of sensibilities while defying them all.

Naman Saraiya is a writer, photographer and filmmaker. His work in journalism and film has led him to work with a variety of alternative culture projects and brands. Some of those include Bacardi NH7 Weekender, Red Bull Music Academy, St+art Festival, television shows for Fox and MTV Networks, besides independently created music videos and documentaries. He's currently a producer at VICE Asia and director of *Kya Bolta Bantai – The Rise of Mumbai Rap*.

Arjun Raj Gaid is the author of the bestselling historical mystery series, The Maharaja Mysteries, which are set against the picturesque backdrop of princely India during the heyday of the British Raj. The first two installments, A

Very Pukka Murder (2016) and Death at the Durbar (2018), have been published to widespread critical acclaim. The third book in the cycle, The Missing Memsahib, is due for release early in 2019. He is also the creator and author of several comic books and graphic novels, including Empire of Blood, Project: Kalki, Reincarnation Man, The Mighty Yeti, Blade of the Warrior, and A Brief History of Death.

About Partners

The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) Mumbai, Ministry of Culture, Government of India is a repository of the cultural ethos of the country and showcases the changing art forms through the passage of the last 160 years starting from about 1857 in the field of Visual and Plastic arts. The first NGMA was opened in New Delhi at the historic Jaipur House, in the presence of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and artists and art lovers on March 29, 1954. The National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai was opened to the public in 1996. It hosts various exhibitions and also has its own art collections comprising paintings, sculptures and graphics with a focus on Indian and International artists. It is located in the precinct of the former auditorium the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Public Hall and the Institute of Science. This architecturally marvellous building was designed and built by the famous British architect George Wittet which has been completely redesigned keeping only the facade edifice that was Public Hall. It has hosted eminent artists like, K.H. Ara, F. N. Souza, Gaitonde, S.H. Raza and M.F. Hussain and contemporary artists like, K.G. Subramanyam, Sudhir Patwardhan, Nalini Malini, Atul Dodiya and Sudarshan Shetty. The NGMA in Mumbai is run and administered as a subordinate office to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, which has two branches one at Mumbai and the other at Bengaluru.

Avid Learning, a public programming platform and cultural arm of the Essar Group, has conducted over 1000 programs and connected with more than 125,000 individuals since its inception in 2009. Driven by the belief that Learning Never Stops, AVID's multiple formats like Workshops, Panel Discussions, Gallery Walkthroughs, and Festival Platforms create a dynamic and interactive atmosphere that stimulates intellectual and creative growth across the fields of Culture & Heritage, Literature, Art and Innovation.

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