

## **AVID Online debuts A. R. T. 2020 – a new series – with a live panel discussion on Meme Art and the future of art engagement**

### **For Immediate Release**

**TIFA Working Studios and Avid Learning present Meme Art and Art Engagement in the Post-Internet World as the debut episode of a new Art Series **Art Redefined Today (A.R.T) 2020.****

*The description of the discussion is as below:*

We are all familiar with memes that broke the internet like the “Philosoraptor”, the “Kiki” and “Ice Bucket” Challenges, “Doge” “Shirtless Putin” and “Duckface”, “Gangnam Style”, “Keep Calm...”, “Dancing Baby” etc.

In a post-Internet world, social media is the new playground for art where the registers of consumption and originality are exploded and redefined. Memes are emerging as a humorous way to leverage and create Art historical images to educate, comment and shape/change cultural commentary.

Over 100 years after artist Marcel Duchamp created a cheeky rendition of the Mona Lisa on a cheap postcard (*L.H.O.O.K.*, 1919) where he drew a moustache and goatee on her face adding witty wordplay- and conceptual art as we know it was born- the impulse to combine and layer humour, social commentary and politics with visual art and popular culture is still going strong and has found its latest avatar in Meme Art. The concept itself derives from the French word *même* meaning “same” or “alike”.

Memes are not pure visual objects. Memes and Meme Art owe a great deal to fine art and the art-historical canon and are arguably the digital descendants of Dadaism, Pop Art, anti-consumerist performance art, graffiti etc.- and has today to become a genre all its own- one that has attitude and aesthetic.

Anyone can make a meme. They are ephemeral and economically viable. Memes follow a templated logic with a format that is ‘hackable’ and therefore easily edited, appropriated, can be endlessly replicated for mutable contexts and are highly accessible and interactive. Who is the artist and creator in Meme Art? The boundaries between artist and audience and public and private spaces have become elided. The performative quality that Memes take on- when they are shared and ‘go viral’, become controversial and even switch sides – is reminiscent of political and anti-art movements throughout art history. How has Meme art changed art engagement and democratised and proliferated knowledge of art history? Are memes Anti-art or have they contributed to transitioning fine art into the digital space that is truly democratic? Conversely, has fine art as we know it been diluted to also encompass graphic arts and illustration? Are memes museum-worthy?

*Independent Arts Manager, Exhibition Consultant, & creator of #ArtWorldMemes **Abhinit Khanna**, Content Creator (@deepfriedneurons), Curator of Meme Regime at TIFA Working Studios **Anuj Nakade** and Social Media Influencer @southbombaymemes **Nivedita Bansal** will be in conversation with *Illustrator, Animator and Independent Comic Publisher **Abhijeet Kini.****

*Read more about the Series below:*

This four-part series will re-energise conversations around Art and the future of Art by engaging with emerging issues and trends and also focusing on taking the conversation beyond – into the stratosphere of Indian contemporary art of tomorrow. Topics to be touched upon include Meme Art and the Future of Art

Engagement, Redefining Traditional Art in today's world, Identity and Body politics in 2020 and Intersections between Science, Technology and Art.

These speakers will unpack the meme phenomenon that has captured the imagination of an entire generation of future stakeholders for the arts.

**When:** Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 | 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

**RSVP:** [www.avidlearning.in](http://www.avidlearning.in)

**Press Email / Call:** Ayesah Dadachanji on [ayeshah.avid@gmail.com](mailto:ayeshah.avid@gmail.com) / +91 9820155297

---

### About the Speakers

**Abhinit Khanna** is an arts manager based in Bombay, India. He has over 9 years of work experience in the visual arts, design and creative business development. He has worked with award winning independent magazine Motherland published by Wieden + Kennedy and consulted GVK for their iconic Mumbai International Airport's T2 Art Programme – Jaya He! His recent consulting projects include Lodha Luxury Group where he was responsible for exhibition design, arts management and launch event for #LodhaxPicasso. He has micro-consulted Cultivate Art - a brand new arts platform for emerging artists and young collectors. He was listed in Verve Magazine's Art Issue as 40 young creatives to look out for in 2018. In April 2019, Abhinit was awarded the prestigious fellowship for his outstanding work as an arts manager and creative leader in South Asia by Art Think South Asia. In October 2019, Abhinit was awarded Young Cultural Innovator Fellowship at Salzburg Global Seminar.

**Anuj Nakade** is a resident meme snob at TIFA Working Studios and also curated the infamous Meme Regime that travelled with the show to Mumbai, Bangalore, Mysore and Goa. He holds a BA honours in psychology from Symbiosis College and is on his way to getting an LLB. He performed as an actor with a theatre Group "The Drama Queens" and also and flirts with the idea of standup. He hosts a podcast by the name "Deep Fried Neurons" which he started in 2018 to deal with meaninglessness in life and curiosity about events in human history. He also does video essays about memes on his channel for information to randomly exist in the space of the internet.

**Nivedita Bansal** is a social media influencer studying sustainability at Utrecht University. She is passionate about social issues and uses memes as a medium to raise awareness and provoke critical thought. Her page 'South Bombay Memes For Class Riddled Teens' makes fun of South Mumbai's rich and elite, addressing issues like classism and misuse of power by poking fun at their idiosyncrasies. In addition to her meme endeavours, she is interested in government reform, writing, animal welfare activism, and scientific research. Her goals are to bring meaningful, grassroots change to Indian society through public policy by joining politics or formulating innovative policies.

**Abhijeet Kini** is a Mumbai based illustrator, animator and independent comics publisher, known for his work in Tinkle comics and his own comic series "Angry Maushi" and "Fanboys". Winner of the Best Illustrator Awards Bronze (2018 and 2019) at the Comic Con India awards, Abhijeet has been a regular participant in all the Indian

comic cons and has also participated in international editions. Starting off cartooning for newspapers and magazines, he has been illustrating for Tinkle comics since 2004. He is also the co-founder of the animation and merchandise line Kinistudios.com. Abhijeet conducts workshops across all age groups on ideation, creative writing and drawing and comic making and is also a visiting faculty at leading academic institutions.

## About Partners

**TIFA Working Studios** is a multi-disciplinary platform for Creativity and Culture. They are an inclusive space for local involvement and global exchange, facilitating critical dialogue, cultural engagement, and experimental practice relevant to their evolving context. Since 2014, they have built a foundation to enrich interactions from intersectional layers of the social fabric and inspire dialogue and engagement therein through programming that brings forth immersive experiences and conversations.

**Avid Learning**, the cultural philanthropy arm of the Essar Group founded in 2009 has, over the past decade, grown into one of Mumbai's leading public programming platforms and is firmly entrenched in the country's wider cultural ecosystem. Our thoughtfully curated and diverse events embrace the spirit of collaboration to bring together the best of Indian and international writers, artists, intellectuals, cultural experts, policymakers and industry leaders across Visual Art, Literature, Culture and Heritage, Education, Design & Technology and the Performing Arts through engaging and dynamic formats like panel discussions, workshops & master classes, roundtables, lecture demonstrations, festival platforms, symposiums & conferences, multidisciplinary performances and walkthroughs. To date, AVID has conducted over 1250 programs and connected with more than 150,000 individuals, a widely eclectic group of life-long learners including students, patrons, practitioners, influencers, thought leaders and cultural & creative enthusiasts in Mumbai, Delhi, Jaipur, Bangalore, Goa and Gujarat. We have also made our mark internationally, with events and collaborations in Dubai and New York. We regularly collaborate and partner with institutions, organisations and initiatives like the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), (CSMVS) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), one of the apex bodies that impact cultural policy and the creative sector as a whole. We have been at the helm of programming at the Royal Opera House, Mumbai India's only surviving Opera House since its reopening in 2016. We believe in the importance of arts for social change and we regularly offer our support and platforms for Social Advocacy. In April 2020, we launched **AVID Online**, an online further learning campaign on our social media platforms for our followers to engage with a range of varied topics across the breadth of the arts. Our eclectic faculty of experts, thought leaders, practitioners and innovators continue to share their learnings, expertise and knowledge on our social media platforms with tailored content featured weekly for AVID's online community and beyond. In collaboration with long-term and new partners, we have since dimensionalised the campaign by re-introducing our existing offline formats and IPs and enhancing them for digital engagement. We have taken our content live with engaging masterclasses and virtual panel discussions and also built robust tangential campaigns and series in support of worthy causes and highlighting topical issues. To keep updated on our programmes, like us on <https://www.facebook.com/avidlearning/>, follow us on <https://twitter.com/AvidLearning> and Instagram: @avidlearning or log onto <http://www.avidlearning.in> #LearningNeverStops!

Watch all past AVID Online episodes on our dedicated YouTube Playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYt7Q44R5xkd4dRefvV3nFloOHEePgLAZ>