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I picked this up at the Jaipur Literature Festival recently. It offers a compelling look at Afghanistan's modern history through the lens of independent media. Mohseni, a key figure in Afghan broadcasting, details how his network navigated political upheavals, Taliban rule, and the fight for freedom of the press. It's a fascinating account of journalism's resilience in one of the world's most challenging regions.

Before the Coffee Gets Cold by Toshikazu Kawaguchi

Rohan Charles,
project manager, Malad



I picked it because the concept of a time-traveling café intrigued me — especially with its rule that you must return before your coffee cools. What I loved most was its emotional depth; the stories were bittersweet, yet heart-warming, reminding me how fleeting yet powerful moments can be in shaping our lives. The book is 'right where you left me,' if it were a happy song.

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Compiled by Nandini Varma

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platter, the crabs of Mumbai, for instance, are much sweeter than what you'd find in North America," she adds.

If you find the time to look away from the seafood extravaganza, you might even make a few new friends, we learn. "People are often hesitant in the beginning. They are probably wondering, 'How do I look devouring food with my bare hands?' or 'Should I ask for a fork?'. But when they see the other foodies getting hands-on at the table, their inhibitions fade away and it becomes a community activity. There are no judgments. You can pick what you want to eat and how you want to eat it," she signs off. There's a lesson for the world somewhere in there, if you ask us.

ON February 28 and March 1; 7 pm to 10 pm **AT** Hava Rooftop, Khar Pali Road, Bandra West. **LOG ON TO** district.in **ENTRY** ₹3,899

The Kala Ghoda canvas



For French photographer Philippe Calia, Mumbai is the muse for his solo show, as he explores its myths, illusions and poetry, including Kolatkar and the Bombay Poets

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AS I play/The city slowly reconstructs itself/Numbered stone by numbered stone,...' wrote Arun Kolatkar in his famed Kala Ghoda poems. Not much has changed. "There is an impermanence that permeates through the city," admits photographer and artist Philippe Calia. The Paris-born artist's latest show, The Second Law that opens this week has a deep-rooted connection with the city, and Mumbai's very own poet icon, Kolatkar.



Arun Kolatkar. **PIC COURTESY/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

"The show's journey began in 2011," shares Calia, recalling the first year of his arrival in the city of Mumbai. Moving to Borivli, he would often spend time roaming around the city, photographing its many forms. "It was only in 2015-16 that I began putting together these photographs and videos in an attempt to make sense of them," he reveals.

It was also during this time that he discovered the Bombay Poets, and Arun Kolatkar in particular. "The encounter with the works of Kolatkar

was quite decisive for me, in particular with his Kala Ghoda poems. I was sensitive to his visions of the city, the objects and the potential beauty of the mundane. It also helped me build an understanding of the city," he says.

Evoking found objects and installations through photography, text and video, Calia seeks to shape Mumbai's persona. He views the city as illusory by nature. "One day things are present; the next day they disappear. Photography and art is an attempt to freeze the moment and give it a certain shape, even as reality tends towards decay and inevitability," shares the artist.

The show will feature Calia's street photography countered against set photographs within familiar city spaces like the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and Capitol Cinema. "It is like a window into the subconscious of the city where the familiar and unfamiliar are juxtaposed improbably, the way dreams appear to us," he explains.

The experimentation is not limited to the visual experi-



Atemporal Creatures (Bombay Natural History Society), 2024

ence. Poetry also adds to the exploration. A key installation is the translations of Kolatkar's poem, The Pattern. On one level, Calia wished to evoke the motif of the recurring pattern visually. "This installation is made of over a hundred small photographs that embody the recurring pattern. And yet, each photograph will also show you a marked difference in those patterns," he points out.

The second level is achieved through an exploration of the city's subconscious. He got the poem translated from English to Hindi, from Hindi to Gujarati and so on by legal writers across the Fort district — a nod to the gallery's Fort location. It also resulted in poems that turned Kolatkar's verses into something new, an homage. In his artist text, Calia writes, "In cities like Bombay, the everyday is experienced through multiple languages, in the form of jumps, cuts, assemblage, collage, bricolage, sometimes within the same word...The idealist — some would say nostalgic — can thus proclaim that translation is Bombay's official language."

Push him further, he laughs saying, "Being French, I remember reading Vile Parle on the station signboard, and translating it to 'A speaking village' in French." In the end, the show reflects the city's own surreal nature. Calia concludes, "It raises the question of Mumbai as Mayanagari — what is real or unreal? Photography is the perfect medium to raise this question, since it enables us to create a distance from the photographed phenomena and reflect upon the question."



Pas de Deux (Jayanthi's translation)



Three Times, 2024. **PICS COURTESY/PHILIPPE CALIA AND TARQ**



Decisive Arrangement (with Mahek and Kalim), 2024



Philippe Calia

FREE FROM February 27 to March 29; 11 am to 6.30 pm **AT** Tarq, KK Navsari Chambers, ground floor, Fort.



A view of the Kala Ghoda precinct. **FILE PIC**