



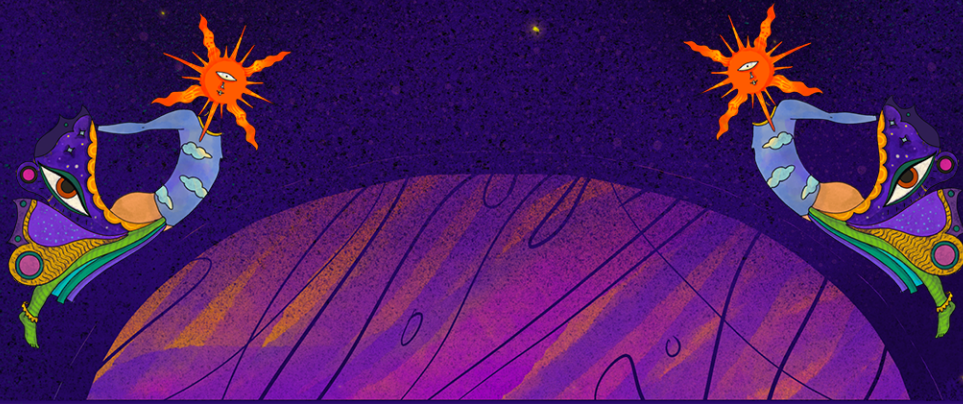
BANGALORE
8-10 DECEMBER 2023

gender bender

Gender Bender 2023

Gender Bender is a multi-arts festival that celebrates fresh perspectives of gender. It is an initiative to create and foster much needed spaces for important conversations that aim to contribute to our constantly evolving understanding of gender and its implications, including the need for intersectionality with audiences and artists alike. We aim to showcase works that enable and empower path breaking and experimental artistic endeavours.

2023 marks the 9th edition of the festival, and will feature performances, conversations and workshops over three days at two locations- The Bangalore International Centre and Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan, Bangalore.

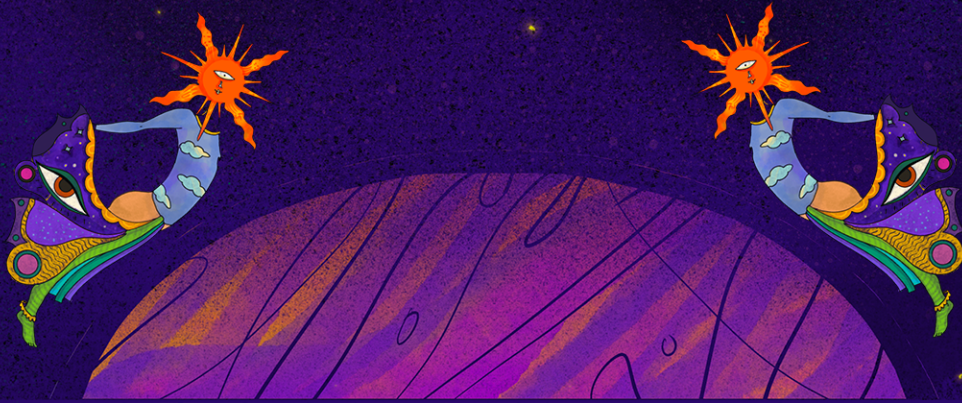


Gender Bender 2023

The 10 recipients of the Gender Bender grant for 2023 will also showcase their works ranging from long form zines and performances to music videos, culinary experiences, films and podcasts.

Talks and conversations will feature sign language interpretation.

Gender Bender is a joint project of Sandbox Collective and the Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Bangalore and is conceptualised, curated and organised by Sandbox Collective.



gender bender

FREE ENTRY

SCHEDULE

08 DECEMBER

Bangalore International Centre



5:00
PM

BOOK LAUNCH AND READING

Ottam aur Anya Natak
(The Race & Other Plays)

5:00
PM

CONVERSATION

Sapan Saran (Playwright) &
Sharda Ugra (Sports Journalist)

7:00
PM

PERFORMANCE 18+

Be-Loved
Music. Theatre. Queerness. Ishq



■ Seminar Hall

■ Auditorium

gender bender

FREE ENTRY

SCHEDULE



09 DECEMBER

Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Bangalore

10:30
AM

DRAG STORY HOUR & TEA PARTY

For Children & Adults
With Gaysi Family

3:00
PM

MEET THE GRANTEES

Ashok Vish (Filmmaker) with
Inner Rhymes & Shradha Raj

11:00
AM

GRANTEE EXHIBITION

Showcase of artworks by
Gender Bender grantees
(Open till 5 PM)

4:30
PM

LIBRARY TALK

Gender Identity : 'Books &
Writing' with Vijeta Kumar
(Writer & Educator)

11:00
AM

GENDER BENDER LIBRARY

Read. Listen. Discuss. Chill.
(Open till 5 PM)

5:30
PM

GRANTEE SHOWCASE

Performance. Film. Music.

12:30
PM

MEET THE GRANTEES

Ashok Vish (Filmmaker) with
Rajiv Bera & The Pomelo

6:30
PM

TANGO OPENHOUSE

Come TanGo with
Bangalore Queer Tango

■ Library

■ Auditorium

gender bender

FREE ENTRY

SCHEDULE



10 DECEMBER

Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Bangalore

11:00
AM

GRANTEE EXHIBITION

Showcase of artworks by
Gender Bender grantees
(Open till 5 PM)

4:30
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Performance. Film. Music.

12:30
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MEET THE GRANTEES

Gopika Bashi (Feminist Campaigner)
with Soumya Mishra &
Mavelinadu Collective

7:00
PM

CONVERSATION

Preeti Panchayati : Jaydeep Sarkar
(Filmmaker), Shilok Mukatti (Poet)
& Tejas AP (Dev. Communicator)

3:00
PM

MEET THE GRANTEES

Gopika Bashi (Feminist Campaigner)
with Santoshpur Anuchintan &
Mohd Intiyaz

8:30
PM

GENDER BENDER AFTER PARTY

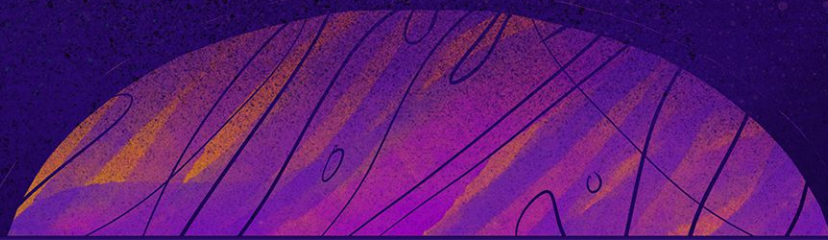
Drink. Dance. Dhamaal.

Library

Auditorium

Indiranagar Social

Curated Section



Ottam (The Race) and other plays by Sapan Saran- Book Release & Conversation

Lekhak ki begum, Sohar & Ottam three plays that place a female protagonist will be read by actors. The book launch will be followed by a conversation between the playwright Sapan Saran and renowned sports writer and journalist Sharda Ugra.



Performance: Be-Loved
Music. Theatre. Queerness. Ishq.

by Tamaasha Theatre, Mumbai. Directed by Sapan Saran.

The performance features the writings of numerous queer writers.



Tamaasha Theatre's

BE-LOVED

Directed by Sapan Saran



Drag Story Hour & Tea Party with Gaysi Family

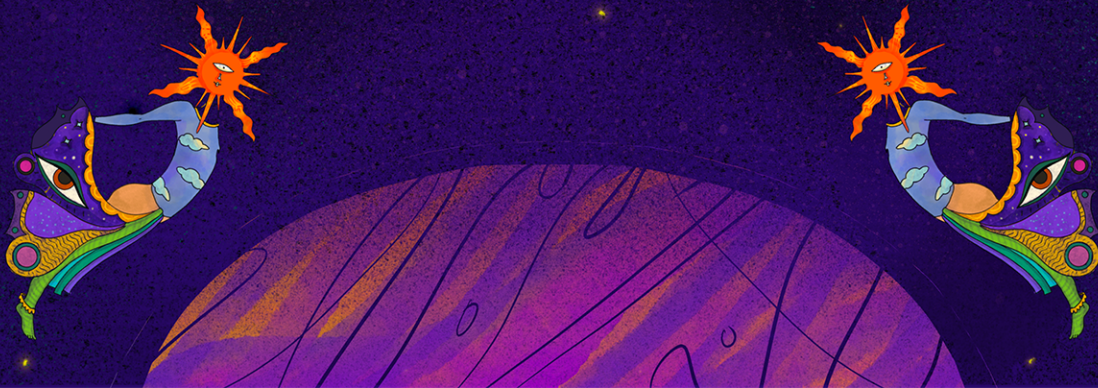
A tea party and children's book reading session with Princess Sayantika. We will read "The Boy in the Cupboard" by Harshala Gupte, illustrated by Priya Dali and "The Many Colours of Anshu" by Anshuman Sathe.

For children and adults.



Library Talk

Educator and writer Vijeta Kumar will helm over two days of the festival an interactive conversation on books, libraries, book shops and writing with a special focus on Gender and Identity.



Come TanGo

Tango Open house with Bangalore Queer Tango

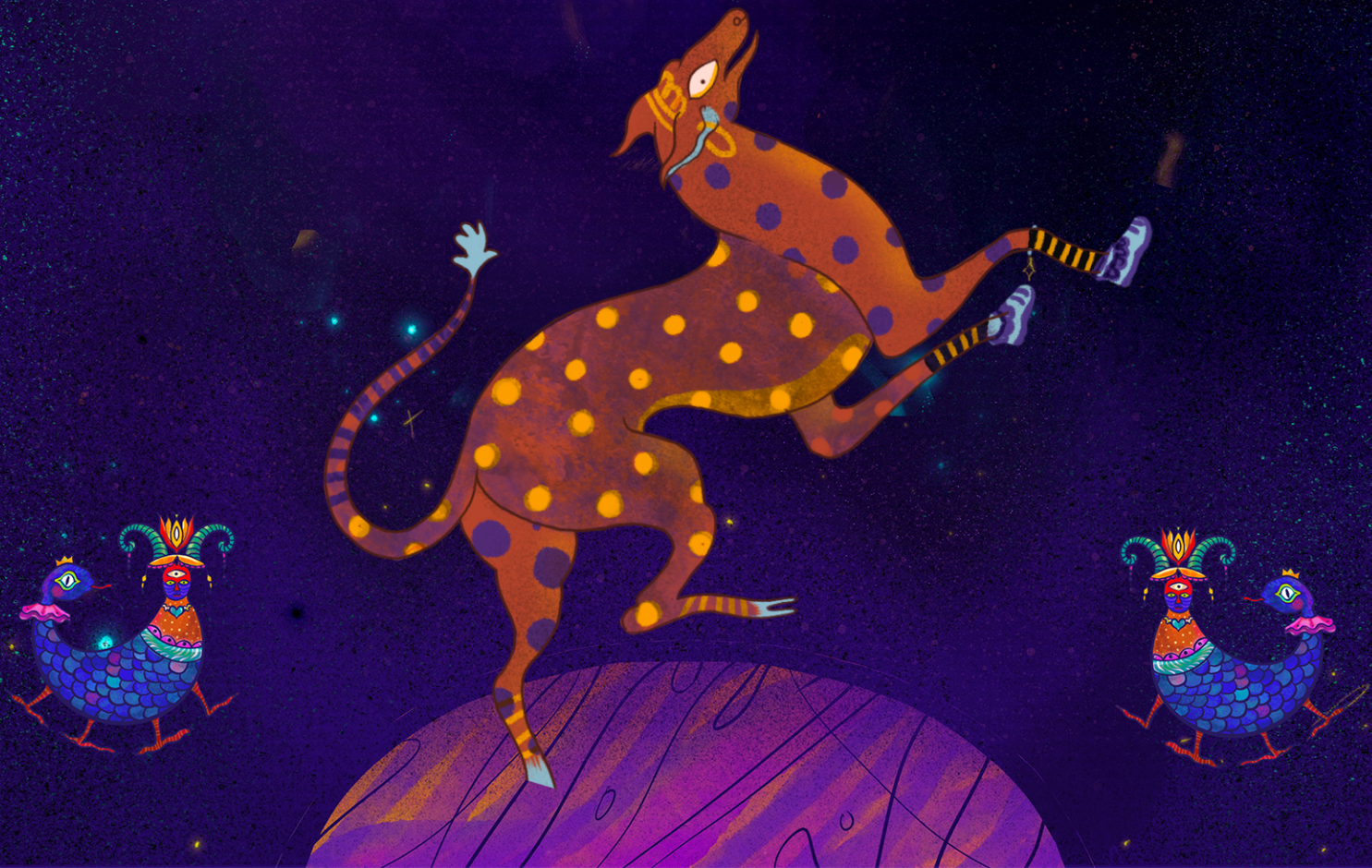
Open to anyone who wants to watch, learn and try their hand (and feet) at dancing the Tango.



Preeti Panchayati – The Panchayat of Love

A conversation on normalising Queer Relationships

Jaydeep Sarkar (Filmmaker, Co-creator of the highly acclaimed series Rainbow Rishta) Shilok Mukatti (Poet, Performer, Intersectional Feminist) and Tejas AP (Development Communicator and Artist)



Gender Bender Library

A crowd sourced feminist library featuring books, comics, zines and other material. Open all day for people to browse, read, listen to talks and discuss anything and everything to do with books and literature.



Meet the Grantees

Ashok Vish will be in conversation with the Gender Bender grantees.



ASHOK VISH (FILMMAKER & LENSBASED ARTIST)



SHRADHA RAJ



INNER RHYMES

&



THE POMELO



RAJIV BERA



Meet the Grantees

Gopika Bashi will be in conversation with the Gender Bender grantees.



GOPIKA BASHI (FEMINIST CAMPAIGNER AND FACILITATOR)



MOHD INTIYAZ



SANTOSHPUR ANUCHINTAN



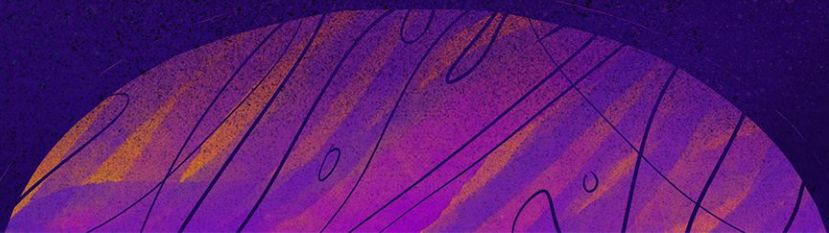
MAVELINADU COLLECTIVE



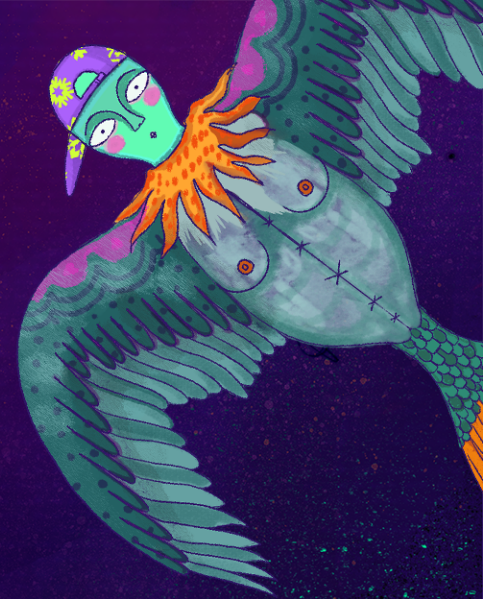
SOUMYA MISHRA



Grantees



Sid Ashok, Aka Inner Rhymes is a 26 year old Non-Binary rapper. The artist is known as one of the co-founders of @Wanandaf, Bangalore's premier Hip-Hop movement. Inner Rhymes initially garnered a buzz in the city's underground scene by releasing tracks revolving around themes of vulnerability and mental health. However since openly coming out of the closet, this Bengaluru enby is set to further expand the horizons of queer Hip-Hop with their upcoming debut album.



Transgression

The track "Transgression" is one out of several tracks on their upcoming album "Closeted Thoughts & Painted Nails" which is set to release in early 2024. Transgression, a play on the words "Trans" and "aggression", is a Trap Metal queer Hip-hop anthem, written and performed by Inner Rhymes, directed and shot by Mahishaa, powered by Neelavarna, a media house collective that works with marginalized communities and produced by \$ynthesis and H8this.

Inner Rhymes
(they/them), Karnataka

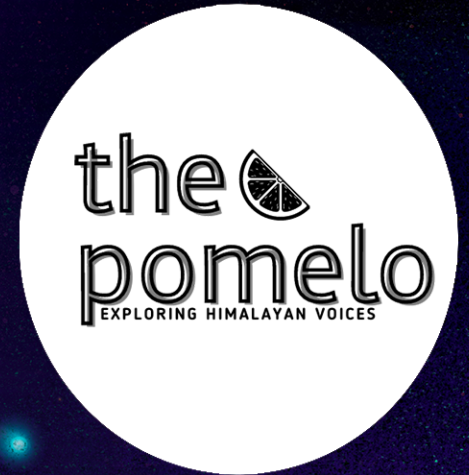




The Pomelo is a small team of women from Nepal and India working to explore Himalayan voices. They are committed to diminishing gaps, those that arise from geographical differences, accentuating their marginality in terms of politics, demography, and identity mostly through writing that they publish on their digital platform.

In Her Footsteps : Archiving Women's Oral Narratives in the Eastern Himalayas

The Eastern Himalayan region is known for its diversity and also for both migration from the bordering nation-states, as well as migration outside the region. The project aims to record and capture the oral narratives of women that would leave for further interpretation in the future, while also documenting stories of these migrations. Through these paths, the Pomelo hopes to create an oral archive of stories that is slowly being lost in the abyss, due to the lack of researchers working on the migrants' histories who are now authentic Indians. Women's stories also give us a more nuanced insight into how society was structured. Women's migration in South Asia has usually been seen as a by-product of male outmigration, hence they want to focus on women who migrated for various reasons other than marriage in a different country.



The Pomelo,
West Bengal



Born on June 6, 1995 in Jharkhand India, Mohd. Intiyaz pursued his Master's in Painting at Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi. His artistic sensitivity has been informed by the social situations and family experiences during his growing years. The thematic line of his work focuses mainly on his childhood memories marked by experiences of migration and marginalization. He has participated in numerous residencies, biennales, and exhibitions in India, most recent being his solo show Baad Me Aana (Come Later) at Method, a contemporary art space in Mumbai.



Mohd Intiyaz (he/him),
Delhi

मर्द मेकअप नहीं करते? - Men don't wear makeup?

In Ramlila, makeup plays a crucial role in transforming actors' appearances to match their characters and be visible from a distance. The use of makeup in theater, often referred to as stage makeup, involves specific techniques and products to enhance facial features, create illusions, and ensure visibility under stage lights.

Initially marketed mainly to women, makeup has evolved to be inclusive of all genders, including men. The integration of makeup into men's lives stems from changing societal perceptions and norms related to masculinity, grooming and self-expression. As society moves towards a more flexible understanding of gender, traditional boundaries defining what is considered masculine or feminine are eroding. This shift encourages individuals to explore and express themselves without constraints based on gender.





Suraksha Kosh

'Suraksha Kosh' is an illustrated lexicon for domestic violence survivors, containing all the legal concepts and terminology used by police and courts – in English and Hindi. Legal processes and terminology used in the Indian justice system are very intimidating for anybody trying to access it. Given the current patriarchal and archaic family structures in India, this experience is amplified much more for a domestic violence survivor. Moreover, domestic abuse survivors also have difficulty communicating their concerns or even reiterating incidents faced by them to the police or legal professionals due to language barriers, trauma and even fear of repercussions. This lexicon, with simple explanations, illustrations, along with actionable information on recourses available for availing protection, aims to be a first step in reducing the intimidation barrier and serve as a communication bridge between survivors and legal professionals, ensuring they can articulate their situations and receive appropriate assistance.

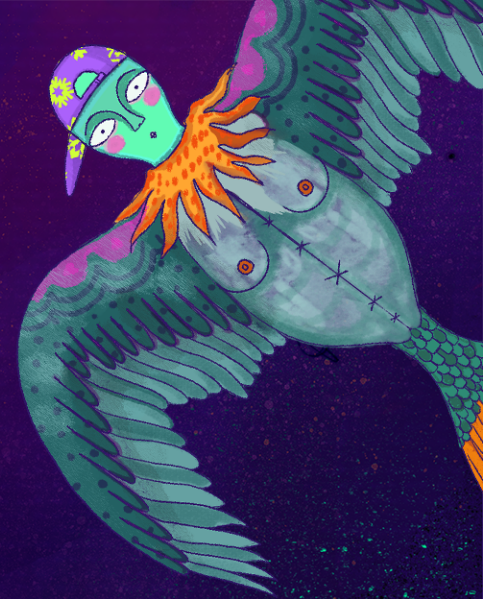
Shonottra is a lawyer working in the development sector making access to legal information and processes easier for the citizenry. Her passion lies in using art and creative writing to achieve her goals of simplifying Indian law and making access to justice a little less intimidating - one tiny doodle at a time.



Shonottra Kumar
(she/her),
Maharashtra



Soumya is a young neuroqueer development sector professional primarily interested in leveraging digital mediums to amplify marginalised voices, bridge existing gaps, promote inclusivity and accessibility. They are an Oxfam Young Fellow, and their work and approaches are very much informed by their lived experiences. Building a community and fostering a sense of belongingness have been crucial in their work approach. Soumya is building a podcast—Atypical Dikkatein—to chronicle the stories of queer-disabled folx in India as these stories are often relegated to the margins.



Soumya Mishra
(she/they), Odisha

Atypical Dikkatein

Soumya Mishra believes that the mainstream feminist movement has a long way to go before queer, neurodivergent, and disabled folx feel included in it. The primary question that drives her inquiry is how she can contribute to the crippling of space and time, and neuroqueer intersectionality, so that more bodyminds can be included in queer and feminist spaces. To achieve this, she is building a podcast—Atypical Dikkatein—to chronicle the lives and experiences of queer, neurodivergent, and disabled folx in India, pushing back against the constant invisibilization they face in their everyday lives.





Rajiv is a writer, cook, social justice lawyer and (un)learner. They have spent the past decade working with QTBPPOC refugees in the UK and founded the food pop-up 'Queer Masala' in London in 2019. Their healing-centred creative practice interconnects images, words and food, as a means of nurturing, affirming and resisting.

Queer Masala: "Taste Buds"

The core of this project is a series of intimate gatherings centring queer and trans folk, during which culinary stimuli falling within the five categories of taste perception - salty, sour, bitter, sweet and umami – acts as a prompt for free-writing around identity. As such, contributors are invited to sit with a word or phrase which speaks to their personhoods and politics. They are then guided to intersect these notions with the sensory prompts to instigate some spontaneous prose. The group shares what has been generated with each other, reflecting on any points of contrast, synchronicity and what the writing process felt like for them. The emphasis is on collectively holding space for whatever constellations emerge. The sessions end around a meal. Words authored during the gatherings will in the future be collaged with images & recipes and archived in a publication.



Rajiv Bera
(they/them),
Goa



Shradha Raj is a Bangalore-based actor, theatremaker, director and writer. Her work mainly centres around Caste and Gender in Kannada and English. She believes that stories make the world go round.



Shradha Raj
(she/her),
Bangalore

“Madvena Manena?” - “Marriage or Home?”

The scarcity of female filmmakers, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, within the Kannada film industry is reflected in the films produced in the industry. Her project takes the form of a short film that delves into themes of sisterhood, desire, and marginalized rituals that do not center around God. The narrative revolves around sisters with a significant age gap, resulting in differences in their generational perspectives and opinions on various topics. The film explores how these sisters navigate through their distinctions.





Akramul Hijra is a self-taught artist, researcher, curator, author and journalist. Their concentration revolves around queerness, gender and sexuality, feminism, technology, public movement, ethics, spirituality, rituals, myth and many more. They are passionate about exploring different art and research disciplines like film, performance, theatre, dance, and journal. They initiated Tehai: An Interdisciplinary Art Initiative in 2018, which works for the rights of the queer community in Bangladesh, bringing together queer, non-binary and other like-minded people to create cultural conversations and connections.

"Beula Soti"

"Beula Soti" is Akramul Hijra's first full-length film based on poet Vijaygupta's "Padma Purana". One of the aims of this initiative is to break the veil of the struggle for the rights of marginalised gender communities in Bangladesh and engage them more deeply with the mainstream art movement.



Akramul Hijra (they/them),
Dhaka



Santoshpur Anuchintan is a queer performing art collective led by artistic director, Dr. Gaurav Das, who primarily works to promote inclusivity through art. They started their journey in 2020 by creating theatrical pieces that dismiss the heteronormative narratives that have done injustice to those who live in the periphery and resulted in a history of marginalization and oppression. Among other works, Anuchintan has also created a Disability Art Collective (DAC) with 11 autistic individuals where the key focus has been on the formation of a new pedagogy for drama intervention therapy.



"In Search of Goddess Sitala"

"In Search of Goddess Sitala" is a multimedia theatre performance that reflects on the lives of the contemporary female impersonators in "Sitala Jatra" beyond their performative gait. Sitala (from sital, meaning cool; literally, the cool one), a non-Aryan deity, is the much-dreaded goddess or mother of spring diseases. Sitala Jatra or Sitala Mangal, is a performance ritual, that depicts the struggle of Sitala to establish herself as a Goddess, is mostly performed in the rural parts of West Bengal. The performance generally entails singing more than fifty songs accompanied by a musical choir and 200 paragraphs of dialogues.



Santoshpur Anuchintan,
West Bengal-





Mavelinadu is a multicultural platform, publication house and movement space created by and for marginalised castes and tribes to nurture anti-caste art, stories and scholarship. They aim to facilitate researchers, writers and artists to reclaim and debrahmanise their histories, highlight lived experiences, and build solidarities within the larger social justice movement. Their pilot project - Debrahmanising Gender, is aimed at investigating how caste and gender produce and sustain each other, expressed through various mediums including research, fiction, poetry, visual art and zines.

Debrahmanising Gender//Zines

Dominant queer narratives in India tend to romanticise pre-colonial times as an era of sexual freedom and gender expression. But for marginalised castes, existing outside not just the binary, but caste-permissible femininities and masculinities is punished by society at large. Bahujan queer and trans perspectives on gender are underrepresented and need to be highlighted to create a more inclusive, accurate historical record. These experiences across communities form challenges to brahmanical heteronormative patriarchy, becoming their own modes of resistance. Expanding on Mavelinadu Collective's work on Debrahmanising Gender, this project brings together three gender non-conforming artists from the DBA community - Aindriya Barua, Navya and Priyanka Paul, to create long-form zines that will explore the subject through their own lived experience.



Mavelinadu Collective,
Maharashtra



July 2023

The eminent Jury that selected this year's grantees.



Afrah Shafiq



Mary Therese Kurkalang



Rajyashri Goody



Vqueeram



Gender Bender is a joint project of



**GOETHE
INSTITUT**
MAX MUELLER
BHAVAN

Supported by

(gaysi)