

it's FRI DAY!



MERIJN VAN DER VLIET

A scene from a *Parallel Cities* performance at a library in Utrecht, The Netherlands.



RAMESH SHARMA

The protagonist of *Rooftop: Review* and her audience who also double as the supporting cast on the terrace of her Tilak Nagar home. The performance was a part of *Parallel Cities*, a play that delves into the lives of people across different cities.

An Unscripted Cityscape

by Barsali Bhattacharyya

CENTRAL Delhi looks stunning from the 15th floor on a cold winter evening. The city lights twinkle bright several hundred feet below and the sound of passing traffic is borne up by the chilly wind. A visually impaired woman sits nearby and speaks about her life in this sprawling city. This is a play unlike any other you have ever seen. The blind woman is the protagonist, the rooftop is the stage, and the audience unknowingly slip into the shoes of the supporting cast. There is no script, free flow of conversation marks the course of the performance.

Titled *Rooftop: Review*, the play is part of a four-piece theatrical performance called 'Parallel Cities', curated by director Stefan Kaegi from Germany and interdisciplinary artist Lola Arias from Argentina. After travelling to Berlin, Buenos Aires, Warsaw, Zurich and Kolkata, 'Parallel Cities' rides to Delhi on the back

The 15th Bharat Rang Mahotsav brings an offsite theatrical experiment that will prod you to look at familiar public spaces differently

of the 15th Bharat Rang Mahotsav, the annual theatre festival of the National School of Drama (NSD).

True to the belief that all the world's a stage, this performance takes place all over the city. The four pieces vary in form - some are for the ears, and some for the eyes. The National Archives Library on Janpath, Select Citywalk shopping mall in Saket, the NSD campus and a rooftop on Tilak Marg are the venues which will host this unique experiment.

"Libraries, shopping malls and campuses are uninteresting yet cogent

components of city life. They are omnipresent in every city across the world and are the best stages to observe the theatre of life", says Kaegi. "For me, theatre is a tool for understanding society. Our performers are not professionals - but common people from the city we are performing in. In the case of Delhi, Priti Prakash Prajapati, a talented singer and professor of Hindi at Lady Shriram College, is the sole protagonist of *Rooftop: Review*."

While the essential objective is always to observe society, as the performance moves from one city to another the ideas are suit-

ably contextualised. "In India, public spaces are crowded and it is hard to feel lonely. Our work helps people convert these spaces into platforms to express themselves better", he adds. A welcome break from our regular, routine-bound and detached urban existence, 'Parallel Cities' offers a different perspective on the spaces we inhabit. The faintest sound is heard and the slightest gesture is noticed. In the end, although you have only been reading at the library or walking through the mall or sitting on a rooftop, the experience appears almost magical. You will surely reflect on it for a long time.

— 'Parallel Cities Delhi 2013' is on till Jan. 18. To register your place, call +919582297249

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— Stefan Kaegi, Curator



by Uma Nair

HIS trademark beret perched on his head and a Sabyasachi stole carelessly thrown over his shoulder, Paresh Maity could pass for a character out of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* as he gives an exclusive preview of his 'Venetian Odyssey' that opens at Art Alive on January 28.

"When I went to London looking at the works of J.M.W. Turner, I discovered an artist that

A PAINTER'S ROVING LENS

