

Ahmedabad
University

SABARMATI
INTERNATIONAL
CONTEMPORARY
ARTS FESTIVAL
AHMEDABAD

11-18 March 2025

In Partnership with



The Country of Focus
- Poland





About Ahmedabad University

Ahmedabad University was founded in 2009 by Ahmedabad Education Society (AES), a non-profit educational foundation located in Ahmedabad. Ahmedabad University is envisioned to become a global leader that provides liberal arts education within a research university. Interdisciplinary curriculum, experiential learning environment, and research define an Ahmedabad education. We are reimagining the classroom beyond the physical walls and focusing on the whole development of each student in an engaging and nurturing environment.

Being located in the centre of a vibrant and entrepreneurial city, our education is contextually rich and globally connected. Our world-class education attracts 3500 students from 22 states of India and seven countries.

Festival Curators

Deepan Sivaraman

Professor Deepan Sivaraman is a renowned theatre director, scenographer, dramaturge, curator, and educator. He is a scenography postgraduate from Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, London, and the founding Artistic Director of Oxygen Theatre Company (Kerala) and Performance Studies Collective (Delhi). He has taught at leading institutions, including Wimbledon College of Art, Central Saint Martins, National School of Drama, and Ahmedabad University, where he is currently a professor.

With over 25 years in theatre, he has directed and designed more than 70 productions across India and Europe, showcasing his work at prestigious festivals like Avignon, Wuzhen, ITFOK, Prithvi, and Bharat Rang Mahotsav. He has received numerous accolades, including the Kerala Sangeet Natak Academy Award (2012) and the Mahindra Excellence National Theatre Awards (2010 and 2018). His acclaimed works include Khasakkinte Ithihasam (2015), Spinal Cord (2009), Dark Things (2018), Peer Gynt (2010, 2023), Ubu Roi (2012, 2023), and The Cabinet of Dr Caligari among others. Routledge's 21st Century Performance Reader discusses him as a key contemporary theatre practitioner who contributed significantly to the language of theatre.



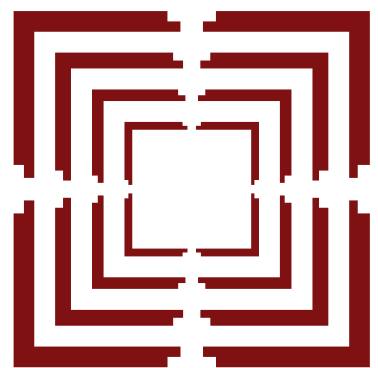
Neena Naishadh

If her travels in India and globally and all her experiences are an indicator, Neena Naishadh's biography is a rich tapestry of her myriad interests. A culturalist and an ardent art lover, Neena is a proud denizen of 'Amdavad' and holds a golden key to its nuanced culture. In promotions and talks she organises for travellers to explore with her; this shows up as creative explorations of art, crafts, textiles, and heritage, always recounted with love and knowledge and an immense desire to share and enrich others with her own experiences. She believes that Ahmedabad deserves a global stage and works to promote it with a connoisseur's attitude through the stimulating medium of art, cuisine, and culture.

Neena is an engaging conversationist and a compelling crusader who attracts young talent to help build Ahmedabad's heritage, art, and cultural identity. Neekoe Foundation, her not-for-profit foundation, was formed to expose the city to top-quality media productions and art exhibitions from India and around the globe. The foundation's vision is to 'change minds through Arts,' and she builds impact and influence through discourse, debate, and discussions with stalwarts from the creative world. From films to art, book clubs, and travel, Neena has invited quality theatre, film, and art shows to exhibit in Ahmedabad. In the past years, they have initiated the Neekoe Artist Grant for young minds, a unique initiative where the grantees are mentored through the programme and motivated and encouraged to think out of the box.

She was a part of the production of two critically acclaimed films by Amol Palekar and continues to build content for children to promote art and aesthetics in the city. Belonging to a family traditionally involved in textiles, Neena's insight into the textiles of Gujarat and knowledge of private collections is something that she shares with travellers and enthusiasts. Neena runs a Travel Management Company, Uniglobe Perfect Connections, for corporate travel and Indians travelling in India and abroad and has been a past chair for CII IWN.





**Ahmedabad
University**

SABARMATI INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ARTS FESTIVAL AHMEDABAD

11-18 March 2025

Throughout history, art has served as a powerful catalyst for transformation, challenging societal norms and shaping cultural development. Ahmedabad University presents The Sabarmati International Contemporary Arts Festival (SICAFA) and invites you to contemplate the dynamic role of art in reflecting, shaping, and propelling human progress.

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In an era marked by rapid technological, cultural shifts, the concept of SICAFAs' curatorial theme 2025, **ART LEADS**, underscores the profound impact of creative expression on forging new pathways – emotionally, intellectually, and philosophically. This festival explores how artists, through their diverse mediums and voices, guide us toward new understandings, offering questioning perspectives that inspire action.

From traditional to contemporary forms, art has historically served as a beacon for transformation and envisioning future possibilities. Whether through the poignant brushstrokes of a painter, the staged debates of theatrical performances, the bold statements of street art, or the immersive realms of virtual experiences, art pushes boundaries and expands our perceptions.

ART LEADS aims to present a rich tapestry of artistic expressions. Each work showcased in SICAFAs serves as both a response to its time and a positive catalyst for the future.



Event Schedule

<p>A Student Photography Exhibition</p> <p>Portraits from the City</p>	<p>11 - 18 MARCH 2025 9:00 AM - 7:00 PM IST Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>	<p>Amitosh Nagpal's</p> <p>Middle Class Dream of a Summer Night</p>	<p>THUR 13 MARCH 2025 7:00 PM IST Tagore Hall Paldi, Ahmedabad</p>
<p>Roysten Abel's</p> <p>The Manganiyar Seduction</p>	<p>TUE 11 MARCH 2025 7:30 PM IST Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>	<p>Kerala's</p> <p>Ritual Theatre Theyyam</p>	<p>SAT 15 MARCH 2025 8:30 PM IST Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>
<p>Rabindranath Tagore's</p> <p>Jeevit Ya Mrit Directed by Anuradha Kapur featuring Seema Biswas</p>	<p>WED 12 MARCH 2025 3:00 PM IST School of Arts and Sciences Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>	<p>Patrick Sims's</p> <p>Puppetry Show</p>	<p>SUN MON 16 - 17 MARCH 2025 7:00 PM IST Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>
<p>Rabindranath Tagore's</p> <p>Jeevit Ya Mrit Directed by Anuradha Kapur featuring Seema Biswas</p>	<p>WED 12 MARCH 2025 7:00 PM IST School of Arts and Sciences Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>	<p>Teatr Biuro Podrozy's</p> <p>Carmen Funebre</p>	<p>SUN 16 MARCH 2025 8:30 PM IST Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>
<p>West Bengal's</p> <p>Folkdance Purulia Chhau</p>	<p>WED 12 MARCH 2025 8:30 PM IST School of Arts and Sciences Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>	<p>Saumya Joshi's</p> <p>Oh Womaniya</p>	<p>MON 17 MARCH 2025 8:30 PM IST Tagore Hall Paldi, Ahmedabad</p>
<p>A SYMPOSIUM</p> <p>Art and Democracy</p>	<p>WED 12 MARCH 2025 4:30 PM IST Room 004, School of Arts and Sciences, Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>	<p>Girish Karnad's</p> <p>Hayavadana Directed by Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry</p>	<p>TUE 18 MARCH 2025 7:00 PM IST Tagore Hall Paldi, Ahmedabad</p>
<p>A SYMPOSIUM</p> <p>Art and Democracy</p>	<p>MON 17 MARCH 2025 2:00 PM IST Room 004, School of Arts and Sciences, Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>	<p>Indian Fusion Music</p> <p>Anirudh Verma Collective</p>	<p>TUE 18 MARCH 2025 9:00 PM IST Ahmedabad University Central Campus</p>

A STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

Portraits from the City

11 - 18 MARCH 2025

Ahmedabad University
Central Campus

Roysten Abel's

The Manganiyar Seduction

Directed by Roysten Abel, this grand ensemble of 40+ Rajasthani musicians offers a mesmerising auditory and visual experience. Performers occupy glowing pods stacked in a four-story structure, their music intensifying as more pods light up. A powerful synthesis of sound and spectacle, this performance is an unforgettable celebration of Rajasthan's musical heritage.



TUE 11 MARCH 2025

7:30 PM IST

Ahmedabad University
Central Campus

Rabindranath Tagore's Jeevit Ya Mrit

Directed by Anuradha Kapur
Adaptation by Geetanjali Shree
featuring Seema Biswas

Kadambini, a widow with no children, lives in her brother-in-law's house and shares a deep bond with her little nephew, her only friend there. One night, she unexpectedly dies, and her body is taken to the cremation ground by the servants of the household. There, she appears to awaken, and the servants run away terrified. She wanders about, believing herself to be a ghost, neither alive nor dead. A man helps her reach her childhood friend Yogmaya's house. While Yogmaya is happy to see her, Kadambini's presence brings strange tensions in the house. Eventually, Yogmaya's husband discovers that Kadambini is meant to have died many months ago. Yogmaya throws Kadambini out, believing that this ghost will destroy her family. Kadambini returns home, where her brother-in-law's son is happy to see her, but others are terrified of her presence, refusing to accept her as alive. In despair, Kadambini throws herself into a well, proving by her death that she was alive.

WED 12 MARCH 2025

3:00 PM and 7:00 PM IST

School of Arts and Sciences
Ahmedabad University
Central Campus



West Bengal's Folkdance Purulia Chhau

Purulia Chau is a dance form thriving within the indigenous communities of West Bengal's Purulia district, particularly in the Baghmundi, Arsha, Jhalda-I & II, Balarampur, Bandwan, and Barabazar regions. The intricate masks, central to the performance, are crafted in Purulia's Charida village, a tradition rooted in the 150-year patronage of King Madan Mohan Singh Deo of Baghmundi. This unique dance holds a significant place among the indigenous peoples of the Chotonagpur Plateau.

Deeply intertwined with the ritual and religious life of the region, Chau is prominently featured during Chait Parab, a festival held around April/May at local Shiva temples. Evolving from its earlier form, Ekoira Chau, performed by a single, unmasked dancer, Purulia Chau absorbed influences from other local dances during the popular Gajan festival. Today, elaborate costumes and elaborately crafted masks, each revealing the character portrayed, bring to life stories drawn from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranic texts.



WED **12 MARCH** 2025

8:30 PM IST

School of Arts and Sciences
Ahmedabad University
Central Campus

A SYMPOSIUM

Art and Democracy

Explore the relationship between artistic practices and democracy, examining how art influences democratic ideals and vice versa with the symposium on Art and Democracy. Art, as a form of social commentary and civic engagement, amplifies marginalised voices and challenges democratic values, while democracy offers a space for artistic freedom. The symposium will focus on how art in India contributes to democratic engagement, social justice, and cultural transformation. It will delve into the complex connections between art, governance, and societal change, shedding light on the role of creative forces in shaping history and our relationship with the world. The symposium will bring together scholars, artists, and educators from across the globe, facilitating multidisciplinary dialogues. These discussions aim to provide new perspectives on art, politics, history, and society while addressing the challenges faced within democratic societies. The symposium hopes to spark meaningful insights into the intersection of art and democracy.

WED **12 MARCH** 2025

4:30 PM IST

School of Arts and Sciences
Ahmedabad University
Central Campus

MON **17 MARCH** 2025

2:00 PM IST

School of Arts and Sciences
Ahmedabad University
Central Campus

Amitosh Nagpal's

Middle Class Dream of a Summer Night

"Middle Class Dream of a Summer's Night" is an extraordinary adaptation of Shakespeare's classic "A Midsummer Night's Dream," infused with a modern Indian twist. This unique English play features characters speaking English with accents from various Indian languages, adding a fresh and humorous flavour to the timeless tale. Set in the heart of middle-class India, the story weaves together love, magic, and comedy, capturing the essence of both Shakespearean drama and Indian cultural quirks. It's a theatrical experience like no other, offering a playful exploration of identity, love, and the unexpected.



THU **13 MARCH** 2025

7:00 PM IST

Tagore Hall
Paldi, Ahmedabad

Kerala's

Ritual Theatre

Theyyam

Kandakarnan was born in Mahadeva's own throat and came out through ears (karna) to cure Shiva's smallpox. Kanadakarnan came to Malanadu with Sreekurumba, the elder(moothaval), Sreekurumba, the younger (ilayaval), and Dandan. Kandakarnan is a deva in a fierce form incarnated as the son of Parameshwara. Kandakarnan is an illness-healing deity from the Cheerumba Nalvar and Srikurumba Nalvar groups. Like Puthiyabagavathi, Kandakarna was born to heal the daughter Cheerumb Parameswaran infected with smallpox. It is also said that the devas named that divine figure as Kandakarna because the son, who trembled at the call, came out of the throat through the ear. To the son who was born with three thousand eyes, two thousand hands, fire on his head, fire and torches on his waist, the father expressed his grief.



SAT **15 MARCH** 2025

8:30 PM IST
Ahmedabad University
Central Campus

Patrick Sims's

Puppetry Show



पोलिश सांस्कृतिक संस्थान
POLISH INSTITUTE NEW DELHI

SUN **16 MARCH** 2025

8:30 PM IST
Ahmedabad University
Central Campus

SUN
MON **16 - 17 MARCH** 2025

7:00 PM IST
Ahmedabad University
Central Campus

Teatr Biuro Podrozy's

Carmen Funebre

The idea for the spectacle and the spectacle itself was created at the time when the civil war was going on in Yugoslavia. The inspiration, or rather the impulse for its creation, was the intensifying ethnic conflicts, outbreaks of nationalism, violence, mutual hostility, and manipulation of social moods that set the Balkans on fire. While working on the performance, the band members met in Poland with refugees from Bosnia. Their relationships contributed to the creation of universal metaphors describing the fate of the exiles. In the performance, the non-linear story takes place both in a realistic and metaphysical plan. The Biuro Podróży Theatre uses spectacular means to attract the attention of both an experienced viewer and a random passer-by. Rats, fire, light effects, and poignant music evoke fear and compassion among the audience. In the performance, few words are used, but the sequence of evocative images moves the viewers' emotions.



Saumya Joshi's

Oh Womaniya

Written and directed by Saumya Joshi, the maker of popular plays like 'Welcome Zindagi,' '102 Not Out,' and 'United States of Paadaani Pol,' and performed by the lead actress of plays like 'Aaj Jaaneki Zid Naa Karo,' 'welcome Zindagi,' 'United States of Paadaani Pol' Jigna Vyas, 'Ohh Womaniya..!' is a play that starts with quirky, funny conversations that take place in a Vijapur to Mumbai train compartment. The conversation then takes a turn that shocks the audience to think about the most heinous societal evil that shakes the world frequently. The play explores the innermost recesses of a woman's existence. Dance and Choreography of the renowned Pappan Dance Company also accompanies the play.

MON **17 MARCH** 2025

8:30 PM IST

**Tagore Hall
Paldi, Ahmedabad**

Girish Karnad's **Hayavadana**

Directed by
Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry

Girish Karnad's "Hayavadana" blends realism, magic, myth, and desire, offering a theatrical experience of boundless possibilities. The play intertwines myth and modernity, crafting a contemporary statement that resonates deeply.

Hayavadana, the horse-headed man who lends the play its title, exists in a space painfully suspended between the animal and human realms. This fractured existence transforms the play into a potent existentialist myth, a metaphor for the timeless discourse of mind over matter. Reality and fantasy collide seamlessly on stage: real and fictional characters share the same space, creating a world where lamenting horses and speaking dolls reflect and comment. Karnad's text explores the body and mind's inherent duality, inviting multiple interpretations. Further enhancing its theatrical power, "Hayavadana" is a musical journey, driving the narrative, adding depth and texture to the scene construction, and ensuring an immersive experience.



TUE **18 MARCH** 2025

7:00 PM IST

**Tagore Hall
Paldi, Ahmedabad**



TUE **18 MARCH** 2025

9:00 PM IST

**Ahmedabad University
Central Campus**

Indian Fusion Music

Anirudh Verma Collective

The Anirudh Varma Collective (AVC) is a contemporary Indian classical ensemble from New Delhi, India. Pianist, composer, and producer Anirudh Varma leads it. The Collective comprises over 150 musicians and artists from India, America, and Canada. Their attempt is to bring the rich tradition of Indian classical music out of a niche viewership to a larger global audience through convergence with diverse genres but keeping it rooted in its pure form. It is impanelled with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Ministry of Culture.

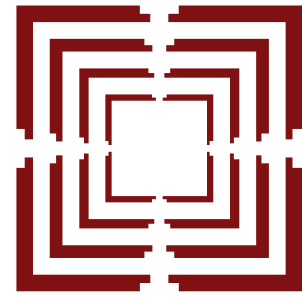
THE PEACOCK PROJECT

A Monumental Installation at Ahmedabad University

The 45-foot long and 25-foot high structure - a peacock motif - towers over the main entrance at Ahmedabad University, symbolises both welcome and a powerful statement. It provides a striking visual prelude to the festival's commitment to exploring boundaries through art while embodying its overarching theme: **Art Leads**.

The beauty of peacock feathers has long inspired artists and prints, influencing local designs (such as Bandhani and Patola) used by artisans and textile industries, thereby reflecting the city's heritage and culture. Designed by our in-house artists and executed by the local artist community, the installation employs bamboo as its framework, with layers of fabric and paper adding texture and dimension.





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