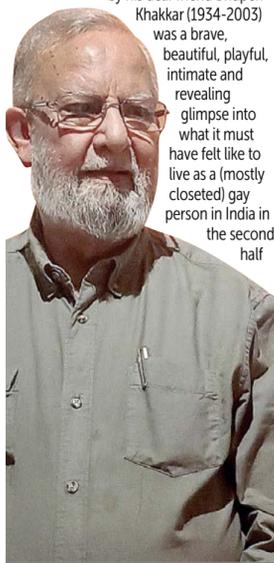


Out of The Closet: Bhupen in Goa with Gulammohammed Sheikh

Vivek Meneses

Given our reign of the uncouth, where just this week two paintings by the great desh-bhakt MF Husain were seized from a Delhi art gallery for being "offensive", it is a big relief the superb 'Bhupen in Goa' exhibition at last month's Serendipity Arts Festival went off undisturbed, well-attended and widely appreciated. Huge credit to the organizers, and especially Gulammohammed Sheikh - at an energetic 87, he is one of the country's seniormost and most respected artists - whose masterful, deeply sensitive and loving curation of over 150 artworks



by his dear friend Bhupen Khakkar (1934-2003) was a brave, beautiful, playful, intimate and revealing glimpse into what it must have felt like to live as a (mostly closeted) gay person in India in the second half

of the 20th century. An absolute tour de force, it was amongst the very best art exhibitions we've ever seen in Goa, and a huge landmark for the Indian art world. Unfortunately - and it must be admitted it was a regrettable pattern at the festival this year - this highly impressive selection of artworks (originally collected by the visionary Vijay Agarwal for his Swaraj Archive, and now owned by Serendipity's founder patron Sunil Munjal) was meticulously lit, and mounted against custom-built walls in colours carefully chosen by Sheikh, but the job was never completed. Khakkar's intrinsically



narrative oeuvre was left marooned without context, absent all the titles, labels and wall texts necessary to help visitors understand what they were looking at. Happily, the curator did endeavour guided walkthroughs, and I was amongst those lucky enough to gain an understanding of the choices he made regarding his dear

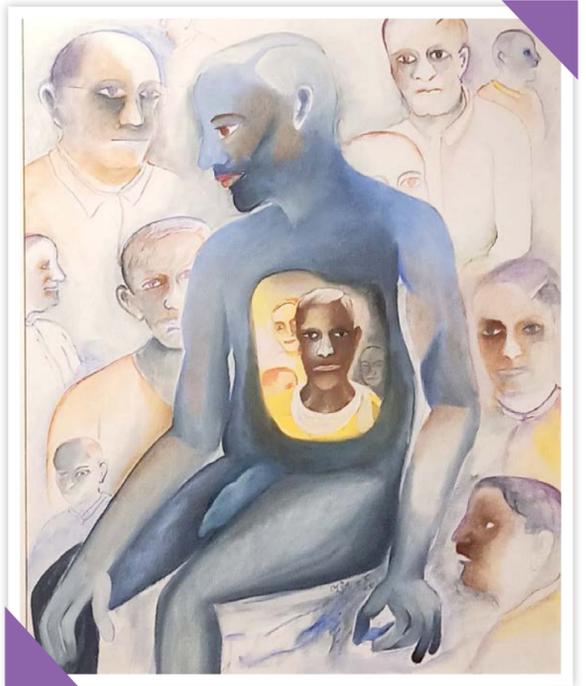
friend (who was also close to his equally prominent artist wife, the utterly brilliant Nilima Sheikh). It was an intensely moving and unforgettable experience to realise how one artist remained tenderly alert to the other's half-closeted predicaments. As Sheikh recalls in his stunning 2013 essay 'Buddy' (re-printed in a limited edition little book for this exhibition): "Bhupen played the double game skilfully. All day he played 'straight' like everyone else around him, but he nurtured a secret world within."

Via email earlier this week, Sheikh told me "it was an emotional issue to mount a big exhibition of one of my closest friends in the form of a tribute. My idea was to focus upon the human condition, especial the lives of the gay community Bhupen had striven to draw and paint throughout his life. I chose drawings for their deep sensitivity where people he drew literally sprang to life in their quizzical eccentricities, many of these imbued with a sense of his characteristic humour. To bring out the inner strength of Bhupen's highly evocative imagery was not a simple task, but I think it came through as a number of visitors expressed their deep appreciation." Sheikh says "I was warned about the gay content in Bhupen's work and even

dropped a largish drawing in the process, much to my reluctance. But I managed to slip in a few explicit water colours and etchings to compensate the loss. I must also say there was no moral police, which continues to haunt the work of M.F. Husain much after his unfortunate departure from the country he loved." When I asked whether there were any surprises in the archive, he responded "I found several unusual works I wasn't aware of. The Rishikesh sketch book, brimming with his breezy sensitivity conducted with the lightest of hand, was a delight. I have marvelled how he managed to draw wherever he went, literally every day with sketchbook in his jhola. He teaches how you get totally immersed yet maintain a distance from your subject, to enable you to find a view simultaneously proximate and distant, not only visually, but also metaphorically."

Bhupen in Goa was laid out in lovely long galleries in the ancient Fazenda building behind the Palácio Idalcão on the Mandovi riverfront (and indeed, was likely the Zenana - or women's quarters - of that 500-year-old complex originally constructed by the Adil Shah). "We have to be really grateful to Gulam, Serendipity and Goa itself for allowing us this experience," says Vikram Doctor, the veteran journalist and Bombay-to-Assagao transplant, "I particularly loved the venue at the old Department of Accounts, which apart from being beautiful (the tilework on the floors!) and evocative, also had a nice echo with Khakkar's life, because he was an accountant himself, and worked as one for years to support his artistic career."

57-year-old Doctor, who has been a leader and leading chronicler of the slow gains of gay rights in India, told me "this was definitely a landmark exhibition. While



Khakkar's work was widely known it was mostly in reproduction and of relatively few images [which] did tend to make him seem slightly one note. Over time he became a legend - "the brave gay artist who painted shocking pictures" - but becoming a legend stops people from really experiencing an artist and his work. Recently, two exhibitions brought Khakkar back to us. The first was in the Barbican in London last year, as part of a wider exhibition curated by Shanay Jhaveri. My partner Alok Hisarwla saw it more than once, and sent me images, and conveyed how radical it was. We realised that Khakkar had, cannily, realised there were buyers for works that could probably never be shown in India, so he had been sending these paintings directly to them. Most of these

images have never been seen in any form in India, and I doubt there's much chance they will be." Bhupen in Goa, says Doctor, "I felt was even more radical. It happened in the India of today, with all that that means - homosexuality decriminalised, but a rising wave of censorship and weaponisation of offence as a tool of suppression. The fact is Khakkar was certainly important for the LGBT movement in India. Just by existing and painting his reality he was a quiet rebuke to assertions that homosexuality was alien, or just a phenomenon of the Westernised upper class living in large cities. He showed a queer, explicitly sexual life that was rooted in regular Indian life and traditions - and religion too, however much current puritans try to deny them."

Anniversary concert

Over the last decade, MOG has supported over 400 artists and 70,000 people annually with contemporary art and Goa's rich stories. Continuing its journey of making art accessible, MOG is hosting 'Concert For Goa' that will feature Susmit Sen Chronicles founded by Indian composer, guitarist and co-founder of the band Indian Ocean, Susmit Sen. The band also comprises musicians Carlos Gonsalves (ghumat, drums), Tatyana Dichenko (piano), Sudheer Rikhari (vocals, keyboard) and Gayathri Natarajan (vocals).

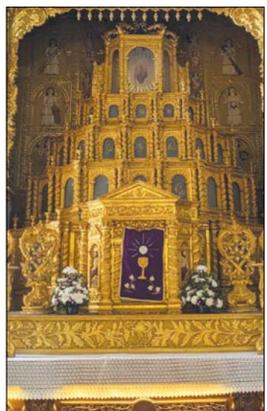
Venue: Museum of Goa, Pilerne
Date: January 25
Time: 8:30 pm



Heritage Walks at Guirim and Socorro

Museum of Christian Art, Old Goa will explore the villages of Socorro and Guirim. They will be taking a closer look at the Franciscan religious order and how their parishes compare with others in Goa. Apart from some intriguing village tales of Socorro, they will also visit the popular Monte de Guirim to discuss its interesting past. All funds raised go towards the conservation, educational and cultural initiatives organized by the Museum of Christian Art. The walk will be of 3 hours duration with light refreshments being served

Venue: Museum of Christian Art, Old Goa
Date: January 25
Time: 9 am onwards



Gut Health and the Microbiome: Why Your Digestive System is Key to Overall Wellness

Aditi Malhotra

Your gut is often referred to as your second brain, and for good reason. Home to trillions of microorganisms known as the microbiome, your digestive system influences not just digestion but immunity, mood, and overall health. Recent research has shed light on how maintaining a healthy gut is essential for holistic wellness.

THE ROLE OF THE MICROBIOME

The gut microbiome is a complex ecosystem of bacteria, fungi, and other microbes that play a vital role in keeping the body balanced. These microorganisms help digest food, produce essential vitamins, and protect against harmful pathogens.

When the microbiome is in harmony, your body thrives. But when this balance is disrupted—due

to poor diet, stress, or antibiotics—it can lead to bloating, fatigue, weakened immunity, and even mental health issues.

GUT-BRAIN CONNECTION

The link between the gut and the brain is one of the most fascinating aspects of modern health science. Known as the gut-brain axis, this connection explains

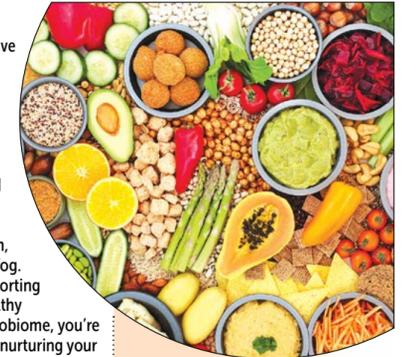
why gut health directly impacts mood and cognitive function.

For example, the gut produces serotonin, a neurotransmitter that regulates mood.

When your gut health is compromised, it can lead

to feelings of anxiety, depression, or brain fog.

By supporting a healthy microbiome, you're also nurturing your mental well-being.



NOURISHING YOUR GUT

Improving gut health starts with diet.

Fiber-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, and legumes act as prebiotics, feeding the good bacteria in your gut. Fermented foods such as yogurt, kimchi, and pickles introduce probiotics, replenishing the microbiome.

Equally important is avoiding processed foods and excess sugar, which can disrupt gut balance. Regular exercise, hydration, and stress management also contribute to a healthier gut.

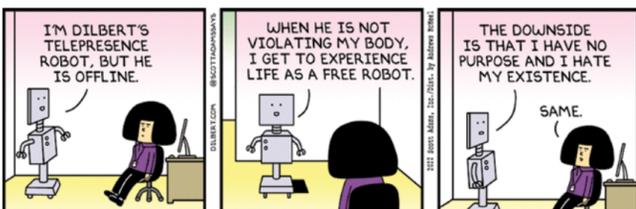
THE FUTURE OF GUT HEALTH

Gut health isn't just a trend—it's a cornerstone of overall wellness. By paying attention to what you eat and how you live, you can transform your gut into a powerhouse of health. The saying "you are what you eat" has never been more relevant, reminding us that wellness begins from within.



Herald Gaming Console

Dilbert



Garfield



Wizard of id



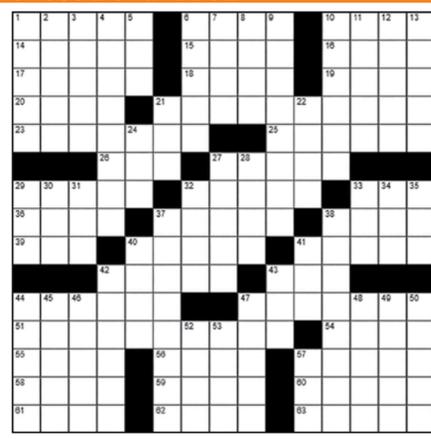
crossword 4751

ACROSS

1- Hold responsible; 6- Champagne name; 10- Ovid, e.g.; 14- Stationery brand; 15- Singer Fitzgerald; 16- Fish-eating eagle; 17- Animal trap; 18- Marine mammal secure something; 19- Capone foe; 20- Gumbo ingredient; 21- Highest rank in Baden-Powell's organization; 23- Suit makers; 25- Sounds; 26- Give rest; 27- Present at birth; 29- Marriott competitor; 32- Crude carrier; 33- Crazy; 36- Count (on); 37- Cobb, e.g.; 38- Celebration; 39- U-turn from NNW; 40- Some nobles; 41- It comes from the heart; 42- Rainy bunch; 43- 'Evil Woman' band; 44- Messenger; 47- Shake; 51- End of the quip; 54- Raised; 55- Bits of thread; 56- Hindu princess; 57- 'Inferno' writer; 58- Egyptian deity; 59- Hullahaloo; 60- Extra-terrestrial being; 61- Room in a casa; 62- Evergreen tree; 63- Like non-oviger months;

DOWN

1- Intoxicate; 2- Sri; 3- Video game pioneer; 4- Ethics; 5- Opposite of WSW; 6- Arizona sights; 7- Couturier Cassini; 8- Airline since 1948; 9- Having ability; 10- Writing instrument; 11- Cream-filled cookies; 12- Follow; 13- Quizzes; trials; 21- Chapter in history; 22- Fly like an eagle; 24- Slugger Mel; 27- Nabisco's; 28- Word of woe; 29- Timecard abbr.; 30- Affirmative



solution 4750

answer: 31- Pub preference; 32- Crew needs; 33- Plop preceder; 34- Court fig; 35- Beverage commonly drunk in England; 37- Golf hazard; 38- Soccer; 40- Slippery; 41- Rhyming boxing champ; 42- Stewart of home tips; 43- Cackleberry; 44- Aids; 45- 1996 Madonna role; 46- Related to the kidneys; 47- Liqueur flavoring; 48- Golfer Palmer, to his army; 49- French beans; 50- Parades; 52- but known.; 53- Party to; 57- es Salaam, Tanzania;

sudoku 4751



Instructions for Sudoku

9 x 9 letter: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes

solution 4750

9	8	5	6	2	1	7	4	3
6	3	4	5	9	7	8	2	1
2	7	1	4	3	8	5	9	6
5	6	8	9	1	4	2	3	7
4	1	2	3	7	6	9	8	5
3	9	7	2	8	5	1	6	4
8	5	3	7	4	2	6	1	9
1	4	6	8	5	9	3	7	2
7	2	9	1	6	3	4	5	8