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India through the eyes of its women

By Dawn Powell

East Finchley's Noble Sage art gallery in Fortis Green is holding a new exhibition to explore the question of what it means to be female and what it means to be Indian.

Director Jana Manuelpillai originally conceived the idea of *She, India*, a mixed media collection of both well known and unknown artists, as a way of showcasing female Indian contemporary art.

He says: "Female art in India is relatively rare. It is something that has yet to find its momentum, particularly in the south where I specialise." Then he realised that the exhibition could address a much larger issue. "I started thinking about what the reason was for including one artist but excluding another. It raised the question of who is more Indian

than another." The exhibition now includes work from artists with different links to India. Jana says: "It includes Indian artists who live in Britain and British artists who live in India. The whole range is there."

Neera Sen, who has several pieces of work in the exhibition, is a typical example of the artists profiled by the gallery. Born in Calcutta, she has lived in Britain for all of her adult life and currently lives in north London.

The Noble Sage is the first gallery in the UK to specialise exclusively in Indian contemporary art. The *She, India* exhibition will run until November.

Curry and wine at the Noble Sage

By Daphne Chamberlain

"You'll like this curry. You're Indian," said the kindly dinner-lady to little Rohan Candappa at his London school. It was "grey minced meat with raisins", and nothing like the curry his Sri Lankan family ate at home. Mind you, neither is most of the food served in Indian restaurants today, but Rohan accepts that cheerfully. "It doesn't have to be the same," he told his audience at the Noble Sage Gallery last month.

He was one of two authors reading from their new books for one of the final events of London's Indian Arts Festival. His *Picklehead* is a history of curry in Britain, mixed with a generous dollop of memoirs about himself and his family.

Also reading was Jae Watson, an Englishwoman writing about *The Journey*, a story of fear and love. Two girls leave London after the terror-

ist attacks, but run straight into more of the same in India.

It's not just the subject matter, the wine and the nibbles that make these evenings at the Noble Sage. It's also the changing backdrop of paintings and sculpture.

For more information about the Noble Sage, the art gallery at 2A Fortis Green, N2, contact 020 8883 7303 or www.thenoblesage.com.

Film and friendship

The Phoenix Cinema has started running 'Close Encounters' evenings for people who love great films and want to meet new friends, maybe even someone special.

The second Thursday of each month is the time for the special showings. Filmgoers can catch the latest movie, then retire to the Noble Sage Gallery just around the corner

in Fortis Green to have a drink and a chat.

Tickets cost £10 and all guests will be offered a badge, a complimentary drink before the screening and a glass of champagne later on at the gallery. For details of future Close Encounters, call the Phoenix box office on 020 8444 6789.

Sheila,

take a bow

Seen at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society Autumn Show, ARCHER reporter Sheila Armstrong winning 2nd prize for the heaviest marrow. Well done, Sheila.

Mini Glastonbury was pure gold

By Sippy Azizollah

It was a perfect day of September sunshine in Cherry Tree Wood for the Muswell Hill Festival. Long queues formed for the barbecue at the park café and other food stalls gave a taste of Chinese, Thai and Afro-Caribbean cuisine.

The donkey derby and dog obedience shows were great fun to watch as were the karate and juggling shows. There was plenty there to keep children amused including bouncy castles and fruit and veg art. The highlight of the day came at about 4.30pm when Spandau Ballet's Tony Hadley came on stage to sing his hits *True* and *Gold*, as well as other crowd pleasers. It felt like being at a mini Glastonbury with a jumping, singing crowd lapping up every beat.

I can safely say a brilliant day was enjoyed by all. The only let-down was that there were no loos provided so everyone had to use the loos in the park, which are in a less than perfect state. Something for the organising committee to think about for next year.

Tony Hadley singing *Gold*.
Photograph by Helen Drake



Cash help for community groups

Nearly £470,000 of grant funding has been handed over to local organisations to improve quality of life in Barnet.

The grants were awarded through the Barnet Local Strategic Partnership, which invited organisations to bid for money available through the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

Winning projects included the Barnet Bulldogs Basketball Club, allocated £28,000, Barnet Community Transport, who were given £79,500, and Norwood, an organisation for young disabled people, who received £40,901.

Barnet Bulldogs will use the money to provide a community development programme using basketball to engage young people at risk of getting involved in petty crime.

Transport will be able to

employ extra staff to improve further the work being done by the borough's only mobile youth centre, Rolling Base, a bus kitted out with the latest high-tech music equipment, wi-fi internet and its own

satellite dish.

Norwood will be able to provide emotional support to young disabled people enabling them to have a successful and seamless transition into adulthood.



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