

# Puppets' got a story to tell, catch up at Anna library

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Chennai:** ArtstageSAN, a creative art group from South Korea specialised in puppetry, is staging their show 'His Day' at the Anna centenary library as part of the annual Little Festival. Inko Centre, which aims to promote intercultural dialogue, is organising the event. People can catch the shows at 11am on July 5 and 6.

Dr Rathi Jaffer, director of Inko Center, said, "We consistently put up shows and have enthusiastic South Korean partners who like to share their culture with Indians. We

usually conduct non-verbal shows aimed at children. The purpose is to provide entertainment that is also informative. The better way to do that is to host theatrical shows. The puppets that come alive on the stage help children grow their imagination."

ArtstageSAN, founded in 2001, works in different spaces such as festivals, practical activities, exhibitions, international exchanges as well as performing arts.

'His Day' deals with the everyday life and the monotonous routine of a salaried man. Exhausted from work, at night he finds solace in the

memories of his happy childhood. The play is non-verbal and runs for 60 minutes.

Hyunsan Jo, the director of His Day, said the play tells a story that anyone living in the present era can relate to. "The main character is played by

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## JULY 5 & 6

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an actor, but we use puppets to portray the mind of the main character with diverse images. Puppet shows are mainly made for children and have a history of traditional works, especially in Asia and Korea. Interest in it is growing as Un-

ima (Union Internationale de la Marionnette) Congress, an international event for puppetry, will be hosted in Chuncheon in 2025."

Dr Rathi said, "In a post-pandemic scenario, in-person global events like this help us reconnect with the world. They also provide a window into Korean culture and help bridge the gap between nations and people. We get insight into the local characteristics of a culture and the nitty-gritty peculiar to it. Chennai audience can relate with its global themes of the importance of relationships and love."



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# His Day and The Kooks enthral children at The Little Theatre's annual festival

While *His Day*, complete with mime, puppets, and lyrical music, delved into the monotonous life of a salaried professional, *The Kooks* was envisioned as a clowning production tackling different themes

July 06, 2023 08:58 pm | Updated 09:00 pm IST - CHENNAI

THE HINDU BUREAU

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A scene from the South Korean play, *His Day*, staged as part of The Little Theatre's annual festival in Chennai on Thursday. | Photo Credit: R. RAGU

On Thursday, an audience of over 800 schoolchildren from the city laughed, cheered, and watched in awe as ArtstageSAN, a creative art group from South Korea took over the stage at the Anna Centenary Library Auditorium in Chennai.

Complete with mime, puppets, and lyrical music, the hour-long play titled *His Day* had actors delve into the monotonous life of a salaried working professional, exhausted from the daily hustle.

The play was staged as a part of the 12th edition of The Little Festival organised by Chennai-based The Little Theatre. The festival this year, showcased two plays *His Day* from South Korea, and *The Kooks*, staged by The Little Theatre.

Over the years, The Little Theatre has been bringing in international theatre groups with their productions as a part of this annual festival. "Through this theatre festival, I felt that it was important to bring the culture of different countries to the city so that children understand that the language of theatre is the same across the world. There will be some nuances that are different, but I want them to understand and celebrate this," said Aysha Rau, Founder, The Little Theatre.

This, she hopes, will steer children towards the path of understanding one and another better across cultures.

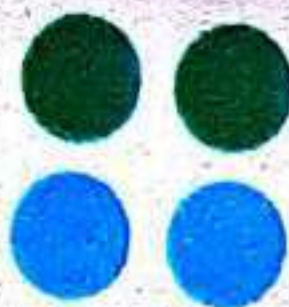
Speaking about their play *The Kooks*, Rohini Rau, Trustee, The Little Theatre, said while it was envisioned as a production for children, they had both adults and children enjoy the shows equally. "While this is predominantly a clowning production, the play tackled different themes, and encouraged imagination, as well as talked about how there's hope in the world if we all come together," she said.

*The Kooks* had a bunch of eccentric cooks come together in a kitchen and cook up a storm and create a recipe that could save the world from impending doom. "There is a misconception that clowns are just people who wear garish makeup and do silly things. Worldwide, clowns are in war zones working with children, at hospitals, and the play was a tribute to all that they do," said Krishnakumar Balasubramanian (KK), writer and director. "Nothing brings people together better than food, and hence the setting inside a kitchen and the main characters playing cooks," he added.

KK underscored the importance of having plays that are visually stimulating and having the ability to appeal to children. "Both the plays staged as a part of the festival have plenty of movement and visually stunning sequences. These are performances that they can take back with them and cherish," he said.

As a part of the festival, a panel discussion on "The Impact of Arts on Mental Health" was held.





# FASHION, FILM & OODLES OF FLAVOUR

ANOTHER WEEK FLIES past, the usual mixed bag of fashion, food and a solid dose of skincare. While everyone scurried off to the mall to do justice to the sales, I managed to steer clear, and gave myself a pat on the back. Which also means that our social media timelines were flooded with influencers showing us their 'hauls' and 'deals' while sustainability peeps waxed eloquent about the perils of fast fashion.

Right on cue was the latest instalment of *Funky Fish*, one of Chennai's favourite fashion pop-ups, this time with a dedicated area for sustainable luxury. The

invite encouraged us to make 'pre-loved fashion, the new normal' and I'm here for it.

Turning heads was the 'fab' range of pre-loved bags by Confidential Couture, with the option of not just to buy but to sell. After soaking it all in, we then moved over to the customisation area by 'Not Enough Yellow' where marquage artist Prarthana showed us how her work can transform an older accessory like a bag or a pair of shoes into a whole new being. Plus, we were treated to a live art demo, by her, that took shape as the day wore on. You can bet we raced back home and started scoping out candidates for a makeover, from the long forgotten sections of our wardrobe.

And speaking of makeovers, our next stop was at the launch of Luxury Derm Aesthetic Clinic, the latest in a string of beauty and skin clinics. Celebs from across genres were present and the traditional inauguration was



On stage:  
The cast of Little Theatre's *the Kooks*

followed by a tour around the new space. With an emphasis on affordability and the promise that every guest would be treated like royalty, everyone was keen to find out more on the latest treatments on offer.

A week's line-up wouldn't be complete without something for the foodies and this week saw *Raviz Nirvana* at The Leela Palace Chennai, presented by the Leela Raviz Hotels and Resorts. The evening showcased the essence of Kerala, God's own country, from traditional art forms to signature dishes. Weaving together the culture of Royal Travancore, Suriani flavours and Moplah traditions, at the same time connecting the four Leela Raviz destination resorts across Kerala. This unique culinary experience was set against a backdrop of temple music, making it an evening to remember.

Later in the week, we had another theatrical experience at the 12th Edition of The Little Theatre Festival for Young audiences. *The Kooks: Sunny Side Up* gave us a good dose of physical comedy, while *His Day*, a non-verbal production showcased Korean puppetry.

Terroir the Madras Wine Club also held a different kind of evening this week. Instead of the wine and cuisine paired dinners, it was a movie night at the Park Hotel theatre. The film? *Bottle Shock*, based on the Paris wine tasting competition of 1976, also known as Judgement of Paris. Organised by British wine merchant Steven Spurrier, the event was a face-off between French wines from Bordeaux and wines from Napa California. Filmmaker Rajiv Menon reviewed the film at the end; it was a fun, insightful and learning experience for all. "Which wine emerged victorious? You certainly won't hear it from me!" said Minnie Menon, president of Terroir.



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## Plays from South Korea and Chennai feature in this international children's theatre fest

The 12th edition of The Little Festival will feature clowning, and Korean puppetry as two productions and a panel discussion comes to stage

June 30, 2023 03:59 pm | Updated 03:59 pm IST

GOWRI S

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The cast of *The Kooks: Sunny Side-Up* | Photo Credit: special arrangement

The clang of metal pots, ding of spatulas, and thrum of water canisters seamlessly give way to a foot-tapping rhythmic interlude that gains pace second by second. We are in the kitchen of chefs Sweet Pea, Souffle, Magic Macaroni, Jojo and Capsicum, a cast just as whacky as their names. They clown their way through a busy, chaotic and noisy kitchen, in pursuit of some learnings. The Little Theatre's rehearsal space, Cheriana, is once again alive with song, dance and dialogue as the cast of *The Kooks: Sunny Side-Up* prepare to get on stage this weekend with a physical comedy that ponders on resolving conflict and working in harmony: all from inside a kitchen, in the company of good food.

The play will premiere at the 12th edition of The Little Festival, a festival for young audiences, that brings world theatre to Chennai. This time, *His Day*, a non-verbal children's production replete with music, mime and puppetry from South Korea also makes its first appearance in the city.

"The entire show is based on clowning. It is also a tribute to the kind of work that clowns are doing across spaces, on stages across countries, hospitals and just everyday life, and how they alleviate suffering," says Krishnakumar Balasubramanian (KK), artistic director of The Little Theatre, who will also star in the production as Idli. He refers to the setting as a "kitchen of infinite possibilities." KK continues, "The show is going to be highly interactive and is also minimal in terms of words. I wanted it to reach people of all languages. There are only two languages here — one is that of clowning, and the other, humour."

The idea of food often also translates to a sense of community, adds KK, describing the setting. "It is laced almost entirely with slapstick comedy. Young audiences have great emotional bandwidth and often notice how the body works, so movement is essential," says KK.



A still from *His Day* | Photo Credit: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

While the home production takes the help of physical comedy and clowning, *His Day* from South Korea dabbles in puppetry and mime, and is also entirely non-verbal. "[The show] tells the story of any normal person living in the present, including myself," says director Hyunsan Jo from ArtstageSAN. The narrative follows a typical day in the life of a salaryman that turns into a fantasy puppet performance. Since *His Day* is partially a puppet performance, the visual image is important. "The main character is played by an actor, who also appears as a small table puppet in some scenes. We use puppets to portray the mind of the main character with diverse images," he adds. The story is led by the actors' movements, mime, music and other elements that help viewers to understand the play sans dialogue.

While the shows are tailored for young audiences, they are also layered and cater to the child in every adult, KK says. An open mind and vibrant imagination are the prerequisites. "We hope [to provide] a time of empathy and comfort, even if it's for a short period," he adds. The festival will also host a panel discussion on The Impact of Arts on Mental Health with experts like Anita Ratnam, Dr Lakshmi Sankaran and Preeti Vasudevan, from the field of medicine and arts.

*The Kooks: Sunny Side-Up* will play on July 2 (4 pm), 3 (11am and 6pm) and 4 (11 am), and *His Day* will play on July 5 and 6, at 11 am. The panel discussion will be on July 5, 6 to 8 pm at Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan. *His Day* will also play in Rangashankara, Bengaluru on July 9 and Glendale International School, Hyderabad on July 14.



A still from *His Day* | Photo Credit: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



## Now, you can check if the drug you need is in stock in GHs

TNN / Jul 4, 2023, 08:17 IST

The image shows the logo for The Times of India (TOI). It consists of the letters 'TOI' in a large, white, serif font, centered on a solid red rectangular background.

Chennai: A drug monitoring system to record stock of medicines available in primary health centres, district headquarters hospitals and medical colleges was launched on Monday. Health workers such as nurses have been trained to feed data on drugs in the system, said health minister Ma Subramaniam after launching the system.

"We decided to bring in a monitoring system after we received complaints about hospitals not having adequate stock of medicines. [Tamil Nadu](#) Medical Services Corporation supplies medicines to all hospitals based on usage and requirement," he said. The data on the stock of medicines on the DDMS portal will be available to all.

Two years ago, PHCs in the state did not stock up anti-snake venom serum and anti-rabies vaccines although the risk of snake and dog bites was higher in rural areas. Over the past two years, the state has ensured that all public hospitals stock up on these vaccines. In addition, the more than 2,000 primary health centers and urban primary health centres will also have adequate medicines for non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, he said. The state will also open teleconsultation in all PHCs along with e-offices, he said.



## 2 Things to do today in Bengaluru

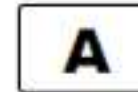
Bangalore Mirror Bureau / Updated: Jul 6, 2023, 06:00 IST

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### Mega show

Don't miss the chance to attend a mega dance drama presenting the contribution of the great freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju. 40 dancers present this narrative with a blend of tribal, folk, Kuchipudi, and modern dance styles. This dance drama commemorates the freedom fighter's 125th birth anniversary and is a part of the Nrutya Rangoli festival.

**Where: Chowdiah Memorial**

### Hall

**When: July 9; 6 pm onwards**

### Puppet magic

ArtstageSan, a creative art group from South Korea, is presenting puppet theatre by exploring heartwarming impressions through diverse stories. The group uses puppets as a medium, incorporating a constant evolution of visual effects. The production is presented with lyrical music and a unique set of objects.

**Where: Ranga Shankara**

**When: Sunday, July 9; 3:30 pm and 7:30 pm**



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# Experts discuss benefits of art therapy and its impact on mental health

July 06, 2023 12:07 am | Updated 12:07 am IST

“The integration of art in school can create spaces for children with special needs to express themselves where this expression is recognised”, said Dr. S. Bhavanishankar, director- strategy, research and innovation, Lalaji Memorial Omega International School

THE HINDU BUREAU

The impact of the arts on mental health was the topic of a panel discussion organised by ‘The Little Theatre’ as part of their theatre festival on Wednesday.

Panelists addressed the benefits of art therapy and its connection to mental health. “The integration of art in school can create spaces for children with special needs to express themselves where this expression is recognised”, said Dr. S. Bhavanishankar, director- strategy, research and innovation, Lalaji Memorial Omega International School.

Dr. Lakshmi Sankaran, deputy director (training and research), Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health, Kovalam, said that art-based therapy had to be on the client’s terms alone. “You have to go with the flow because arts have many dimensions”, she said.

Performer Anita Ratnam shared her personal engagement with art, from being pushed into dance by her mother to recognising the need for something to change in her children’s school and style of education. “Things that you can touch can be very therapeutic, such as gardening, cooking and pottery which are all art forms”, she said.

“Art therapy helps us engage with the client more than what they’ve come for”, said Dr. Sujatha V., a psychiatrist who shared her experiences with certain clients and how she used *kolam* drawing, garland making and calligraphy to engage with clients. “*Kolams* help recreate patterns from visual memory and you can understand their frustration, tolerance, their approach to drawing and it helps to calm older people”, she said.

Choreographer and dancer Preeti Vasudevan said that dance helped her focus her hyperactive energy as a child and was a way to encounter different emotions in a raw way, sculpting her responses to her surroundings.

“In a project I was a part of, a cast member experienced the coming-out moment on stage with family in the audience, so there is a transformative power in the arts”, said Dr. Rathi Jafer, director, InKo Centre Chennai.

“We conducted a camp for conservancy workers recently and aside from checking regular health parameters, we created a counter for counselling. We have to accept that there is an issue and begin documenting the combination of medication, counselling and art form over a long period”, said Commissioner J. Radhakrishnan.



## Art and mental health to take centre stage at The Little Theatre's festival in

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Seven eminent panellists will discuss the symbiotic relationship of art and mental health at The Little Theatre's annual festival — The Little Festival.

BY [AATHIRA](#) — Published: 02/07/2023 8:00 am [AA](#)



Cast of 'The Kooks, Sunny Side Up' (Supplied)

Discussions surrounding mental health, which include openly speaking about it and busting myths, have been gathering steam over the past few years. This is especially true in the aftermath of the pandemic, where people were (for lack of a better word) forced to have healthy discussions about their psychological well-being.

To unravel the various links between art and mental health, Chennai-based [The Little Theatre](#) is organising a panel discussion on the topic "The Impact of Arts on Mental Health" on 5 July at the Goethe-Institut in Chennai.

The panel discussion is a part of The Little Theatre's "The Little Festival", an international theatre festival for young audiences organised every year that acts as a platform for various countries to strengthen ties with the youth of India. This year, it is being held from 2 to 6 July.

### Myriad of perspectives

"The transformative and healing power of art needs to be explored further," says [Dr Rohini Rau](#), a doctor, sailor, medical clown, and a trustee of The Little Theatre.

"People are slowly realising how important it is to talk about mental health instead of considering it taboo. Through this panel discussion, we hope to explore both the positive and negative impact of the arts on mental health," she adds.

For the past 32 years, The Little Theatre has focused on helping children overcome the stress of schoolwork through high quality theatre productions and creative workshops. And in its 12th year now, audiences can look forward to two productions this time.

The group's brand new in-house musical, *The Kooks, Sunny side up!*, is premiering at the festival at the Anna Centenary Auditorium in Kotturpuram, with shows from 2 to 4 July. The second production, called *His Day!*, will be performed by ArtstageSan, a talented theatre group from South Korea, at the same venue on 5 and 6 July.

The panel discussion will feature seven professionals — Anita Ratnam, Preeti Vasudevan, Dr Lakshmi Sankaran, Dr S Bhavanishankar, Dr Rathi Jafer, Dr J Radhakrishnan, and Dr Sujatha V — from different walks of life who have explored the impact that art has on mental health in their distinct ways.



The panel discussion will feature seven professionals from different walks of life who have explored the impact that art has on mental health in their distinct ways. (Supplied)

The session will be moderated by Dr Rohini and her husband Krishnakumar B, an actor, medical clown, and the artistic director of The Little Theatre.

**Also Read: [TN school's art show displays works of nomadic tribal children](#)**

### Creativity in diversity

"Performer and arts entrepreneur Anita Ratnam, who is also the founder and managing editor of [narthaki.com](#), along with Preeti Vasudevan, dancer and choreographer, will be able to reflect on how art has helped them in their personal journeys, in their interactions with their students and audience, and how they view art in different capacities," explains Dr Rohini.

The event has been designed to foster a dialogue between the panellists and the audience, to address a diverse range of mental health conditions across the spectrum of illness, and the role played by art to help overcome them.

"Dr Lakshmi Sankaran of Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health will lend her insights into how they use art therapy in treating advanced psychiatric illnesses. An educator, Dr S Bhavanishankar of the Lalaji Memorial Omega International School, will focus on what schools can do to use art to promote mental health among students," she adds.

**Also Read: [Kerala library's initiative is ushering in a spring of knowledge](#)**

### Initiatives for mental health

"We are excited about hearing from Dr Rathi Jafer, Director, InKo Centre, about the significance of cross-cultural collaborations in the art world. Indian youth are heavily influenced by South Korean art and her views on the topic will add greatly to the discussion," says Dr Rohini.

She adds, "I also hope that Dr J Radhakrishnan, Corporation Commissioner, Chennai, will bring about positive transformations in policy, leveraging the potential of art to enhance healthcare and mental health initiatives in the city."

The panel also includes psychiatrist Dr Sujatha V, who creatively uses handloom, sari printing, and Japanese art in her therapy sessions.

### Healthcare through arts

The Little Theatre has always been at the forefront of creative therapy in healthcare.

From 2015 to 2020, they ran a creative therapy art studio at the Institute of Child Health & Hospital in Egmore, Chennai.



The Little Theatre is involved in weekly sessions of medical clowning at the Institute of Child Health & Hospital in Egmore, Chennai (Supplied)

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the studio had to be temporarily converted into a ward. However, plans are underway to restart its operations soon.

Known as the Centre for Creative Arts Therapy, this unique initiative had a full-time expression arts therapist who used to work directly with patients at the studio. The projects conducted at the studio, encompassing art, music, and dance, have yielded remarkable outcomes.

"Additionally, we are involved in weekly sessions of medical clowning at the hospital. I am the only medical doctor in India to undertake the activity," Dr Rohini says proudly.

"The art of medical clowning goes beyond mere make-up and entertainment, aiming to create a positive environment within hospitals that are often devoid of joy. We have been doing this since 2015, demonstrating its effectiveness in improving the well-being of patients," says Dr Rohini, daughter of author, playwright, and founder of The Little Theatre, Aysha Rau.

**Also Read: [Rhymes, songs keep elderly hooked in Kochi's 'School of Seniors'](#)**