

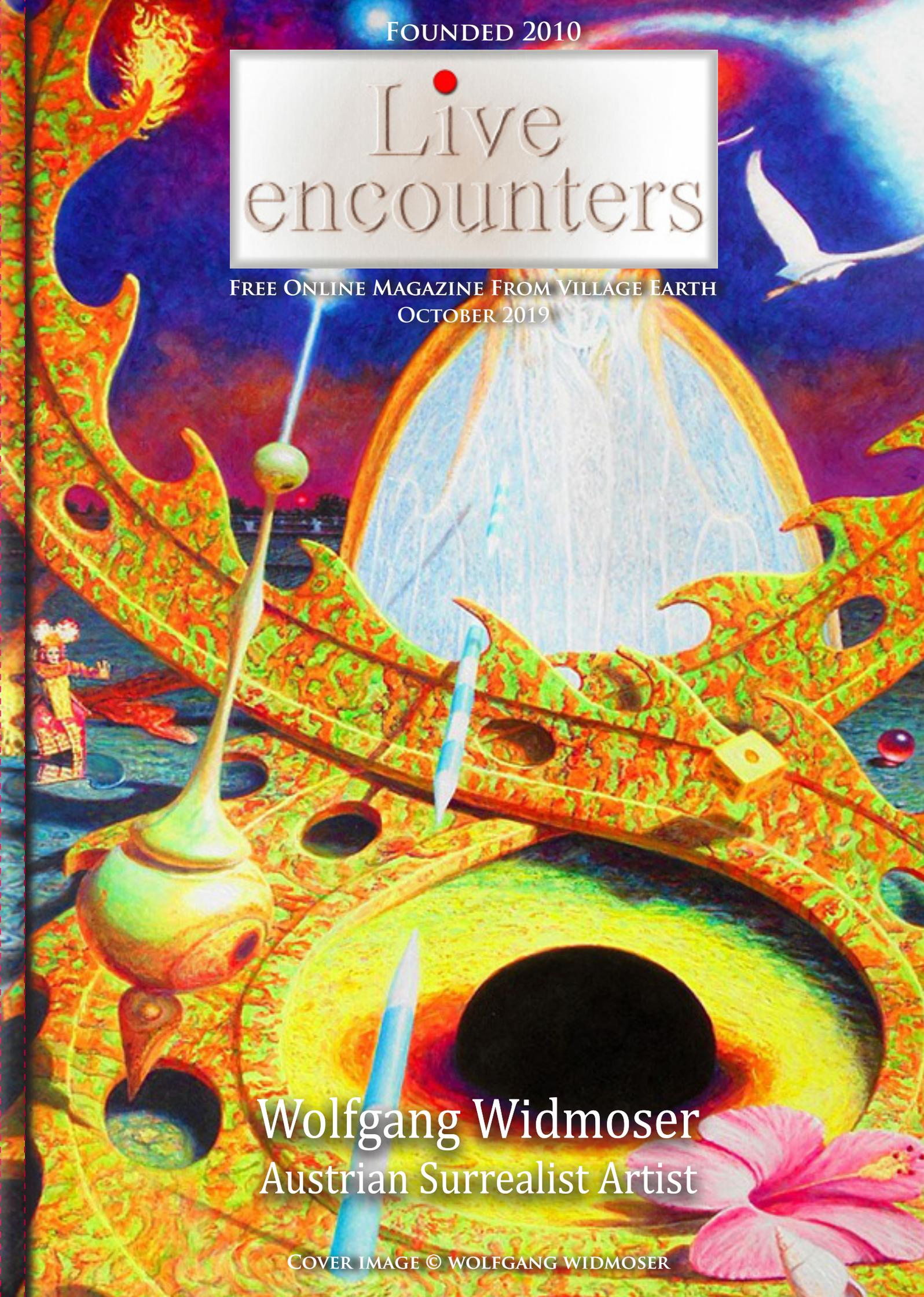
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Live encounters

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH
OCTOBER 2019

Wolfgang Widmoser
Austrian Surrealist Artist

COVER IMAGE © WOLFGANG WIDMOSER



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Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was founded in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Poets, writers, academics, civil & human/animal rights activists, academics, environmentalists, social workers, photographers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of the magazine.

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Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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CONTRIBUTORS



Venusian Queens

Wolfgang Widmoser

Born in Munich 1954. 1973 studied with Ernst Fuchs and Salvador Dali. 1970 he painted still-lives in Switzerland introducing curved mirrors which reflect objects in most surprising ways and led to a proposal for the –elegant Universe. Moving to Tuscany in 1980 landscape and atmospheric effects crystallized to intense, portraits of nature. Since 1984 living in Bali. In his search for the- abstract. Papua New Guinea – Warriors combine the archaic with the futuristic. Wolfgang's motto – aesthetic = ethic – points to places where humans experience the Good, the True and the Beautiful.



Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, a glimpse

Mikyoung Cha

Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to Live Encounters Magazine.



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Part I - The Afghanistan-India Drug Trail

Dr Bibhu Prasad Routray & Dr Shanthie Mariet D'Souza

Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray held the position of Visiting Professor and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) chair, India Studies at Murdoch University, Perth between July-December 2017. He served as a Deputy Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Government of India and Director of the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)'s Database & Documentation Centre, Guwahati, Assam. Routray specialises in decision-making, governance, counter-terrorism, force modernisation, intelligence reforms, foreign policy and dissent articulation issues in South and South East Asia.



Part II - Afghan Drug Trail & the Indian Drug Syndicates

Dr Shanthie Mariet D'Souza & Dr Bibhu Prasad Routray

Dr. D'Souza is researcher, analyst, writer, editor, consultant and subject matter expert with specialisation in International Relations (IR), Afghanistan and South Asia. She is Associate Editor, Journal of Asian Security & International Affairs (Sage Publications); Expert and Contributor to the Middle East-Asia Project (MAP) at the Middle East Institute, Washington DC; Senior Analyst, South Asia desk, Wikistrat Analytic Community, New York; Advisor, Independent Conflict Research & Analysis (ICRA), London; Fulbright Fellow at South Asia Studies, The Paul H Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC and more. www.mantraya.org



Goebbels' Rapture

Mark Ulyseas

Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photographer. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry*, which was relaunched as *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* in March 2017. In February 2019 the third publication was launched, *LE Children Poetry & Writing* (now renamed *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers*).



Book Review - The Philodendrist Heresy by Jed Brody

Dr Margi Prideaux

Margi Prideaux has written about wildlife, international politics and law almost every day for the past 27 years. As an international negotiator and independent academic, with a Ph.D. in wildlife policy and law, her words have been tuned to inform policy audiences in more than 20 different international conservation processes. Her essay Trading in Bones appeared in Live Encounters, 12 December 2017.



Book Review - The Suicide Season by Jeremy Gadd

Donna Mulvenna

Donna Mulvenna is a nature enthusiast, who when not tending to her food forest or canoeing along one of the world's wild rivers is reading from her hammock. A Fellow of the International League of Conservation Writers, Donna's own writing has been published in various newspapers, magazines and online publications.



Book Review - Happiness is Green by Donna Mulvenna

Maria Theresa Stadtmueller

Maria Theresa Stadtmueller is a writer and podcaster living on a permaculture farm in northern Vermont. She earned her MFA from the Nonfiction Writing program at The University of Iowa. Her environmental nonfiction has been published in The Iowa Review, Dark Mountain, and other literary journals, and has also been anthologized by SUNY Press and in book Walking on Lava for Chelsea Green Publishing. She produced 25 episodes of the Big Chew Podcast, asking the question "How do we live on Earth without the Stupid?" and talking with scientists, artists, adventurers, farmers, and spiritual seekers. But some of it's funny.



Pacanga Boregi

Ozlem Warren

International cooking teacher and Turkish culinary expert Ozlem Warren is a native of Turkey, lived there and extensively travelled for 30 years. She has been teaching wholesome, delicious Turkish cookery in the US, Jordan, Istanbul and England. Her recipes have been published in the local media in England, Hurriyet and Sabah national daily newspapers in Turkey. Ozlem also took part at the "Turkish Chefs of the World", "Dunyanin Turk Seferi" TV program aired at TRT, National Turkish TV channel and in 37 countries.

<http://www.wolfgangjohanneswidmoser.com>
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VENUSIAN QUEENS

ARTWORK BY
WOLFGANG WIDMOSER

These artworks reflect a reality that has been overlooked in the rush to absurdity, living in a rampant commercial world oblivious to what is now living among us – people from other parts of the Universe. The artist's sleight of hand with the brush... strokes... breathes life into the imagery of these extra-terrestrials – kaleidoscopic forms that appear to move. Perhaps it is the colour embedded in their sinews that give light and life to them.



Guardian of the black hole - oil on canvas 100 x 160 cm



Fire and Ice - oil on canvas 160 x 100 cm



Water and fire - oil on canvas 160 x 100 cm

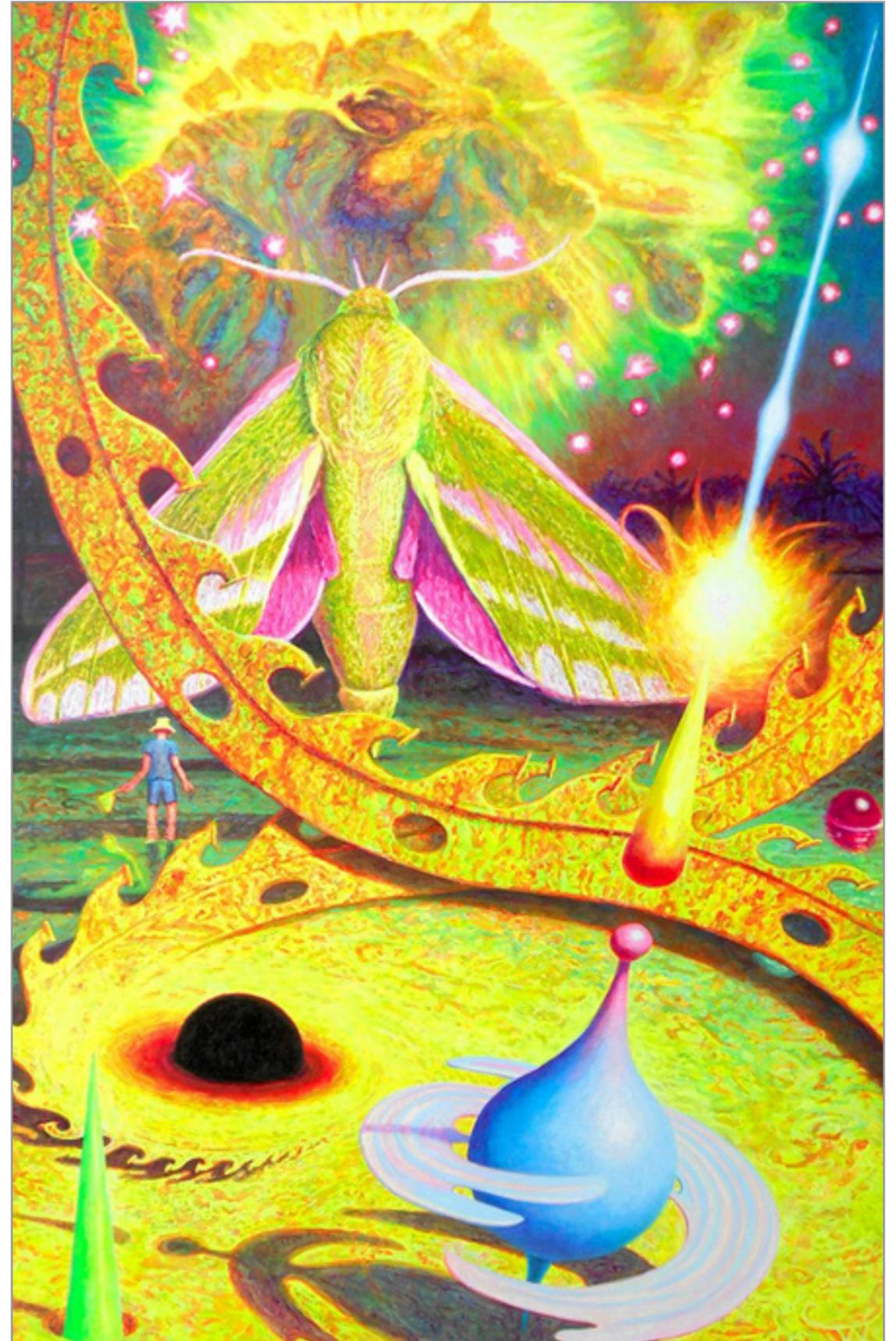
Celestial Queen admiring St. Elmos fire - oil on canvas 150 x 180 cm





Martian Queen looking into magic mirror - oil on canvas 180 x 150 cm

The eel-fisher - oil on canvas - 100 x 160 cm



Guardian of the black hole - oil on canvas 100 x 160 cm



The observer - oil on canvas 112 x 180 cm



Venusian sisters - oil on canvas 100 x 160 cm





Venusian Queen exploring exotic galaxy - oil on canvas 180 x 150 cm

Mikyong Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to *Live Encounters Magazine*.



HERMITAGE MUSEUM
ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA
A BRIEF GLIMPSE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MIKYOUNG CHA

The State Hermitage Museum is a museum of art and culture in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The second-largest art museum in the world, it was founded in 1764 when Empress Catherine the Great acquired an impressive collection of paintings from the Berlin merchant Johann Ernst Gotzkowsky. The collection of the State Hermitage includes over 3 million works of art and world culture artefacts. It contains paintings, graphic works, sculptures, works of applied art, archaeological artefacts and numismatic objects. The museum celebrates the anniversary of its founding each year on 7 December, Saint Catherine's Day. It has been open to the public since 1852.*

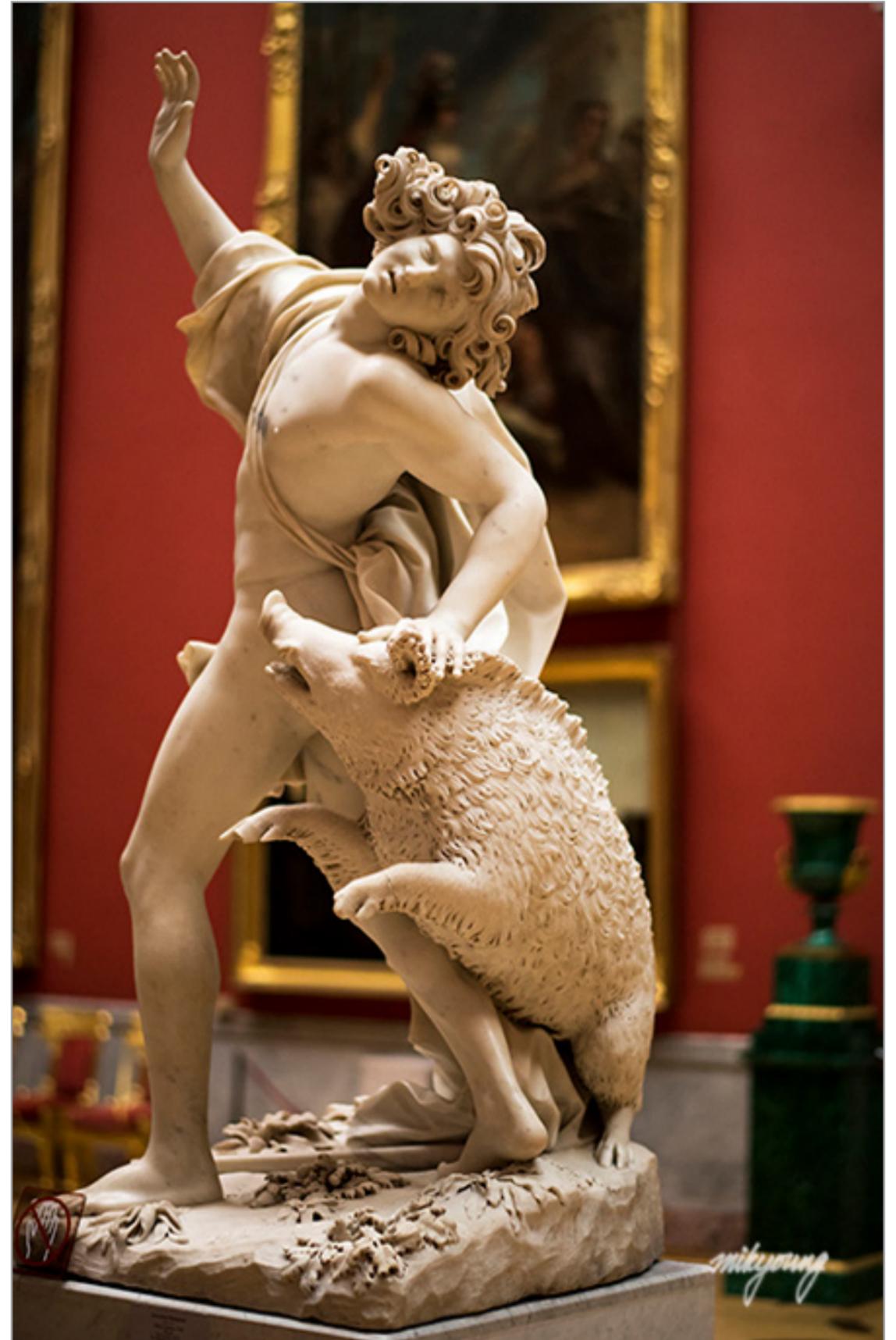
*references: www.hermitagemuseum.org



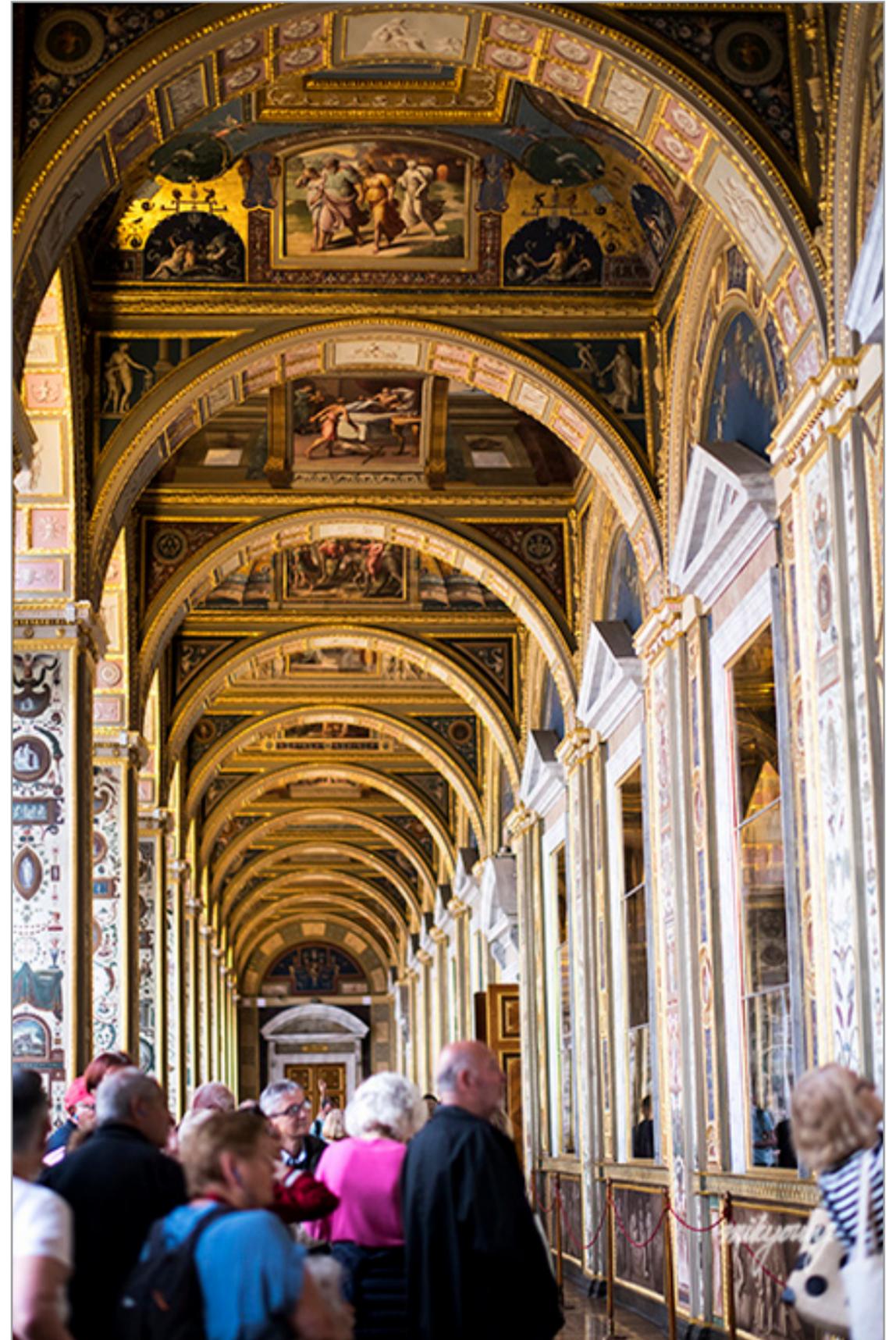
Madonna Litta, 15th century painting by Leonardo da Vinci. It depicts the Virgin Mary breastfeeding the Christ child, a devotional subject known as the Madonna lactans.

The Death of Adonis sculpture in marble by Giuseppe Mazzuoli
c.17th century.

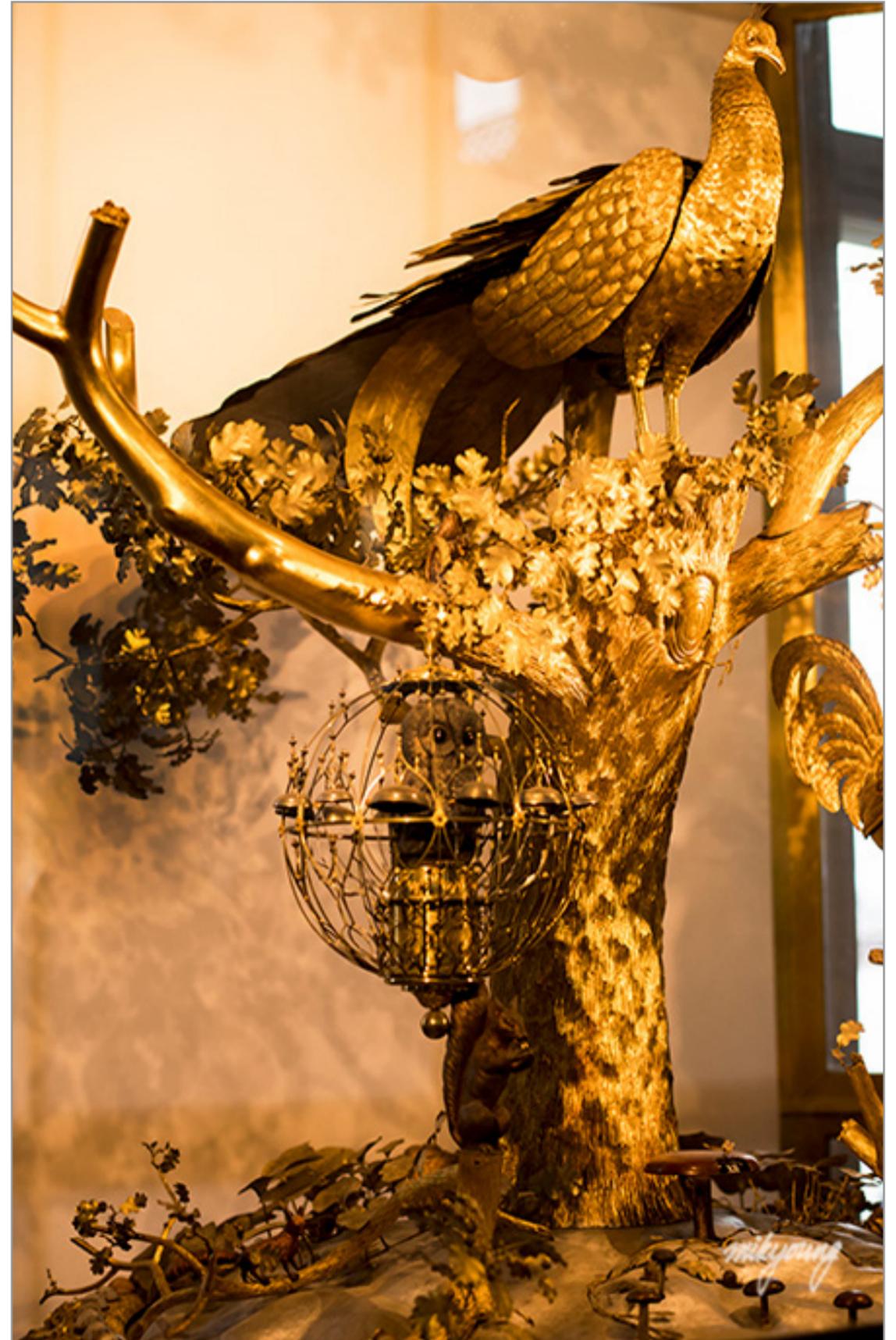
** Adonis chose to spend his final third of the year with Aphrodite. One day, Adonis was gored by a wild boar during a hunting trip and died in Aphrodite's arms as she wept. His blood mingled with her tears and became the anemone flower.*



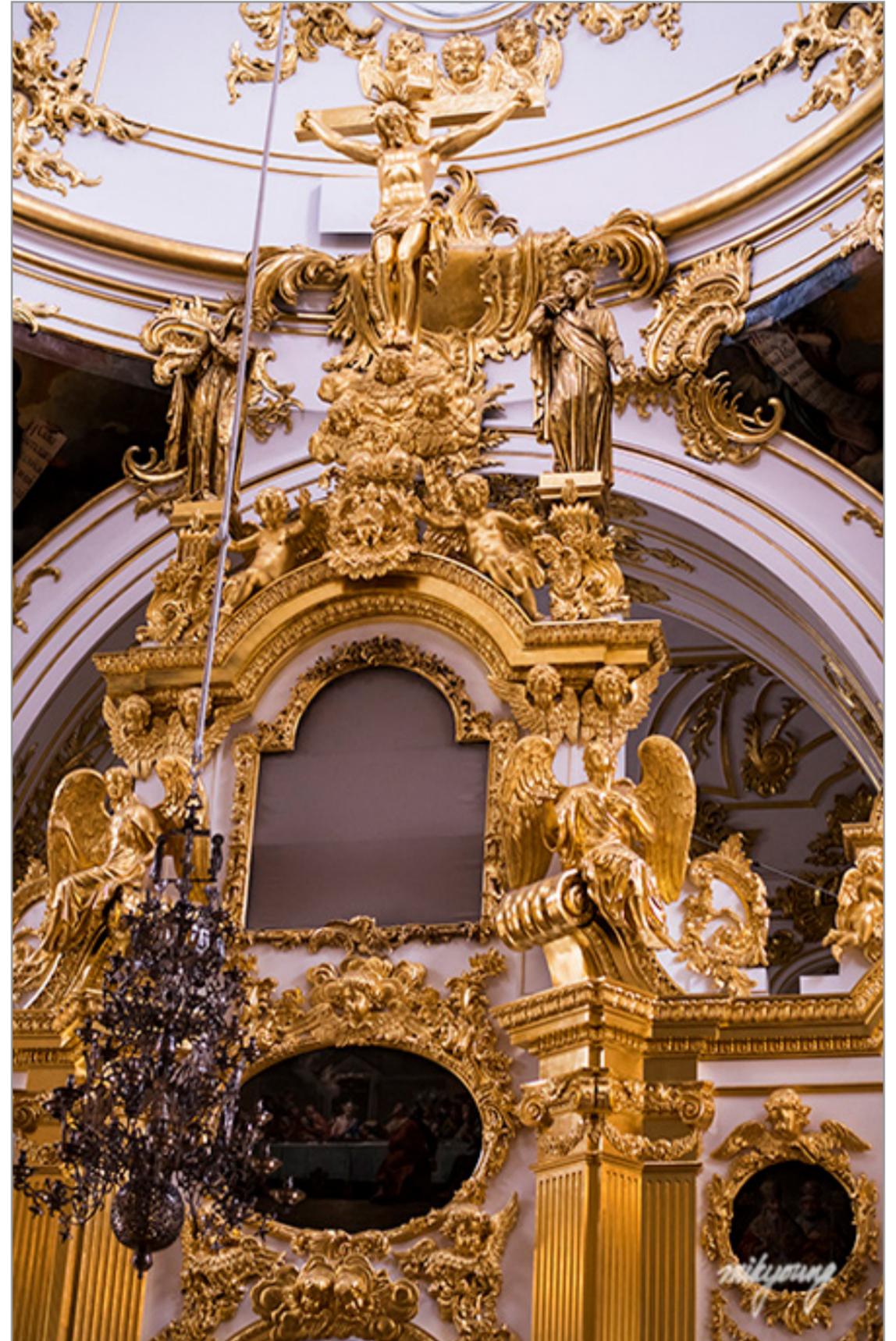
Commissioned by Empress Catherine II in the late 1780s, the Raphael Loggias are the exact copy of the Gallery in the Papal Palace in Vatican City. The frescoes of the open loggias of the Papal Palace were painted after Raphael's sketches. Their copies made in Italy by a group of artists under the supervision of Christopher Unterberger, took their place in the gallery of a separate building erected by Giacomo Quarenghi. The Loggias vaults are decorated with scenes from biblical stories, the walls are covered with paintings with ornamentation motifs, known as "grotesques".



The Peacock Clock is a large automaton featuring three life-sized mechanical birds. It was manufactured by the entrepreneur James Cox in the 2nd half of the 18th century and through the influence of Grigory Potemkin it was acquired by Catherine the Great in 1781.



Altar of The Grand Church of the Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg, sometimes referred to as the Winter Palace's cathedral, was consecrated in 1763.



Display of exquisite artifacts that are highlighted by fabulous gold chandeliers hanging from an ornate ceiling.



The Boudoir was part of the apartments of Empress Maria Alexandrovna, the wife of Alexander II. The elegant decor was created in 1853 by the architect Harald Bosse, a virtuoso of interior design in the "Second Rococo" style. The bright colour of the brocatelle (silk fabric with metal thread), the exquisite lines of the ornament and soft gilded furniture create an impression of refinement and comfort. The splendid ormolu chandelier that is reflected in the mirrors completes this striking interior.





The Knights' Hall, a large room in the eastern part of the New Hermitage originally designed in the Greek revival style for the display of coins, now hosts a collection of Western European arms and armour from the 15th-17th centuries, part of the Hermitage Arsenal collection.



Statue on the Jordan Staircase. It is called the Jordan Staircase because on the Feast of the Epiphany the Tsar descended this imperial staircase in state for the ceremony of the “Blessing of the Waters” of the Neva River, a celebration of Christ’s baptism in the Jordan River.



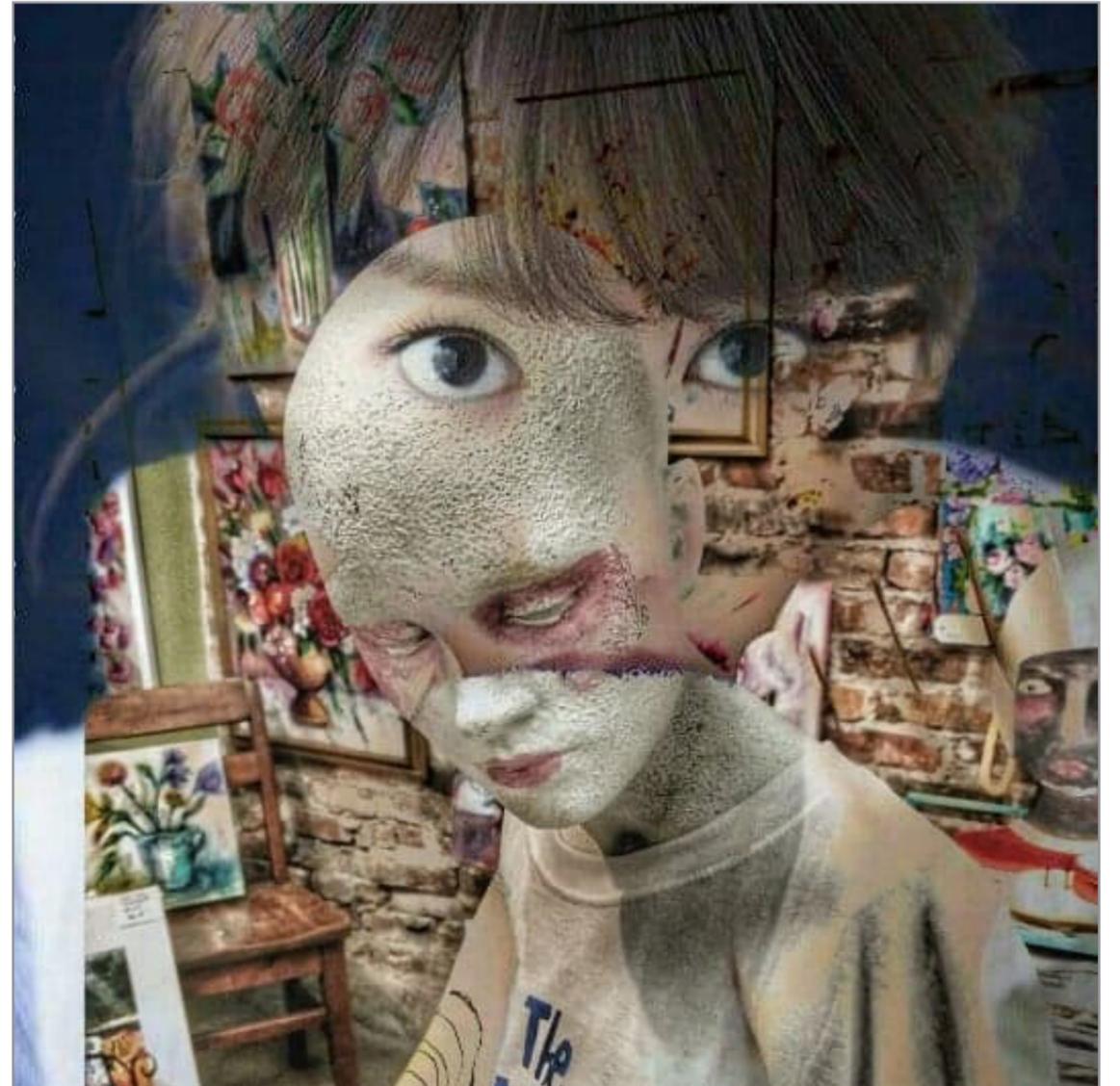
The State Hermitage Museum.

Carl Scharwath, has appeared globally with 150+ journals selecting his poetry, short stories, interviews, essays, plays or art photography (His photography was featured on the cover of six literary journals.) Two poetry books 'Journey To Become Forgotten' (Kind of a Hurricane Press) and 'Abandoned' (ScarsTv) have been published. His first photography book was recently published by Praxis. Carl is the art editor for Minute Magazine, a dedicated runner and 2nd degree black-belt in Taekwondo.



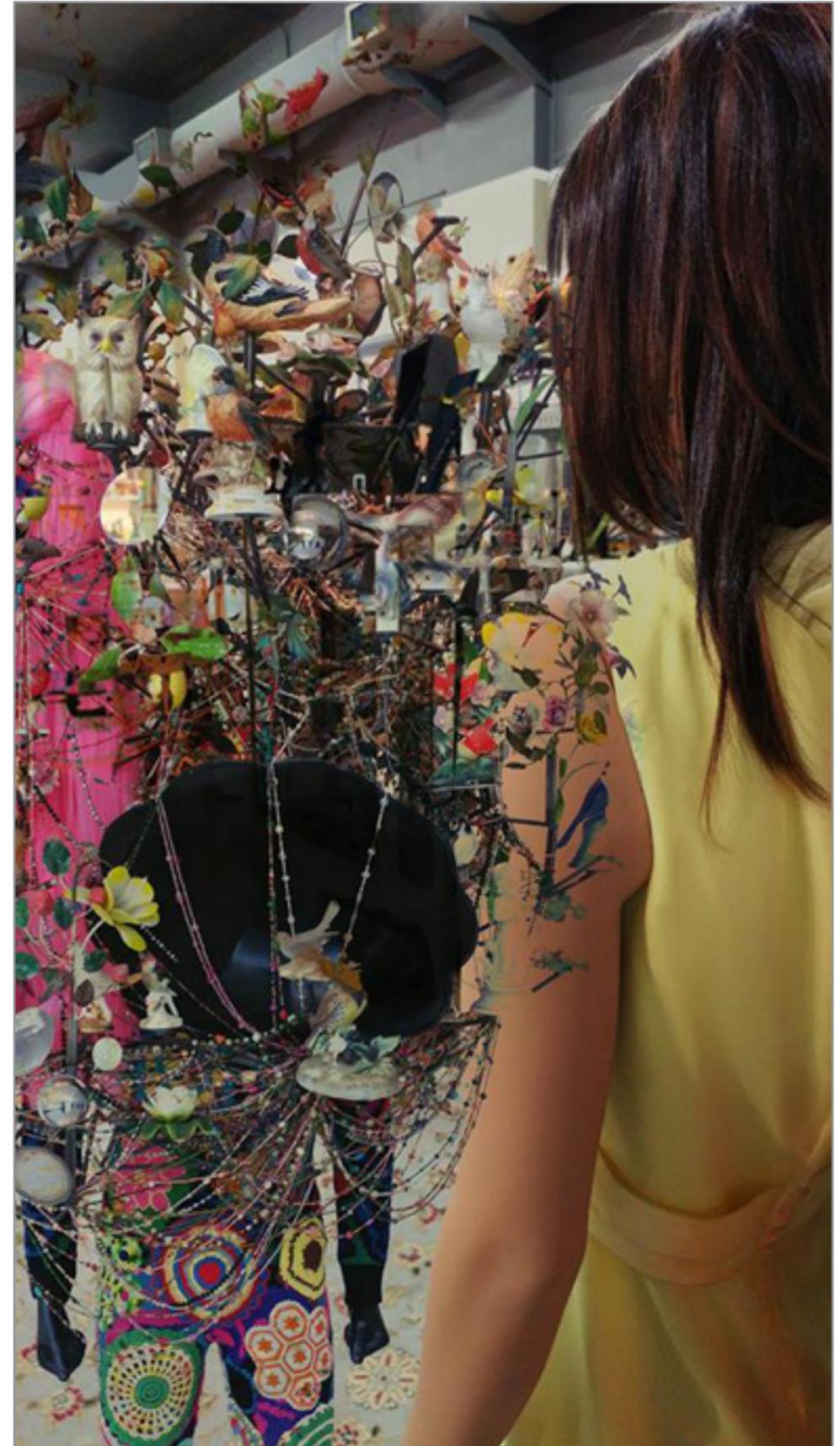
MARINA
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
CARL SCHARWATH

I use photography as a means of self-expression. The most important quality of a photograph, as in all of art, is to evoke an emotional response. I prefer to capture surrealistic moments when I can, the play of light and colors and unusual situations as they unfold. As a passionate runner, being aware of my surroundings tends to produce some surprise scenes instead of forcing an image of time with my camera. Currently I have been concentrating on collaborations with other poets who interpret my photos with their powerful words creating an art form that compliments each other.



Marina.
(Model: Marina Malhotra)

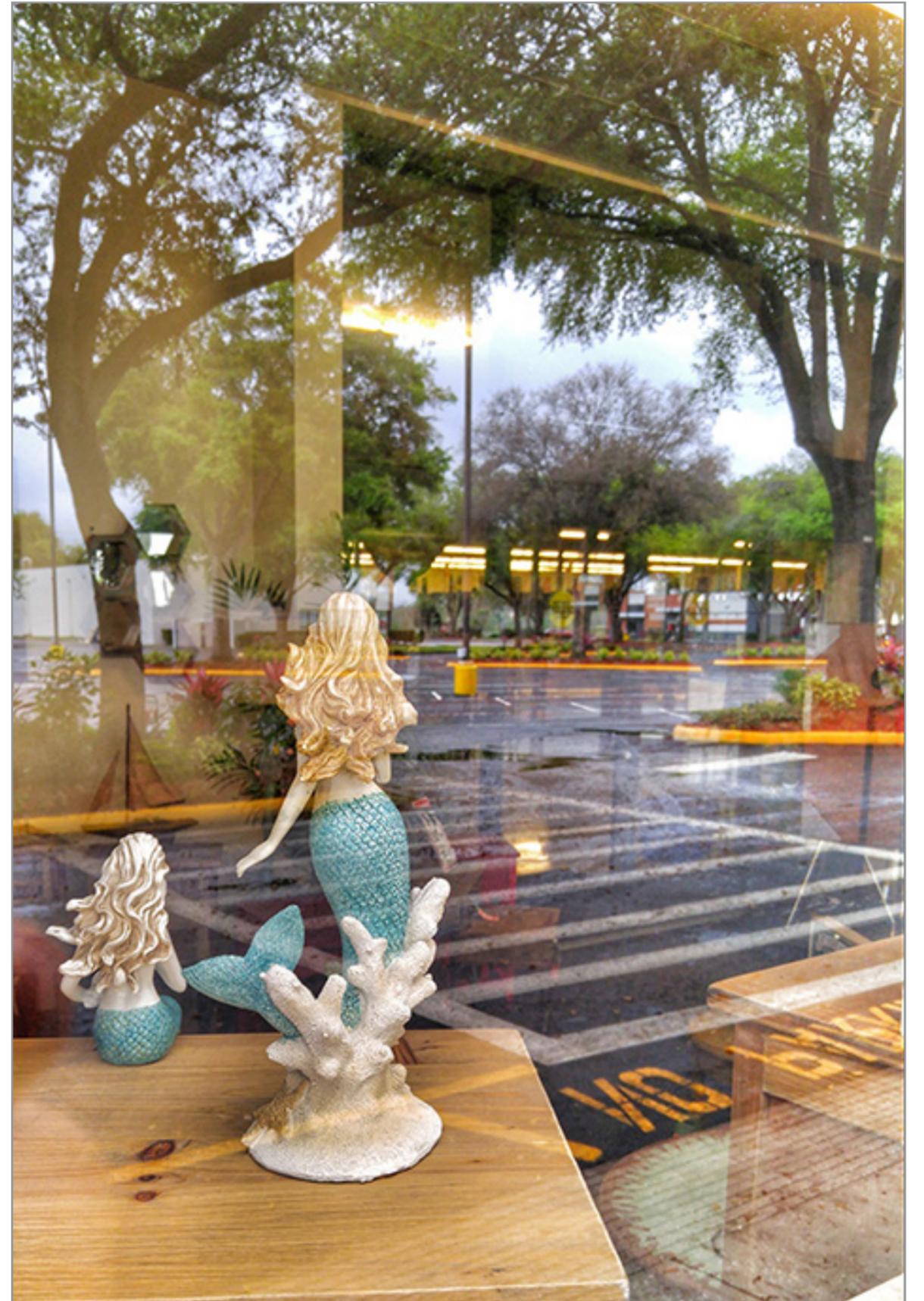
A Mannequin Dream.



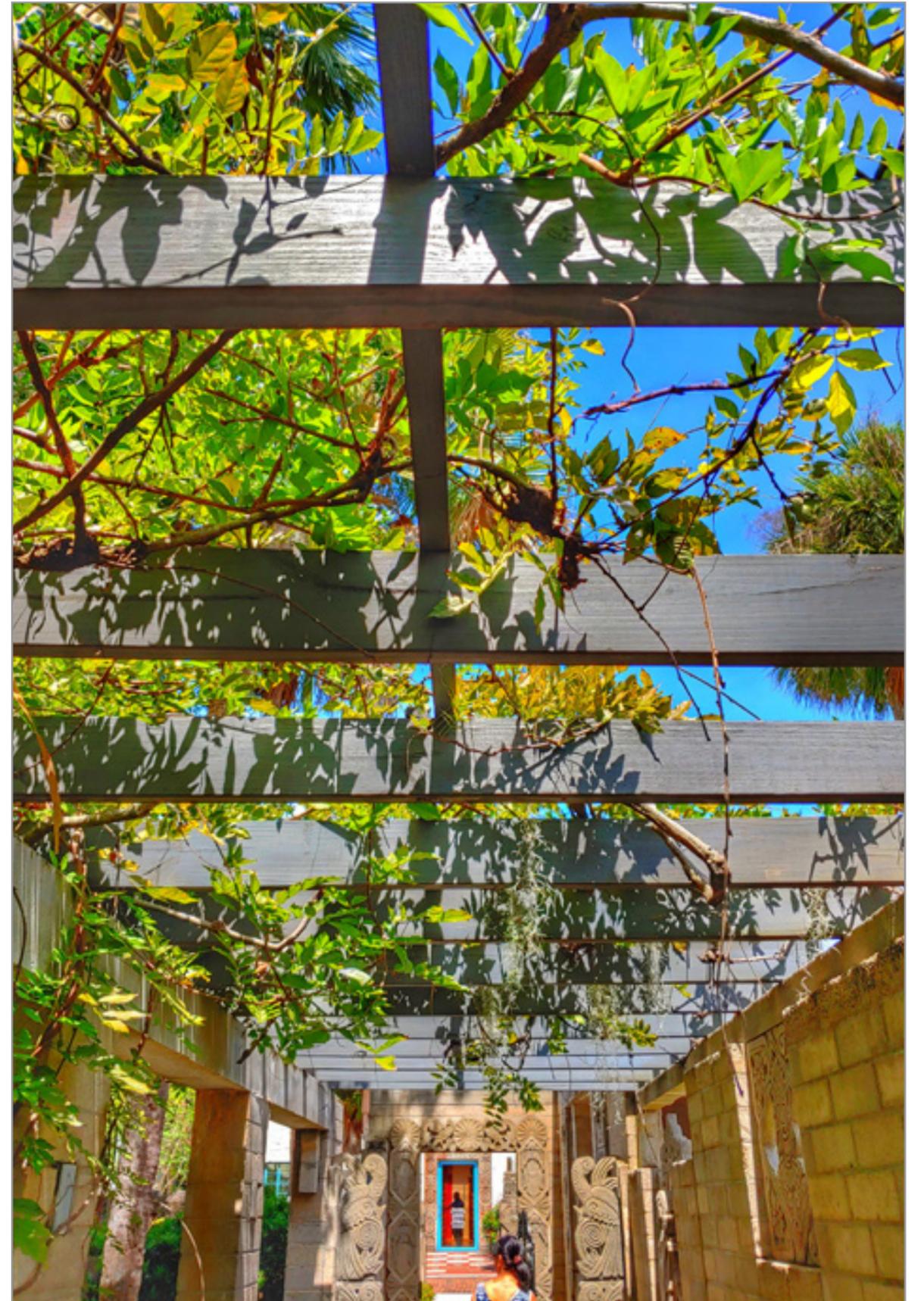
Birthplace.
(Model: Alona Tuballa Alagasi)



Mermaids.



Espalier.



Wheels.





Binge Watcher.



Dr. Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, analyst, writer, editor, consultant, adviser and subject matter expert with specialisation in International Relations (IR), Afghanistan and South Asia. She is Associate Editor, Journal of Asian Security & International Affairs (Sage Publications); Expert and Contributor to the Middle East-Asia Project (MAP) at the Middle East Institute, Washington DC; Senior Analyst, South Asia desk, Wikistrat Analytic Community, New York; Advisor, Independent Conflict Research & Analysis (ICRA), London;. She has been a Fulbright Fellow at South Asia Studies, The Paul H Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC and more. She has conducted field visits to various provinces of Afghanistan since 2007. She is the editor of a book titled "[Countering insurgencies and violent extremism in South and South East Asia](#)", (Routledge: UK), published in January 2019.



Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray held the position of Visiting Professor and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) chair, India Studies at Murdoch University, Perth between July-December 2017. He served as a Deputy Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Government of India and Director of the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)'s Database & Documentation Centre, Guwahati, Assam. He was a Visiting Fellow at the South Asia programme of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore between 2010 and 2012. Routray specialises in decision-making, governance, counter-terrorism, force modernisation, intelligence reforms, foreign policy and dissent articulation issues in South and South East Asia. His writings, based on his projects and extensive field based research in Indian conflict theatres of the Northeastern states and the left-wing extremism affected areas, have appeared in a wide range of academic as well as policy journals, websites, and magazines. This article republished by permission of www.mantraya.org [Here](#) and [Here](#).

DR BIBHU PRASAD ROURAY & DR SHANTHIE MARIET D'SOUZA PART I - THE AFGHANISTAN-INDIA DRUG TRAIL



Abstract

Proximity to the Golden Crescent, steady rise in domestic demand, and the thriving illicit networks' ability to exploit the ungoverned spaces and porous borders are among the factors that are making India a new destination of drugs from Afghanistan. The contraband is entering India both through land as well as the maritime route. In this 'nexus' that has led to the growth of the drug trade, organized criminal networks, smugglers, local policemen, and politicians are tied in a symbiotic relationship. The situation may have improved marginally, according to the claims of the Indian authorities. However, to curb the growing trade and to break the 'unholy nexus' that sustains it, a regional counter-narcotics strategy combined with beefing up domestic laws and law enforcement capacities would be necessary.

<https://pixabay.com/photos/poppy-flower-plant-seeds-3521471/>

In November 2018, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime reported a 20 percent decrease in the total area under opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan compared to 2017. The potential production of opium decreased by 29 percent in 2018 compared to 2017, while farm-gate prices hit an all-time low.'

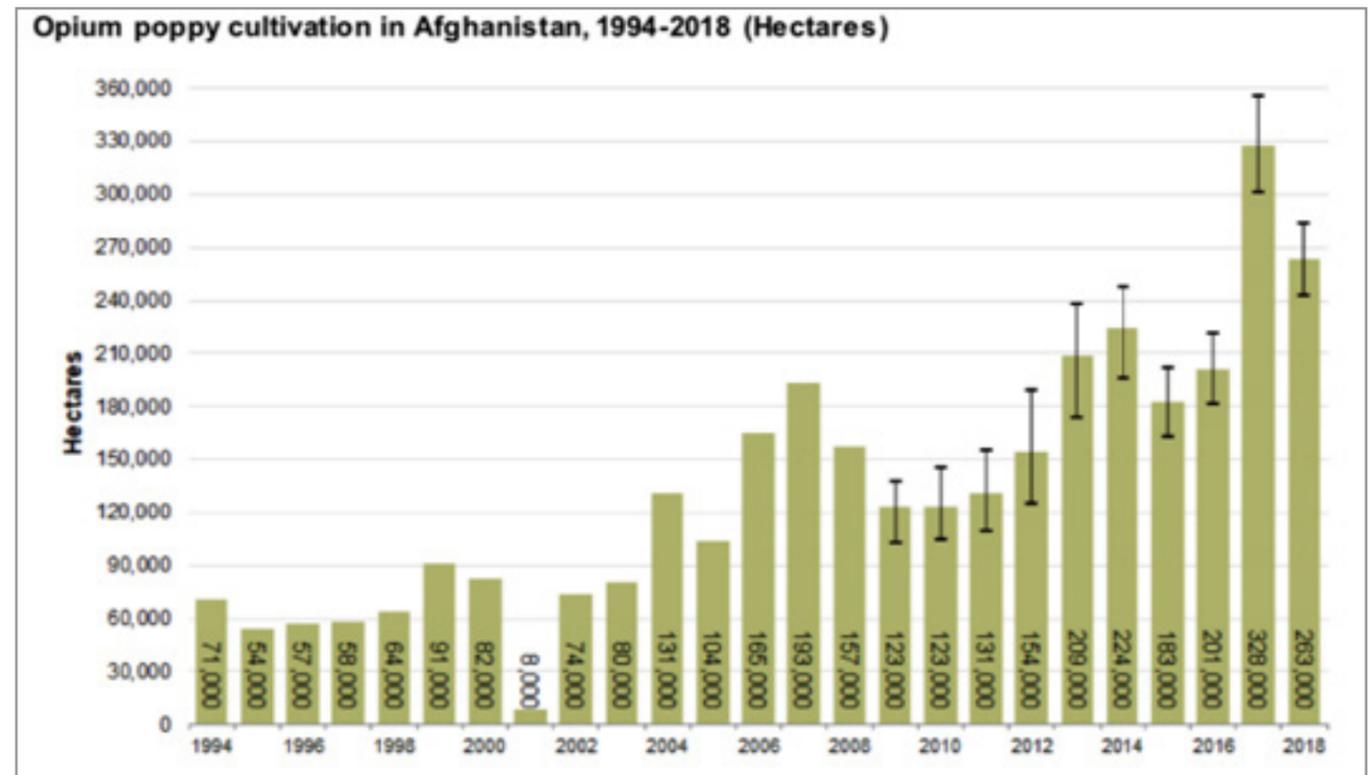
Introduction

India’s geographical proximity with the ‘Golden Crescent’- the area comprising Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran, which is infamous for illicit production as well as transnational smuggling of drugs, is often cited as the reason for the rise in the drug trade that uses India as both a destination of narcotics as well as a transit point. According to the 2018 annual report of the International Narcotics Control board (INCB), India is rising as one of the major hubs for illicit drug trade.[1] The Trump administration has put India along with its other South Asian neighbours among the list of 21 countries that are major drug producing or transit nations.[2] However, over the years, even as the Afghan drug production has shown a marginal decrease, the drug cartels, organized criminals, smugglers, and peddlers across several countries have innovated in several ways to increase the consumer base in India. The ‘nexus’ with the law enforcement agencies and politicians has facilitated the trade, whereas lax counter-narcotics strategies have thwarted state efforts to curb it.

The ‘Narco Economy’ of Afghanistan

In November 2018, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime reported a 20 percent decrease in the total area under opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan compared to 2017. The potential production of opium decreased by 29 percent in 2018 compared to 2017, while farm-gate prices hit an all-time low.’[3]

The decreases, in the northern and western regions of the country, were mostly attributed to the severe drought that affected Afghanistan. The intensity of the problem, however, continues to be grave, due to the sheer expanse of the land in which such cultivation is still carried out. The area under opium poppy cultivation in 2018 was 263,000 hectares compared to 328,000 hectares in 2017. The drug economy in 2018 is estimated to be US\$60 million[4], which feeds generously the ongoing Taliban-led insurgency and a host of other players, including organized criminals, smugglers and terrorist groups.



Source: UNODC, November 2018

The drug packets from the Pakistani side are picked up by the couriers on the Indian side who work in close coordination with their Pakistani counterparts. Once the package is received on the Indian side, the courier waits for further instructions from the Indian handler before moving the contraband. The handler is in charge of ensuring that the drugs, now packed in small packets of one gram each does not run into a check-post. In Punjab, the drug peddlers have developed 'Chitta', a cocktail of heroin and other chemicals, which has become enormously popular with the addicts, for its low cost and effect.

A pack of 'Chitta' weighing less than a gram costs Rupees 500. The smugglers use poor farmers, migrant labourers, drug addicts, and unemployed youth to transport drugs from border areas to cities and villages. On occasions, even policemen and local politicians were found to be part of this distribution network. More than a hundred Punjab police personnel have been arrested for smuggling or helping to smuggle drugs from border regions between 2014 and 2018.

The Land Route: Pakistan

On 28 July 2019, Indian Customs department seized 532 kilograms of heroin at the Attari Integrated Check Post on the Indo-Pakistan border. The heroin was concealed in 15 gunny bags of a rock salt consignment that was coming from Pakistan. The authorities described the seizure as "the biggest achievement in the annals of the Indian Customs history"[5]. Pakistan acts as an important trans-shipment point in the illicit drug trade from Afghanistan into India. Whereas several entry points exist on the Pakistan and Afghanistan border depending largely upon the source of narcotics within Afghanistan, most of the illicit heroin and opium enter India through the 550-kilometre Pakistan-Punjab border. Opium and poppy husk enter Punjab through Rajasthan. Rivers and streams along the Indo-Pakistan border are popular routes for smuggling drugs into the villages located along the border. Other modes of smuggling include sliding in drugs in plastic pipes through the barbed wire at the international border. Cross-border smuggling of drugs involves three kinds of players: (i) Drug dealers in the border region who provide the drugs, (ii) Agents like poor farmers, labourers, addicts etc. who transport the drug in small quantities and (iii) Mafia bosses in various parts of the country who distribute and sell them further within the country and outside.

The drug packets from the Pakistani side are picked up by the couriers on the Indian side who work in close coordination with their Pakistani counterparts.[6] Once the package is received on the Indian side, the courier waits for further instructions from the Indian handler before moving the contraband. The handler is in charge of ensuring that the drugs, now packed in small packets of one gram each does not run into a check-post. In Punjab, the drug peddlers have developed 'Chitta', a cocktail of heroin and other chemicals, which has become enormously popular with the addicts, for its low cost and effect. A pack of 'Chitta' weighing less than a gram costs Rupees 500. The smugglers use poor farmers, migrant labourers, drug addicts, and unemployed youth to transport drugs from border areas to cities and villages. On occasions, even policemen and local politicians were found to be part of this distribution network. More than a hundred Punjab police personnel have been arrested for smuggling or helping to smuggle drugs from border regions between 2014 and 2018.[7] Those arrested included two Deputy Superintendents of Police indicating the extent of the nexus between the smugglers and the law enforcement agencies.



Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Drug Route, Source: UNODC, 2015.

In July 2019, four policemen were arrested from Jammu and Kupwara and heroin packets were seized from their possession. The problem has assumed serious proportions in the state of Himachal Pradesh where 1622 cases of drug smuggling were registered in the first 6 months of 2019 and 789 people were arrested. In Himachal Pradesh, one of the few Indian states where poppy is grown locally and legally, drug peddlers have specifically targeted school and college students with 'Chitta' packets. According to an estimate by a drug rehab and counselling centre in the state capital Shimla, 55-60 percent of youths of that city are addicted to drugs.

Following the 'Drug trail'

From Punjab, drugs flow seamlessly into other states, taking advantage of the almost non-existent inspection mechanism on the inter-state borders. According to a media report, youths in Kashmir are getting hooked on to drugs from Afghanistan that flow into the state from Pakistan. On 26 November 2018, heroin worth Rupees 40 crore was recovered from Rajouri. The consignment bore Afghan labels which indicated that the drugs were smuggled into Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) from Pakistan before it crossed borders and entered J&K. Whereas the earlier smuggling route was through Punjab, since early 2018, the source of 80 percent of drugs seized in the state are from Pakistan.[8] According to officials, the Ramban-Banihal National Highway, one of the two road links between Kashmir and mainland India, has turned into a major route for the drug mafia that has connections to Pakistan-based smugglers. Here too, incidents of policemen facilitating the drug trade have started to emerge. In July 2019, four policemen were arrested from Jammu and Kupwara and heroin packets were seized from their possession. The problem has assumed serious proportions in the state of Himachal Pradesh where 1622 cases of drug smuggling were registered in the first 6 months of 2019 and 789 people were arrested.[9] In Himachal Pradesh, one of the few Indian states where poppy is grown locally and legally, drug peddlers have specifically targeted school and college students with 'Chitta' packets. According to an estimate by a drug rehab and counselling centre in the state capital Shimla, 55-60 percent of youths of that city are addicted to drugs.[10]

Since 2015, Rann of Kutch in Gujarat too has emerged as a route for drug smuggling from Pakistan. On 21 May 2019, six Pakistani nationals were arrested and around 200 packets of heroin were seized in an operation by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence off Jakhau port in Kutch. Investigation revealed that the accused were carrying 336 packets of heroin and had dumped around 100 in the sea. On 28 July, a team of Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) arrested two persons for allegedly carrying one kilogram of brown sugar, near Mandvi Koday of Kutch.[11] Police said the duo received the contraband from a fisherman in Kutch who found it on the shore. The fisherman handed over the contraband to his nephew who then tried to sell it in the black market. Although few details are available regarding the modus operandi of smugglers in the area, a 2015 report had referred to the active role of Thai-Pakistan drug syndicates[12] in narcotics smuggling off Gujarat coast. In April that year, Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy personnel had seized 230 kilograms of heroin from a boat and arrested eight Pakistani nationals. Previously on 31 December 2014, smugglers believed to

Due to government regulation along the Indo-Pakistan border, especially the effort of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the local police that claimed to have choked the heroin supply lines into Punjab, drug dealers have been using alternate routes that pass-through Iran and Africa before finding their way to Punjab and Delhi. In July 2017, India's National Technical Research Organisation (NTR) spotted a suspect vessel 380 kilometres off the coast of Gujarat and alerted the Coast Guard which pressed its ships and aircraft to intercept the Panama registered merchant ship, the Prince. When the vessel was brought to the port of Porbandar, sleuths recovered 1500 kilograms of heroin on board. Eight Indian crew members were arrested.

belong to the same syndicate had set their own boat carrying drug afire resulting in the death of four crew Pakistani members, 365 kilometres off Porbandar.[13] The boat was initially suspected to be carrying terrorists on board.

The Maritime Route: Iran & Africa

Due to government regulation along the Indo-Pakistan border, especially the effort of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the local police that claimed to have choked the heroin supply lines into Punjab, drug dealers have been using alternate routes that pass-through Iran and Africa before finding their way to Punjab and Delhi. In July 2017, India's National Technical Research Organisation (NTR) spotted a suspect vessel 380 kilometres off the coast of Gujarat and alerted the Coast Guard which pressed its ships and aircraft to intercept the Panama registered merchant ship, the Prince. When the vessel was brought to the port of Porbandar, sleuths recovered 1500 kilograms of heroin on board. Eight Indian crew members were arrested. The last port of call for Prince was Chabahar in Iran from where it had picked up the contraband of Afghan heroin meant for an Indian cartel. This, till date, remains the biggest single haul of narcotics in India. According to new modus operandi, drug cartels are increasingly using the maritime route to bring heroin from Afghanistan to the Makran coast, where the coastlines of Pakistan and Iran meet. From there, the consignments are taken across the Indian Ocean to western markets via east Africa, where the coastline is inadequately policed. As the drugs head towards India from Africa, the African smugglers who have their bases in cities like Delhi become involved. Bulk consignments arrive in Delhi either by air or even postal services before being distributed further to other cities like Mumbai. While small quantities are usually transported by postal services, large quantities are transported by using a variety of illegal means like concealing drugs inside vehicles, furniture, bags or specially designed luggage to be aired to other countries. Smugglers also swallow drug capsules or specially designed packets or insert them into their body cavities surgically or otherwise to be transported via air. Drugs are also routed through Sri Lanka. In December 2018, Sri Lankan authorities seized 800 kilograms of cocaine worth Rupees 4,000 crore from an India-bound ship docked at the Colombo port. The ship had sailed from Ecuador. Even as the consumer market in India is on a rise, a portion of drugs transiting India appear to be mainly bound for European countries, US, Canada, and West Africa. Fishing vessels are being used as mode of transport of drugs largely from India to Sri Lanka and its other neighbours.

According to India's Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), 27231, 31535 and 46959 cases were registered by various drug law enforcement agencies in the country during 2015, 2016, and 2017 respectively. Frequent arrests of Afghan and African nationals with drugs in various Indian cities often creates the impression of their large-scale involvement in the trade. However, according to the Indian Home Ministry, "99 percent of the 127180 persons arrested"[16] in these three years, are Indian nationals. It is safe to conclude that Indian mafia, smugglers, and agents dominate the trade within the country with only a minor participation of foreign nationals. The NCB claims that steps taken by it has led to a reduction in the quantity smuggled Afghan drugs in India. However, the ground situation portrays a different picture.

Growing 'Nexus'

The huge narco-economy with enormous potential to bring about financial windfall explains the involvement of a range of agents including unemployed youths, law enforcement personnel and politicians in the trade, particularly given the high corruption levels that permeates the state structures. As previously mentioned, the Afghan narco-economy in 2018 is estimated to be US\$60 million. It increases by leaps and bounds as the contraband leaves the soil of Afghanistan and travels the distance. There is no estimate of drugs that enter the Indian market. However, according to a report in 2018, one gram of heroin costs more than Rupees 2500 in international border areas in India. As the drug reaches districts like Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Fazilka, the price is doubled. A gram of heroin costs Rupees 8000 in cities such as Ludhiana and Chandigarh. Reduced supply further leads to skyrocketing of prices. For instance, the cost of heroin in Mumbai went up from Rupees 2.9 million in 2016 to Rupees 9.8 million in 2017.[14] This translates to Rupees 9800 per gram. By 2019, however, in national capital Delhi, the asking price for a kilogram of heroin (from either Afghanistan or Myanmar) had reached Rupees 40 million, i.e. a staggering Rupees 40,000 per gram. [15] Not surprisingly, improvised drugs like 'Chitta' are becoming more popular and play a key part of the burgeoning narco-economy.

Fighting the Menace: Coordination deficit

According to India's Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), 27231, 31535 and 46959 cases were registered by various drug law enforcement agencies in the country during 2015, 2016, and 2017 respectively. Frequent arrests of Afghan and African nationals with drugs in various Indian cities often creates the impression of their large-scale involvement in the trade. However, according to the Indian Home Ministry, "99 percent of the 127180 persons arrested"[16] in these three years, are Indian nationals. It is safe to conclude that Indian mafia, smugglers, and agents dominate the trade within the country with only a minor participation of foreign nationals. The NCB claims that steps taken by it has led to a reduction in the quantity smuggled Afghan drugs in India. However, the ground situation portrays a different picture. The fact that both central and state level efforts have remained uncoordinated and dissipated has aided the smugglers. The state government in Punjab has struggled to deal with the drug problem in spite of its promise to wipe it out in few months. It is hard pressed for resources and the nexus of smugglers with the police and politicians are creating problems.

The decrease in opium cultivation in Afghanistan, mainly due to drought unfolds a false sense of promise. Both the area under cultivation and amount of production remains large enough to meet the demands of the increasing clientele. Worse still, shortage of supply merely leads to a rise in prices and not necessarily a dip in demand. Increase in the ability of the respective governments to act against the smugglers notwithstanding, the problem requires a bilateral /and regional collaboration to supplement the efforts of domestic agencies. This aspect is either absent or nascent. In April 2018, for instance, Indian and Afghan officials met in New Delhi for a day long bilateral meet to discuss issues related to drug trafficking and narcotics abuse.

However, the realization that the problem needs to be dealt with by inter-state cooperation has led Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to form a joint force to tackle the interstate network of drugs smugglers. Such mechanism, however, does not include the government of J&K, where efforts to tackle the menace remain minimal. According to a media report, the state-level de-addiction panel constituted by the Governor in March 2019 had not met even for a single occasion till July.[17] Both Haryana and Himachal Pradesh are moving towards strengthening legal mechanisms to arrest the chaos. Both are reportedly considering a legislation on the lines of the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) to tackle the drug menace in their states.[18]

Realization that efforts of individual states will always be limited and affected by politics has led to calls for the establishment of a national agency to deal with the problem. In July 2019, for instance, state governments of Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh asked New Delhi to set up a specialised agency on the lines of National Investigation Agency (NIA) to against the drug mafia who run high profile rackets. The meeting which was also attended by official representatives from Delhi, J&K, and the union territory of Chandigarh also agreed to initiate a series of measures including joint operations at the inter-state borders, information sharing and implementation of the best practices of the participating States. The states also appeared to move towards strengthening the information sharing mechanism on drugs and drug dealers-smugglers, for a more effective crack-down against them. The implementation of all these measures would be crucial in controlling the menace.

Need for a Regional Counter-Narcotics Strategy

The decrease in opium cultivation in Afghanistan, mainly due to drought unfolds a false sense of promise. Both the area under cultivation and amount of production remains large enough to meet the demands of the increasing clientele. Worse still, shortage of supply merely leads to a rise in prices and not necessarily a dip in demand. Increase in the ability of the respective governments to act against the smugglers notwithstanding, the problem requires a bilateral /and regional collaboration to supplement the efforts of domestic agencies. This aspect is either absent or nascent. In April 2018, for instance, Indian and Afghan officials met in New Delhi for a day long bilateral meet to discuss issues related to drug trafficking and narcotics abuse.

The Indo-Pakistan counter-narcotics cooperation mechanism is largely non-functional due to the difficulty in the bilateral relationship. There is a need to reactivate such cooperation between countries on the smuggling routes. This is particularly important given the impact that this epidemic has on the youth of all three counties which are witnessing rising numbers of drug addiction. The drug trade continues to fuel the conflict in Afghanistan and facilitates linkages between organized crime and terrorist groups. Sharing of real time information as well as sharing of best practices are the need of the hour. In addition to interdiction and sharing information, a trilateral mechanism between Afghanistan, Pakistan and India can help curb the growing menace.

According to an issued press note, “the meeting discussed exchange of ideas, sharing of best practices and furthering areas of cooperation in the drug crime domain”[19]. No further meeting has taken place since then. The Indo-Pakistan counter-narcotics cooperation mechanism is largely non-functional due to the difficulty in the bilateral relationship. There is a need to reactivate such cooperation between countries on the smuggling routes. This is particularly important given the impact that this epidemic has on the youth of all three counties which are witnessing rising numbers of drug addiction. The drug trade continues to fuel the conflict in Afghanistan and facilitates linkages between organized crime and terrorist groups. Sharing of real time information as well as sharing of best practices are the need of the hour. In addition to interdiction and sharing information, a trilateral mechanism between Afghanistan, Pakistan and India can help curb the growing menace.

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DR BIBHU PRASAD ROURAY & DR SHANTHIE MARIET D'SOUZA PART II - AFGHAN DRUG TRAIL & THE INDIAN DRUG SYNDICATES



Afghan Heroin seized by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police, Photo Courtesy: News 18.

Abstract

Recurrent arrests of Indian drug smugglers and Afghan nationals have brought renewed focus on the increase in smuggling of heroin from Afghanistan into India. The nefarious trade has not only grown in sophistication, but could be paving way for direct linkages between India's own drug lords and compatriots in Afghanistan. Orders placed from India are getting delivered through a variety of means using sea, air, and land routes that crisscross different continents. Efforts of Indian law enforcement agencies need to be innovative and more importantly, supplemented by a regional cooperative mechanism to control this illegal trade.

A modified version of the earlier strategy is to use of Afghan nationals coming to India on medial visa or those with residence permit in India by the Afghan drug lords. These men, usually from poor families, are lured by a promise of money and are asked to swallow pills containing fine quality heroin of 15 to 20 grams each. They are asked not to eat or drink anything till they reach India. Once they pass through the security check and reach their destination, they excrete these pills and hand them over to designated persons who could be Indians or even African nationals. In March 2019, three Afghans were arrested for being part of such a network. Each of them had swallowed about 15 to 20 capsules. In the same month, four more Afghans were arrested after their arrival from Kabul at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi. They had swallowed capsules containing a net weight of 920 grams of heroin which were extracted in a hospital.

New Models of Nexus

On 25 July, a special cell of Delhi Police arrested 35-year-old Tifal Nau Khez, an alleged drug lord along with an Afghan national Ahmad Shah Alokzai with 130 kilograms of heroin from Navi Mumbai[1] in Maharashtra state. The drug, soaked and dried on 260 jute bags, originated from Herat in Afghanistan, travelled in a container to Bandar Abbas in Iran, before taking the sea route to Mumbai. In addition to the drug seizure, arrest of Tifal Nau Khez, described by the police as the kingpin of the drug network in the national capital, brought to light the relatively little-known world of drug smuggling and organized crime in Indian urban centres. This special report, based on monitoring of incidents of drug seizures in India over the past one year, attempts to unravel the modus operandi of some of these Indian drug syndicates and their links with Afghanistan.

Three models of nexus between the Indian and Afghan drug syndicates have emerged in recent times. The first model consists of Afghan drug lords and smugglers operating through their Indian contacts. Drugs reach India through Pakistan or travel the longer route through Iran or Africa before reaching India. The second model consists of Afghan drug lords using multiple Afghan carriers to smuggle drugs to their Indian counterparts. Unlike the first model, here Afghans as well as African carriers are involved. And in the third model, the Indian syndicates reach out to their Afghan contacts to import drugs. The latter use a variety of means and routes to deliver the consignments.

Afghan Drug Lords and Smugglers

In spite of years of international counter-narcotics efforts, the smuggling networks in Afghanistan remain functional and complex. Deeply rooted in the nation's tribal societal structure, drug lords and smugglers in Afghanistan have operated through contacts which include Afghan expats in various countries. For instance, deals are struck during Haj, the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. The smuggling network manages to seamlessly export tonnes of opium across the national borders 'plugging into the Turkish, Iranian, Pakistani and Russian gangs that refine the drug into heroin for sale in Europe'[2]. Media reports in the past have pointed at some of the techniques that the drug lords employ to move narcotics. From the southern province of Helmand, for instance, 'at night high-speed convoys laden with narcotics move across the desert towards the border with Pakistan. The frontier is effectively controlled by the Baloch tribe which has long experience of smuggling.

From the unmanned border, a part of the contraband is moved to Karachi or Makran, a coastal strip along Balochistan's Arabian seacoast. Another part moves west by road into Iran.[3] Drug lords of Afghanistan are known to maintain distribution offices within Pakistan, run by cartel bosses. The latter, in symbiotic relations with the law enforcement agencies, could have been responsible for smuggling of 150 tonnes of Afghan drug, according to an estimate in 2015. From Karachi and Makran, drugs were boarded on boats and shipping vessels and sent to the high seas, where it was picked up by the syndicates of different countries. The cartels in Pakistan, according to the UN, made a whopping US\$1.2 billion by simply transshipping the contraband to different parts of the world.[4] Among the recipient countries of these narcotics, mostly consisting of heroin, is India. In the recent years, as India's ability to disrupt largescale smuggling has improved. Several seizures have taken place either on the high seas or when drug carrying vessels enter the Indian waters. To counter this, smugglers have attempted to tap into the hundreds of Afghans who travel by air to India on a daily basis. The strategy is shifting from attempting to smuggle huge consignments at one go, to transporting relatively small quantities on a recurrent basis. The quantum of loss, in case of an arrest, is minimal.

Afghan Carriers and Indian Distributors

A modified version of the earlier strategy is to use of Afghan nationals coming to India on medial visa or those with residence permit in India by the Afghan drug lords. These men, usually from poor families, are lured by a promise of money and are asked to swallow pills containing fine quality heroin of 15 to 20 grams each. They are asked not to eat or drink anything till they reach India. Once they pass through the security check and reach their destination, they excrete these pills and hand them over to designated persons who could be Indians or even African nationals. In March 2019, three Afghans were arrested for being part of such a network. Each of them had swallowed about 15 to 20 capsules.[5] In the same month, four more Afghans were arrested after their arrival from Kabul at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi. They had swallowed capsules containing a net weight of 920 grams of heroin which were extracted in a hospital.[6] On 2 August, another Afghan, 30-year-old Mohammadi Roohullah, was arrested from the Lajpat Nagar area of New Delhi with 2.97 kilograms of heroin. Roohullah revealed that few months back in Afghanistan he had met two smugglers who promised him US\$2000 to smuggle heroin to India by swallowing them. Roohullah had been instructed to wait for unknown persons to collect these capsules from his residence in Delhi.[7]

People like Roohullah are also coerced to peddle the capsules to meet their medical expenses. On 24 July 2018, a 36-year-old Afghan national Mohammad Nadir Khadim was arrested in New Delhi with two kilograms of heroin.[8] Khadim was on his third visit to India for Hepatitis B treatment. He told his investigators that he was lured into a trade by a fellow Afghan named Mustafa, who is a resident of New Delhi's Lajpat Nagar area.

In addition to Afghans, other arrests in New Delhi have indicated that Afghanistan-based Nigerians and their South African connections could be involved in bringing heroin capsules into India. While small quantities are mostly swallowed by these carriers, bigger quantities are often carried in concealed packets or camouflaged baggage. On 17 August 2019, a South African woman was arrested at the Indira Gandhi International Airport with nearly five kilograms of heroin. She had reached New Delhi from South Africa via Qatar.[9]

Indian Drug Lords & Organized Crime Groups

Although drug smuggling from Afghanistan and Southeast Asia has a long history in India, involving several Mumbai-based organized crime groups, the epicenter of such operations appears to be shifting gradually towards the national capital. In this context, arrest of Tifal Nau Khez represents a relatively new phenomenon of an Indian national attempting to run a narcotic empire by establishing contacts with the Afghan drug syndicates. Khez hails from Bulandsahar in the state of Uttar Pradesh. He lacks formal education. Working as an auto driver, in 2013, he was arrested in Punjab for possessing 250 grams of heroin and served a prison term in Amritsar. During his stay in jail, he not only established contacts with other criminals, but seems to have picked up the finer points of smuggling drugs. After his release, Khez got in touch with Afghan nationals staying in Delhi asking for heroin capsules. An Afghan reportedly offered him few capsules to sell. The small business grew phenomenally over time leading to his direct contact with an Afghan drug lord, identified by his pseudo name Haji. Afghan national Ahmad Shah Alokozai, who was arrested along with Khez is a wholesale dry fruit importer, who has been living in Delhi for the past few years. The dry fruit consignments he received from Afghanistan, through Iran, contained heroin. He, the police believe, has also used his business to set up a network of dry fruit dealers in the city, who were involved in the distribution of drugs. Under Khez's directions, reconstituted heroin was being delivered to distributors in Punjab.

Since Indians are yet to master the trade of reconstituting heroin from jute bags, they are seeking the help of Afghan nationals with experience to teach them the technique. In July, five members of an international drug cartel including two Afghans were arrested along with 150 kilograms of heroin in Delhi. The arrested Afghans- 30-year-old Shinwari Rehmat Gul and 31-year-old Akhtar Mohammad Shinwari- tuned out to be chemical experts who were attempting to set up a reconstitution 'factory' in Delhi. Gul had experience of working in a drug processing unit in Afghanistan and had been sent to India by the Afghan syndicate to handle operations of this newly-established unit. The Indian partners were in charge of the distribution network.

Khez's arrest may have provided a setback to similar aspirations of individuals involved in the trade. But the trend of consolidation of a smuggling network that has connections across several countries is apparent. Unless controlled, from here it can only grow in sophistication.

Afghan Dry Fruits, Spices, and Jute Bags

On 23 July, two Afghan nationals were arrested in New Delhi and 50 kilograms of heroin was recovered from them. Hailing from Kandahar and Helmand provinces in Afghanistan, they had smuggled drugs into the country via the Attari-Wagah border between India and Pakistan. Drugs were concealed inside dry fruit cartons which had been imported.[10]

The difficulty in bringing in processed heroin into the country has constrained the smugglers to attempt setting up chemical reconstitution factories in India in recent times. The term 'factory', however, is a bit of a misnomer. These units are meant to be non-descript small facilities, operating out of apartments in busy residential areas. Khez had bought an apartment in New Delhi's Zakir Nagar area where he had set up a similar 'factory'.

The modus operandi of smuggling heroin in this manner is complex. In Afghanistan, jute bags, used to export dry fruits and spices like cumin to India, are soaked in liquid heroin and dried. After the consignment reaches India, the imported products are removed and the jute bags are kept aside. Subsequently, these bags are collected by a group of men from various traders, who bring them to these 'factories' for processing. Each processed bag can yield approximately a kilogram of high-quality heroin.

Since Indians are yet to master the trade of reconstituting heroin from jute bags, they are seeking the help of Afghan nationals with experience to teach them the technique. In July, five members of an international drug cartel including two Afghans were arrested along with 150 kilograms of heroin in Delhi. The arrested Afghans- 30-year-old Shinwari Rehmat Gul and 31-year-old Akhtar Mohammad Shinwari- tuned out to be chemical experts who were attempting to set up a reconstitution 'factory' in Delhi.[11] Gul had experience of working in a drug processing unit in Afghanistan and had been sent to India by the Afghan syndicate to handle operations of this newly-established unit. The Indian partners were in charge of the distribution network.

Police and drug enforcement agencies, who struggle to control the trade that is growing in sophistication exploiting the anonymity provided by India's burgeoning metropolises, underline the importance of better human intelligence (HUMINT) and other counter narcotic mechanisms. Since the menace involves and affects other countries in the region, a regional mechanism for cooperation through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) could be useful to supplement efforts in breaking the growing nexus.

Breaking the Nexus

While the involvement of Afghan nationals in the drug smuggling especially heroin into India remains small[12], the new trends are worrisome. According to a Statement of Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, Minister of State for Home Affairs in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of the Indian Parliament) on 28 March 2018, "99 percent of the 127180 persons arrested" in drug related cases between 2015-2017 are Indian nationals. This, however, points at the consolidation of the drug syndicates in India, with Indian mafia, smugglers, and agents seeking to find ways to smuggle narcotics. Arrests and busts do provide a setback, but do not deter the people in the trade from innovating and expanding their trade to cater to the growing demand. Police and drug enforcement agencies, who struggle to control the trade that is growing in sophistication exploiting the anonymity provided by India's burgeoning metropolises, underline the importance of better human intelligence (HUMINT) and other counter narcotic mechanisms. Since the menace involves and affects other countries in the region, a regional mechanism for cooperation through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) could be useful to supplement efforts in breaking the growing nexus.

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MARK ULYSEAS GOEBBELS' RAPTURE

Reality is now relegated to a metaphysical world. And to reach this reality one has to trudge through the filth of Goebbels bastard offspring. Offspring that spout an unending litany of untruths expertly marinated with a few spices of truth tidbits so as to entice the viewer or reader to part-take of the 'news', to eat it, to be contaminated by it and to release it ...like daily bodily excretions ...expect that nothing is flushed...it remains floating around while the viewer wallows in it unmindful of the stench of agendas. One would imagine that pigs are intelligent creatures.

Nothing appears sacred anymore. Religion, politics, poverty and entertainment jostle for space on the shelves of the media that roam, scavenging anything and everything, dragging it back to their lairs, then hastily reconstructing the garbage to resemble a nice glitzy version for suckers to suck on...viewers...the gullible mental invalids who find it far more comfortable to share the news links without making any attempt to cross check facts or to question what is being reported.

Colourful images and haunting sound tracks, reporters and anchors wearing masks of the *masquerade ball* announce with aplomb the news of their reality. Debates, discussions and the usual 'all sound and fury signifying nothing' are *aired* with a sincerity of a bitch in heat waiting on the roadside for a passing dog.

And as if on cue viewers line-up for a quickie selfie. Every one of them wants their views on the news to be heard and accepted, and if this does not happen they unleash the trolls that in turn run riot on the net. Abuse is the mantra. And so is denigration, another exciting path, though much trodden of late.

The rules of the game are that *there are no rules*. The order of the day is to sell, sell, sell...viewership numbers outrank truth on any given day...as long as sponsors — political, commercial or religious, are willing to pay the price for such services. There is profit to be had in promoting *agendas*.

Mark Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photo-grapher. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. It is a not for profit (adfree) free online magazine featuring leading academics, writers, poets, activists of all hues etc. from around the world. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry*, which was relaunched as *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* in March 2017. In February 2019 the third publication was launched, *LE Children Poetry & Writing* (now renamed *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers*). He has edited, designed and produced all of *Live Encounters'* 167 publications till date (October 2019). Mark's philosophy is that knowledge must be free and shared freely to empower all towards enlightenment. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*. www.amazon.com/markulyseas



Phrases almost always feature the hash tag to denote a universal acceptance, an acceptance that does not, initially, exist. However with regular usage a phrase becomes the WORD. And then this WORD generates a following of believers. Anyone who challenges this WORD is marked *offensive* and denigrated by the juggernaut of users, the *enlightened* enforcers.

And so from the good old days of hash browns we now have hash tags.

Spin doctors don't wear masks anymore; they can't be bothered, for they walk in the light of studio cameras. They know how to rehash and repack untruths into a credible reality and administer it to the public like nerve gas. Notice how many people are obsessed with the news as if it is pornography. The more violent and salacious the words and visuals the more viewers congregate to confabulate, to expound their own versions of reality.

The excessive odious reportage assumes an air of sweet jasmine on a cool summer night.

Media is the surrogate mother of social media, Goebbels' bastard offspring.

Turning of the screws on the thumbs appears to have begun with the 'editing' and/or deletion of posts of free thinkers by *social* media generals of the WORD and their pack of lexicon executioners. The management of minds is underway and there is no turning back, no way out but, in.

Welcome to *The Ministry of Social Media*, your avatar is being processed, please take a seat.

Available at:

<https://stormbirdpress.com/book/the-philodendrist-heresy/>

Dr Margi Prideaux has written about wildlife, international politics and law almost every day for the past 27 years. As an international negotiator and independent academic, with a Ph.D. in wildlife policy and law, her words have been tuned to inform policy audiences in more than 20 different international conservation processes. Her essay *Trading in Bones* appeared in *Live Encounters*, 12 December 2017.

<https://liveencounters.net/2017-le-mag/12-december-2017/dr-margi-prideaux-trading-in-bones/>



DR MARGI PRIDEAUX'S REVIEW OF **THE PHILODENDRIST HERESY** BY JED BRODY, Stormbird Press

Danielle Gasket's search for ancestral secrets is imperilled by warring factions that agree about nothing, but that Danielle must die.

Danielle's home is a dystopian city beneath the earth's surface. People have lived underground for so long that knowledge of the surface is preserved only in dwindling communities of persecuted heretics. According to the heretics, a prophet called "the philodendrist" led people underground to repent for their violent conquest of the natural world.

Following a string of clues while eluding pursuit, Danielle races toward the long-forgotten path of ascension to sunlight, relying upon her wits and valour to make it through. Finally, her mercy toward her fiercest persecutor convinces him to help her ascend to the pure waters of the sunlit world.

Jed Brody wrote *The Philodendrist Heresy* as a call for the preservation and resurrection of the great forests of the earth. "Philodendrist" means "tree lover."

Coming Soon

THE ENTROPY HERESY

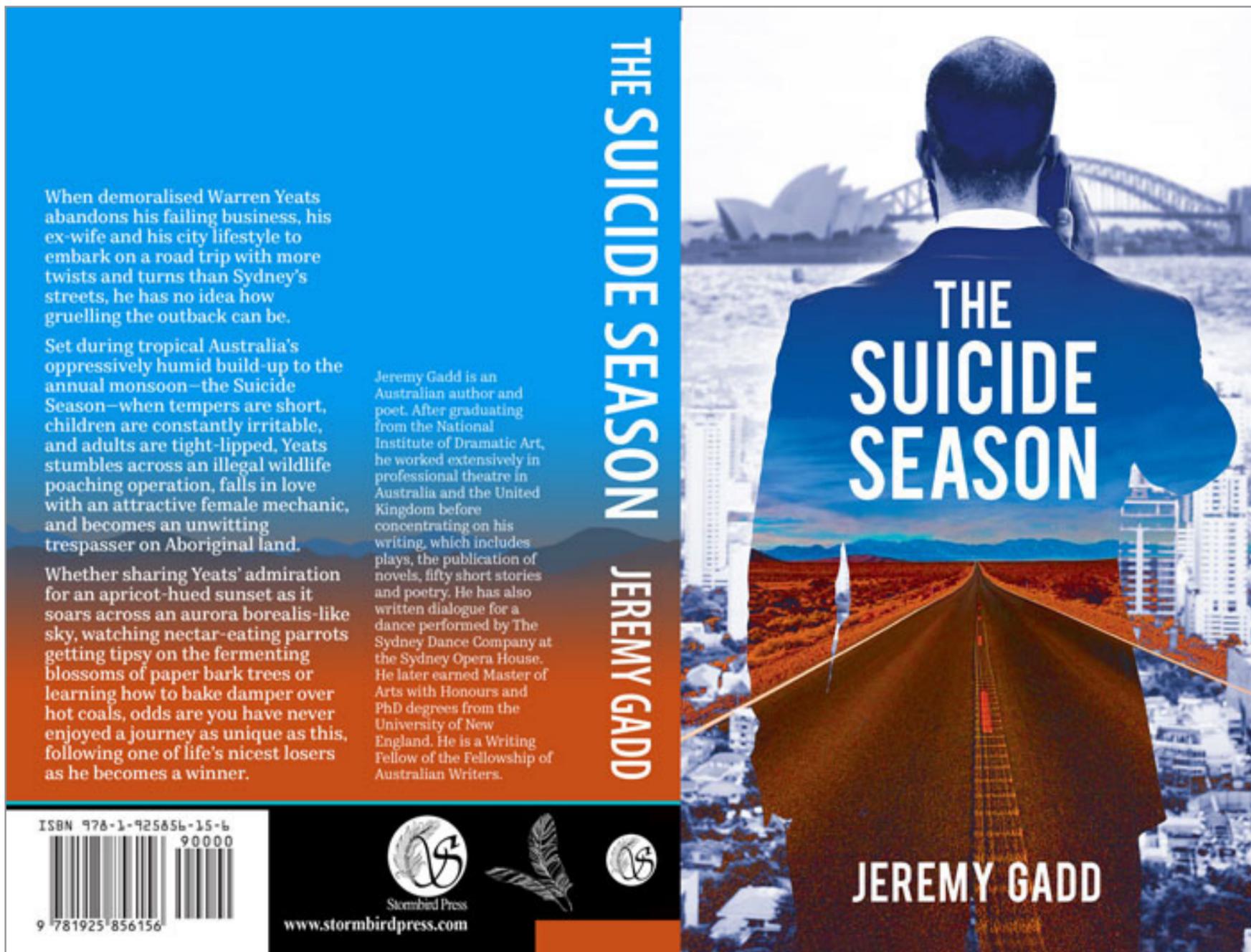
A year has passed since Danielle Gasket miraculously escaped the subterranean "crypt world" where she was born. But now the lushly forested paradise she found when she emerged into sunlight is in danger of radioactive contamination from ancient wastes, and Danielle must return to the nightmarish underworld in search of an elixir that can save it."

- Stephen Wing, author of *Free Ralph! An Evolutionary Fable*.

Available at:

<https://stormbirdpress.com/book/the-suicide-season/>

Donna Mulvenna is a nature enthusiast, who when not tending to her food forest or canoeing along one of the world's wild rivers is reading from her hammock. A Fellow of the International League of Conservation Writers, Donna's own writing has been published in various newspapers, magazines and online publications. <https://donnamulvenna.com/>



When demoralised Warren Yeats abandons his failing business, his ex-wife and his city lifestyle to embark on a road trip with more twists and turns than Sydney's streets, he has no idea how gruelling the outback can be.

Set during tropical Australia's oppressively humid build-up to the annual monsoon—the Suicide Season—when tempers are short, children are constantly irritable, and adults are tight-lipped, Yeats stumbles across an illegal wildlife poaching operation, falls in love with an attractive female mechanic, and becomes an unwitting trespasser on Aboriginal land.

Whether sharing Yeats' admiration for an apricot-hued sunset as it soars across an aurora borealis-like sky, watching nectar-eating parrots getting tipsy on the fermenting blossoms of paper bark trees or learning how to bake damper over hot coals, odds are you have never enjoyed a journey as unique as this, following one of life's nicest losers as he becomes a winner.

Jeremy Gadd is an Australian author and poet. After graduating from the National Institute of Dramatic Art, he worked extensively in professional theatre in Australia and the United Kingdom before concentrating on his writing, which includes plays, the publication of novels, fifty short stories and poetry. He has also written dialogue for a dance performed by The Sydney Dance Company at the Sydney Opera House. He later earned Master of Arts with Honours and PhD degrees from the University of New England. He is a Writing Fellow of the Fellowship of Australian Writers.

ISBN 978-1-925856-15-6



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JEREMY GADD

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REVIEW OF
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Available at:

<https://stormbirdpress.com/book/happiness-is-green>

Maria Theresa Stadtmueller is a writer and podcaster living on a permaculture farm in northern Vermont. She earned her MFA from the Nonfiction Writing program at The University of Iowa. Her environmental nonfiction has been published in *The Iowa Review*, *Dark Mountain*, and other literary journals, and has also been anthologized by SUNY Press and in book *Walking on Lava* for Chelsea Green Publishing. She produced 25 episodes of the *Big Chew Podcast*, asking the question “How do we live on Earth without the Stupid?” and talking with scientists, artists, adventurers, farmers, and spiritual seekers. But some of it’s funny.



MARIA THERESA STADTMUELLER'S
REVIEW OF
HAPPINESS IS GREEN
BY DONNA MULVENNA, Stormbird Press

Donna only daydreams of pulling up stakes and starting a new life, until an impetuous decision catapults her on a soul-changing journey in the Amazon rainforest. Tested mentally, physically and spiritually it is hard for her to feel lost in the wilderness when pure joy pounds in her heart. Written with stirring poignancy, laugh-out-loud humour and deep compassion, Donna captures her real-life experiences of isolation, challenges, and the true beauty of the Amazon rainforest where she taps into a wordless knowledge to recognise it was her wild self who coerced her to travel over ten thousand miles so it could unleash itself.

Mulvenna's earlier book, *Wild Roots*, introduced readers to the life she adopted in Guyane. This new book has more stories of the author's life, both before and after, and further inspiration. Reading this new book, it's clear that the jungle agrees with the author and feeds her creativity. The narrator is humble, sensitive, and friendly, and shows great skill in introducing us to her world. No matter where you live, *Happiness Is Green* is a welcome read.

<https://ozlemsturkishtable.com/>



Signed copies of
Ozlem's Turkish Table; Recipes from My Homeland
 by Ozlem Warren is available at
www.gbpublishing.co.uk/product-page/ozlem-s-turkish-table



PACANGA BOREGI PASTRY ROLLS WITH PASTIRMA, CHEESE AND VEGETABLES

Delicious delicacy pastirma, dried cured beef with a coating of spices called cemen, consisting of cumin, fenugreek, garlic and hot chili flakes is also very much enjoyed in pastries, as part of a mezze spread in Turkey. Pacanga boregi, as we call in Turkish, showcases flavorful pastirma, kasar cheese (Turkish cheddar cheese) and in some versions like mine, diced peppers and tomatoes. It is one of our favorite pastries for a Turkish style weekend brunch or as a mezze spread.

This wind-dried beef, pastirma has been made in Anatolia for centuries. It's also been enjoyed throughout Middle Eastern as well as Eastern European countries and has a special part in Lebanese and Armenian cuisine. Some of the finest pastirma is being produced in Kayseri region, in Middle Anatolia, Turkey; it almost has a silky texture and just melts in the mouth, very aromatic with the spicy cemen coating; I hope you can have a chance to enjoy pastirma in Kayseri.

Afiyet Olsun,

Ozlem



Rolling the pacanga boregi; tomatoes and peppers make a delicious filling with pastirma & cheese.



Pacanga Boregi; Turkish pastry rolls with pastirma, Turkish pastrami. © Ozlem Warren

Serves: 4 to 6

Ingredients:

- 6 sheets of filo pastry (app. 48cmx25cm, 19"x10" each) or equivalent of yufka sheets
- ½ green bell pepper or 1 pointy green pepper (sivri biber), finely diced
- 2 small tomatoes, finely diced
- 15 ml/1 tbsp. olive oil
- 8 slices of pastirma (Turkish dried cured beef), or a pastrami of your choice, roughly chopped
- 150 gr / 5 oz. shredded Turkish kasar (cheddar) cheese or mozzarella, for a milder taste
- Salt and ground black pepper for seasoning
- 1 egg, beaten to brush the pastries
- 15ml/1 tbsp. olive oil to brush the pastries
- Bowl of water to seal the pastries
- Preheat the oven to 180 C / 350 F/ Gas Mark 4

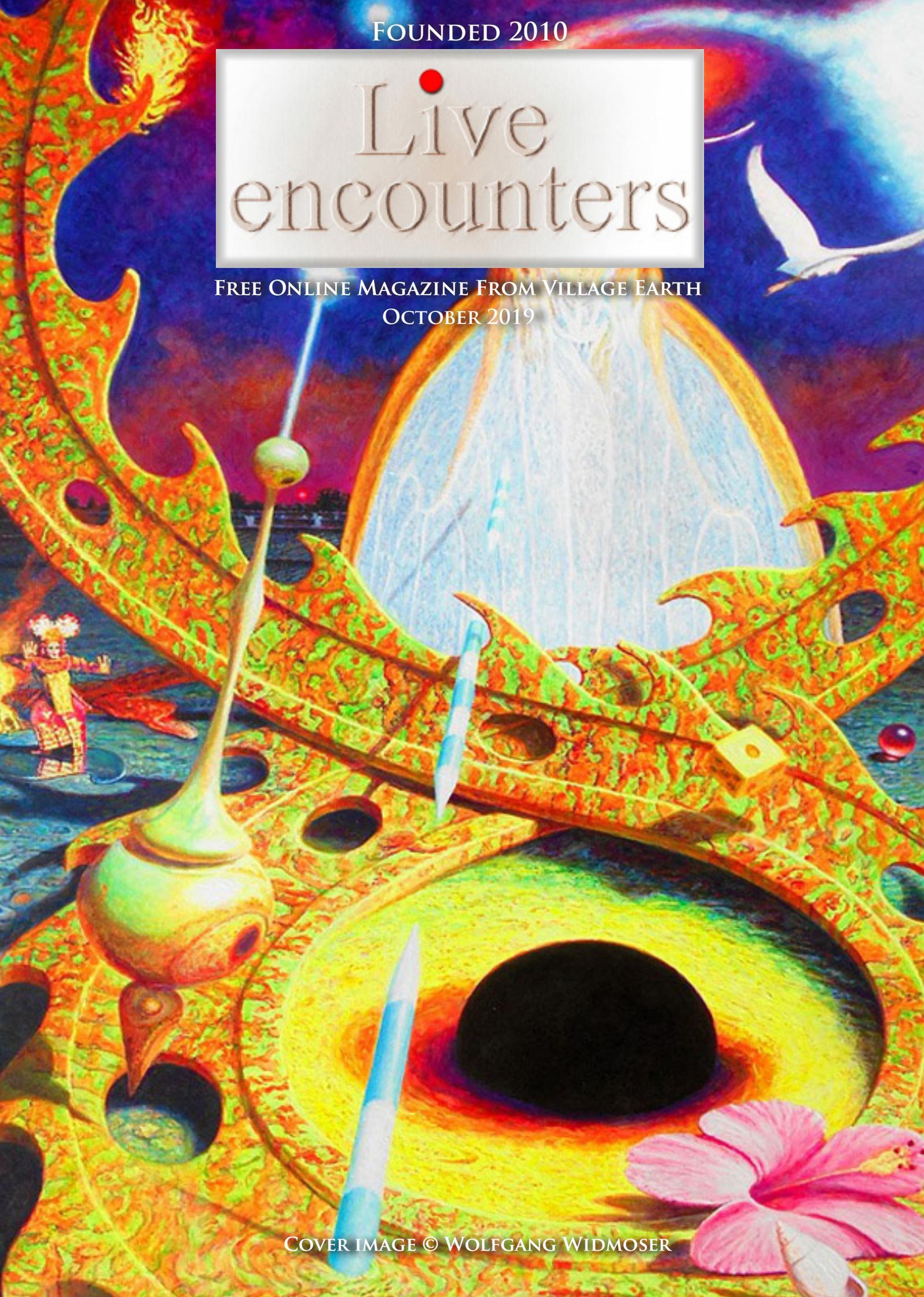
Instructions:

01. For best results, thaw the frozen filo pastry in the fridge overnight and bring it to the room temperature 1 hour before using. That enables the filo thaw completely. If it is sold fresh as in the UK, you only need to bring the filo sheets to the room temperature 30 minutes before using.
02. Heat the olive oil in a pan and stir in the diced pepper and tomatoes. Stir and cook over medium heat for 3 -5 minutes, until the peppers start to soften. Season with salt and ground black pepper to your taste (You may use a little salt or omit, as the pastirma is quite salty too). Set aside to cool.
03. Place the chopped pastirma or pastrami of your choice and the cheese in a wide bowl. Stir in the cooked tomatoes and peppers, combine well. Filling is ready.
04. Cut the filo sheets into 11cmx25cm (4"x9") rectangular stripes and stack on top of each other. Place a damp towel over them so that they don't dry out.
05. Lay two rectangular strips of filo sheets on top of one another.
06. Place a generous tablespoon of the filling along the short end near you (take care not to over-fill as the filling may ooze out while cooking). Fold over the pastry from each side to seal in the mixture and then roll up like a fat cigar.
07. Seal the end of the pastry as well as any openings/ cracks with little water. Repeat this with the remaining filo sheets.
08. Mix the egg with the olive oil in a small bowl. Brush the boreks, pastries with this mixture and place them on a greased tray.
09. Bake the pastries in the preheated oven for about 25 - 30 minutes or until golden.
10. Serve hot as a mezze spread, weekend brunch or a tasty snack.

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FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH
OCTOBER 2019



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