

Patachitra on PowerPoint

Through a fascinating graphic presentation adorning its invites, flyers and hoardings across the city, a literary festival is trying to save a dying art form

This year, the colourful invite of the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2013 looked a tad different. With loads of vibrant characters, monuments and activities, it seemed to narrate a story about the festival through a graphic presentation of *patachitra*, a unique art form from West Bengal which also forms the theme of AKLF 2013. *Patachitra* is a scroll painting created when a *chitrakar* pours his imagination into paint on a cloth and later unscrolls it and narrates the story through his song for an audience.

The visual motif for AKLF 2013 was the outcome of an intense brainstorming session of the ideation team, says Apeejay Surrender Group Vice-President Renu Kakkar. The group began hosting the Kolkata literary festival in 2010 as part of its centenary celebrations. The fascinating graphic presentation adorning the invitations, flyers and hoardings across the city is an intellectual exercise by the communications team of the company.

Unlike other lit-fests — which are usually identified with a recurring visual icon —, the Kolkata lit-fest has a new one each year (the fish motif in 2011 and the *Durga*

motif in 2012). The original *patachitra* will be unveiled at the inauguration of the five-day literary festival in the sprawling lawns of Victoria Memorial. “Even as we set our hearts on supporting and promoting the dying art of *patachitra*, the real challenge lay in recreating the traditional art form on computer as the prime visual icon of the festival,” gushes Kakkar. The result was an interesting graphic replica of *patachitra* depicting every element of the festival — right from the aircraft ferrying participants to the city’s heritage monuments as venues of events, the trademark yellow-top ambassadors, the Kolkata traffic cop, the books and the mugs depicting the

Oxford Bookstore and its in-house Cha Bar. The tiger element denotes the special events meant for children in the Apeejay House lawns. Interestingly, the AKLF is one of the only literary festivals in the country which is created and presented by a book store (The Oxford Book Store) leveraging its 92 years of experience in dealing with books, writers and publishers. This uniqueness reflects in every aspect of the festival, right from creating the visual language, the emphasis on meaningful interactions, intimate sessions with writers and artists or in bringing alive heritage monuments of the

The graphic replica depicts intrinsic elements of the city — the yellow-top ambassadors, the Kolkata traffic cop and mugs displaying the Oxford Bookstore

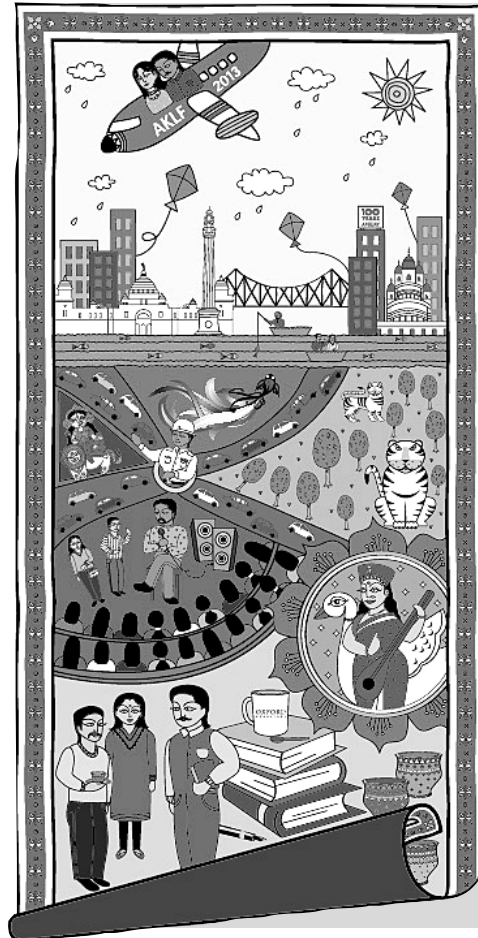
city as apt venues. So you can catch a special session with Ramachandra Guha sitting on the stairs of the National Library, or debate on whether “Kolkata is the cultural capital” at the unique Lascar Monument by the River Hoogly, or enjoy a performance at the St. John’s Church.

Each event is equally important and is conceived, curated and implemented with great thought and intelligent programming, points out Anjum Katyal, associate director of AKLF. “Size matters in a literary festival but making it large is not as important as keeping it intimate and interactive,” she maintains.

Over the last four years the festival appears to have culminated well, building on its shortcomings of the previous years. Even as the curtains draw on AKLF each year, the team gets cracking to analyse their learnings and come February, a 100-page “learning report” is tabled for action, confides Kakkar.

With the litfest around the corner, it remains to be seen whether the promise of a wholesome experience for book lovers holds good.

The AKLF 2013 will be held from January 9-13. For complete schedule, visit www.kolkatalitfest.in



WATCH OUT FOR

- ▶ Shyam Benegal's talk at the inauguration on a century of Indian Cinema
- ▶ “When Ghalib Met Manto: Ek Guftagu” on January 11
- ▶ “Maya Mahal—An Enchanted Look at Hindi Cinema through the Priya Paul Collection” — a private collection of film posters and memorabilia on January 9
- ▶ An exhibition of Somnath Hore's drawings and wood works, with a dramatised reading of Nobel prize winning Knut Hamsun's masterpiece *Hunger* by actor Jayant Kripalani on January 13
- ▶ “Transgressions: Essaying the New in Indian Cinema” with Shyam Benegal, Onir, Dhritiman Chatterji and others on January 10
- ▶ “Talking Writing: Tomorrow and the Written Word” with young writers on January 10
- ▶ “Image, Identity, Literature and the Asian Woman” with writers from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Turkey on January 12
- ▶ “Media for Change: The Asian Neighbourhood” with mediapersons from Malaysia, UK, and across the subcontinent on January 12