

# Tehelka

## JYOTHI MENON

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**MASTERTAKES**  
CULTURE CRITIQUE BY THOSE WHO KNOW



Compiled by **MANJULA NARAYAN**

**Mapping minds**  
RM Palaniappan's work titled Alien Planet XI

**S RAVI SHANKAR ON ART** 

I like the work of **RM Palaniappan**, basically a printmaker who is now painting too. He's doing work that's related to maps and cartography and uses graphic notations. You'll see universal symbols and aviation notations also in his work. It's like he's mapping the cosmos and also the earth as seen from space. I think his work is unique. I also like the work of **SH Raza** and **KG Subramanyam**. While Raza's colours are bright and his approach is bold, KG Subramanyam's work is very expressive. What I like about both is that they are still energetic though both are very senior. When I visited Raza's studio in Paris, I found that he was still working with as much enthusiasm. Very few artists can manage that.

*Ravi Shankar is an artist who lives in Thiruvananthapuram*



**JYOTHI MENON ON BOOKS** 

I keep revisiting **Harper Lee's** *To Kill a Mocking Bird* as it left a lasting impression on me. An account of bigotry and injustice narrated through the eyes of six-year-old Scout, the book is set in 1930s Alabama. With a thought-provoking plot that talks about racial prejudice in the US in the pre-Civil Rights era, this Pulitzer prize winner (1961) is woven over a brilliant canvas with classic characterisation. When Atticus Finch, a lawyer and the unsung hero in this book, defends a black man accused of raping a white girl, an event that never took place, his children Scout and Jem too are dragged into a racial battle. The black

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man, Tom Robinson, is shot to death in prison before his final trial, but this does not stop the attacks on the Finch family. *To Kill a Mocking Bird* looks at the impact of false accusations and the labels society places on different races.

*Menon is a writer and HR professional who lives in Chennai*

**DHRUV JOLLY ON FOOD** 

The best food I've had is at **Kallumian's** dhabha next to the Rahmania mosque in the Ramganj area of Jaipur. The dhabha is about 150 years old and has been around for three generations. Eighty-six-year-old **Khansahab** does the cooking there and the food is absolutely awesome. It's like what **Kareem's** in Delhi used to be like. The mutton korma served here is obscenely good! The taste is great, the colour is perfect and it's cooked on a wood fire. The old man doesn't give out his spice combinations to anyone but because I've been visiting the place for 15 years and he considers me his son, he's passed it on to me!

*Jolly is the General Manager of the Cambay Spa and Resort, Jaipur*

**TANMOY BOSE ON MUSIC** 

**Zakirji (Hussain)** interests me most as a percussionist. I like his collaborative work too. **Niladri Kumar** from Mumbai, who plays the electric sitar, is fantastic. Then, there is **Debashish Bhattacharya** who's been nominated for two Grammys for his *Calcutta Chronicle* album with **Louis Banks**. He comes from a humble background and I've known him for 30 years. He's modified three string instruments and one of them, based on the ukulele, led him to be felicitated by the University of Hawaii. His work is just fascinating.

*Bose is a musician who lives in Kolkata*

**SHYAM KAUSHAL ON FILM** 

Of course, I like the action sequences that I did in *Slumdog Millionaire* and also my work in *Kameenay*, **Vishal Bharadwaj's** next film. But if you want me to talk about the work of oth-