



SANGAM HOUSE 2010 NEWSLETTER

Dear friends and supporters of Sangam House:

Apologies for the delay in getting this out to you all – we've been busy with Sangam related projects – primarily, a brand new website (do visit www.sangamhouse.org) and bringing out the first volume of the Sangam House Reader. But more on all that a little later.

Let's first bring you up to date with the writers that were with us this last season.

Thanks to you all, we were able to host 13 writers during the 2009-2010 season. As before, our host location was ALTAR, Adi Shakti Laboratory for Theatre Arts and Research. With the support of the **Danish Arts Council**, Lars Husum and Claus Ankersen were with us. Our on-going



partnership with **InKo Centre**, Chennai brought Haam Seong Ho to Sangam House. The **German Book Office**, New Delhi sent us Stephan Thome who currently lives and works in Taipei. The **Lavanya Sankaran** Fellowship was awarded to Abha Iyengar who works in English and Hindi. The **Currimbhoy Fellowship for Playwrights** was shared between 2 young playwrights, Ram Ganesh Kamatham and Manav Kaul, who writes in Hindi. Ram Ganesh won the TFA Award for Young Writers in January 2010

for a play that he was working on while at Sangam House. The **Prakriti Foundation** supported the residency of award-winning Tamil writer Perumal Murugan who started work on a new novel while he was with us. The **John Steinbeck Fellowship** was awarded to Ajay Krishnan who has won multiple awards as a playwright and is now working in short fiction. **Samir Gandhi** helped us bring our first writer from South America, Carlos Eduardo de Magalhaes to Sangam House; his support



also contributed to Austrian Xaver Bayer's residency period along with funds from the **Short Family**. Additionally, funds from **Lakshmi Chandra** and such publishing houses as **Penguin India, HarperCollins** and **Hachette** supported K Srilata, Janhavi Acharekar and Madhulika Liddle, all of whom were working on their second publications.

2009 was also the first year of the Sangam House/InKo Centre writers' exchange with the **Toji Residency** in Wonju, Korea, a project supported by **Arko** (Korean Arts Council) and **KLTI** (Korean Literary Translation Institute). Each year, an Indian alumna of Sangam House is chosen for a month-long residency at the Toji Centre. Our first exchange writer was Mridula Koshy who continued work on her first novel at Toji. The wonderful news about Mridula is that her collection of short stories, "If it is Sweet" won the Shakti Bhatt First Book Award in 2009 and has been short-listed for the Crossword Book Award this year.



It was a relatively quiet season in terms of public readings. We did one in December at the Neemrana Hotels Pondicherry property, Le Orient, a splendid old colonial building that oozes atmosphere and charm. We had several smaller readings or each other at Adi Shakti, attended by a small circle of friends and admirers. Our big public event in January was a special forum on the freedom of expression in various cultures and nations with the students of the Asian College of Journalism, Chennai. We had a 3 hour long session with media students, debating the parameters of official censorship, self censorship and cultural vigilante groups that attack writers and thinkers for their views. The forum was supported by the **Centre for Communication and Development Studies**, Pune, the **Asian College of Journalism**, and **freeDimensional**, a non-profit organization that works to link human rights efforts to the art world. We hope to make our interaction with student groups an annual event each season.



Over and above that, our major project for the year have been a spanking new website that indicates our growth over the last 2 years and showcases the 27 writers that have been in residence with us since we started in 2008. We are also readying our first publication, the Sangam House reader, entitled “Other People” (supported by **Open Space**, Pune and **InKo**, Chennai). The reader brings together work from all the writers that have been at Sangam House over our first two seasons. The volume is multi-

lingual so that writings appear in their original language as well as in English translation. And we thank our writers for generously contributing



their work to our publishing program. We're planning the reader as a biennial publication, each one bringing together two Sangam seasons of writers and their works.

We are very happy to announce that for our upcoming session we have formed several new and important collaborations.

We are now working with the **Qater Foundation** to bring a writer from that country to Sangam House. This is a particularly exciting partnership as it guarantees the participation of an Arab writer, a new inclusion for Sangam. Additionally we have received support from the **M Literary Residency** in China. This sponsorship, which was arranged by **Pankaj Mishra** and **Michelle Garnaut**, will support one writer for the duration of the upcoming Sangam House session. And finally we are very proud to announce a new fellowship, the **Nevatia Fellowship for Humanist Writing**. This fellowship will provide a four-week residency for an Indian



writer whose work focuses on human rights, violence, equality, challenging religious dogma, and discrimination based on caste, gender or religion. Support for this fellowship has generously been provided by **Neeraj Nevatia.**

As you can see we've had a lot going on and we are in the middle of our selection process for the upcoming session. Our pool of applicants is larger and more accomplished than ever before. Most exciting, we have more

support to provide residencies for more Indian writers working in regional languages – a chief objective of Sangam House, as we realize how these are the writers that are marginalized all too often. It will not be easy narrowing the list, and we look forward to welcoming a new



group of talented writers and translators to Sangam House so that their work might be enriched, reaching as many readers as possible.

With love and gratitude,

Arshia Sattar and DW Gibson