

Ostraca: The Creative Writing Society

About the Society:

Ostraca: The Creative Writing Society was established in Hansraj College with the aim of providing a space for the students who find their calling in art of writing. It has since grown into a vibrant community of talented writers from all across India.

The society is dedicated to opening up avenues to students which can help them explore their skills. Ostraca's bi-annual journal, The Medley, has consistently featured writers from around the world, while simultaneously working with some of the most celebrated authors and poets of India– Easterine Kire, Janice Pariat, Shubhangi Swarup, Tishani Doshi, Sumana Roy, to mention a few. The society has also partnered with the entertainment platform Tape-A-Tale for its nationwide storytelling event "Stellar" which saw brilliant performers emerge from the student community of Hansraj College. The annual fest of Ostraca, namely Gutenberg, sees participation in huge numbers from students across universities in competitions and spoken word events conducted therein. Interactive and informative sessions, along with workshops by experts, are routinely organised for the members in order to expand their knowledge and skills.

Ostraca aims to continue devoting itself in creating a stimulating, safe and encouraging environment where young and aspiring writers can find the opportunities to learn and grow.

Convener Name: Dr. Meenakshi Malhotra

Student Members (with positions held):

Ananya Gaur (President)

Sidra Sajid (Vice-President)

Ifrah Fatima (Vice-President)

Report of **EVERY EVENT**/workshop/seminar organized/participated in the Academic Year 20-21

Event 1:

On 13th January, 2021, Ostraca: The Creative Writing Society partnered with the entertainment platform Tape-a-Tale as a representative of Hansraj College in organizing the nationwide storytelling event, Stellar, for the second year in a row. The event was presided over by representatives of Tape-a-Tale.

The shortlisted performers from Hansraj College narrated beautiful and insightful stories about life and love. The participants provided razor-sharp critique of unjust social systems, while others transported us to the nostalgic memories of childhood and school. Stories of visits to Jama Masjid and a grandmother scaling a backyard were told, and the competition was wrapped up with the announcement of the winner. The evening not just made for a competition, but became a welcoming environment filled with profound stories for the storytelling enthusiasts of Hansraj College.

In the midst of a pandemic, this was an incredible opportunity to connect with other like-minded people, and the event culminated successfully to the appreciation of all.

Event 2:

Ostraca: The Creative Writing Society, organized a detailed and informative session on the theme “Asian Poetry” on 27th February, 2021. The event, planned and conducted by the society’s president, aimed at

familiarizing the society members with poetic traditions of different countries.

The session began with an introduction about the contributions of Asian poetry traditions to subsequent development of poetry across centuries in other languages. The participants were briefed about certain tools of poetry such as rhythm, metre and syllables. The session then proceeded to comprehensively cover several Persian poetry forms such as Masnavi, Rubaai, Rubaaiyat and Interlocking Rubaaiyat; along with Japanese ones such as Haiku, Tanka, Choka, Sedoka and Haibun.

Works of several writers who have utilized these poetry forms were analysed as for the understanding of all the participating members. The ones in the audience with their knowledge of Japanese literary history also weighed in and made the session all the more enriching. The evening concluded with a question-and-answer session.

The efforts proved fruitful and were able equip the society members with additional skills to learn, explore and experiment in.

Event 3:

Ostraca, the creative writing society of Hansraj College, conducted an informative workshop cum discussion session on "Writing Confessional Short Stories through the Lens of Feminism, Post Modernism and Magical Realism" on the 27th of February, 2021 over Google Meet.

The workshop was chaired by Ms. Manjima Misra who is an alumna of Delhi University and a distance learning student at University of St. Andrews, Scotland, for the English Literature course and the English

Language studies course respectively. She is the author of two books, *Indian Feminine Fury* and *Unapologetically Mad.*' The recurring themes in her short stories are feminism and psychological turmoil. She uses the techniques of postmodernism and magical realism in her stories to put across questions of socio-political importance.

The event was aimed at providing people with an insight into new and traditionally less explored genres and to move beyond their comfort zones to try something novel. It also proved as a platform for the curious enthusiasts who wished to explore these genres but could not find a breakthrough. With discussions on writing techniques, the peculiarities that the genres identify themselves with, deconstructing myths and stereotypes, and eventually writing a collective short prose piece, the event was wrapped up with a question and answer round. With a strength of about a hundred participants, the event was a huge success!

Event 4:

In the month of May, 2021, Ostraca, the creative writing society of Hansraj College, organised a successful series of four events under its annual festive event, Gutenberg. The events included "Outspeak," a bilingual open mic/performance competition; "Re-verse Relay" and "Lights, Camera, Verses," both poetry competitions involving creative processes; "Tabula Rasa," a bilingual prose and poetry writing competition.

"Outspeak" was conducted on the 9th of May, at 4 PM, over Google Meet. It was judged by Ms. Mugdha Sinha, the current Secretary of Art, Literature, Culture and Archaeology and the Director General of Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur. The event, with the vision "Hope can never be silent,"

witnessed a plethora of enthralling performances across a plethora of themes and a set of enthusiastic audience. Performances ranged across genres like Slam Poetry, Shayaris, Rap, Stand Up Comedy and songs, leaving the audience spellbound.

"Re-verse Relay" included using the last line of any famous creative work as the first line of the submitted work, building it up to form a poem. "Lights, Camera, Verses" involved a fun jumble poem comprised entirely of film dialogues. Both the competitions were conducted online with a huge turn in of creative submissions. "Tabula Rasa" was a bilingual poetry and prose writing competition where the fantabulous entries made it quite challenging to judge the winner from.

With enthusiastic teamwork, fabulous participants, and a heaven for writing enthusiasts, Gutenberg was wrapped up successfully.

Awards and achievements in the academic year 2020-21

Members of Ostraca: The Creative Writing Society received several accolades over the course of the academic session 2020-21, the list for which is attached below.

Date	Name of the Event	Participant
Jul-21	Australian Writers' Centre Furious Fiction (July) (Longlisted final entry)	Sukanya Singh
30-01-2021	Anjuman: Hindi Kavyapath, Dayal Upadhyay College (2nd Position)	Yuvraj Singh

31-03-2021	Poetry Competition, Vivekananda College (1st Position)	Yuvraj Singh
24-04-2021	Adbhud Mela, Society of General Awareness, Hansraj College (Top Performer)	Yuvraj Singh
20-07-2020	Open Mic, Chingaari (Best Performer)	Haritima Sharma
13-08-2020	Spill The Ink, JECRC University (1st Position)	Haritima Sharma

Photographs

