



Word play

Slam poetry will be one of the highlights at the second edition of the Contemporary Art Week. Its director SOHINI DUTTA tells SHRABASTI MALLIK about the emerging genres in theatre, art and music

It's going to be a poetry show, but not the way we have mostly seen it. Interestingly, neither does it follow the lyrical style of Wordsworth nor the 20th century verses of Sylvia Plath. Some ten poets will come together on stage and will recite stories extempore on Delhi and their experiences in the city. It is called slam poetry, which rips verse off the stuffy academic books and plants them firmly on the face. "The exciting thing about slam poetry is that the verses are created on the spot. Although some of the lines are improvised, most of the content of slam poetry is original. The poetry moves forward in the form of a conversation," points out Sohini Dutta, director Friends of Art, an NGO.

Slam poetry originated in Chicago way back in 1984 and has found wide acceptance in the West. Although the concept is new to the Indian masses, it has not failed to attract attention. The young generation is gradually taking a keen interest in this unique art form.

Slam poetry will be one of the major highlights of The Contemporary Arts Week 2014. To be held from September 12-21, the event will have over 35 shows in multiple venues in the city. Sohini says, "This is the second time we are organising the event. Last year it was put up as The Delhi Contemporary Week. It generated a huge response and that encouraged us to continue the event this year on a large scale."

The Art week will see a collaborative work of all the various forms of art. Being a dancer and choreog-



rapher herself, Sohini believes that the ten day event will provide a holistic platform to the nine odd art forms that this year will present. "Contemporary art is something which most people do not know about. For them it is a pre-notioned concept that anything that has to do with contemporary is restricted only to painting. This is a deliberate attempt to break that idea and to bring forth the fact that contemporary art embodies all the varied art forms — be it music, dance or stand-up comedy," Sohini informs.

The event will bring to fore emerging artists from the genre of dance, acting, puppetry and clowning. She feels that it is only when the audience are educated about the varied forms of art,

apart from the ones we already know about, that they will be able to understand and appreciate them. She adds, "In the world of contemporary art, everything is free. There are no hard binding rules and guidelines that you have to stick to. Since it gives an artiste the liberty to improvise and experiment, this art is evolving every moment. That is basically what we will be striving to show the audience."

The event will provide a platform for artistes who are willing to showcase their talent to the national audience. The Art Week will also provide them the opportunity to interact with other artistes in the field and broaden their experience. The success of last year's event garnered a nationwide urge among the youth to come up and exploit their art form. As Sohini points out, "We had received so many applications from people wanting to be a part of the event that we had to cut out on many of them."

The other highlights of this year's show will be contemporary theatre and clowning, something which she claims, "has not been performed before." It will also feature music and will show how music has opened up to adapt itself into the genre of the contemporary. What Sohini is really proud of is the fact that there will be dance troops and companies who have already performed on the international level.

She wraps up, "With the air of excitement all around the event at a time when it has not yet kicked off, I am sure that it will taste success larger than last year."