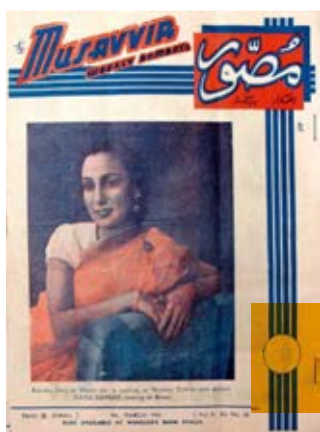


1



2

3



4

"THE PROCESS
OF DIPPING INTO
THIS ARCHIVE
IS LIKE DIPPING
INTO OUR
UNCONSCIOUS—
UNSETTLING,
REWARDING"

- AARTI LOHIA

1. Still from Mohanakrishnan Haridasan's short film on artist K Ramanujam
2. Still from Ayswarya Sankaranarayanan's animation film based on miniature Pahari paintings 3. Illustrator Vidyun Sabhaney's work on picture-based folk performing traditions 4. Yousuf Saeed's *Tasveer-e-Urdu* archives vintage printed images from popular Urdu magazines

than backbreaking: "The IFA had to go through 540 projects, add metadata and fill gaps in information." The more tedious part was tracking down the artists spread all over India.

It didn't help that the works pack differing heft and focus points. For instance, writer Sapan Saran's play revolves around gender testing in sports, while educator Prajna Hegde's project interprets government school syllabus through local Karnataka folk art forms. Another project explores the art forms of the minority Muslim community in Char Chapori in Assam, and the sense of alienation they experience in the wider world around them.

WE THE PEOPLE

The IFA Archive is also more significant to the modern world as it is one of the rare few that focuses on the alternative history of the 'other', voices that are often erased or ignored in mainstream history. "This is the history that is not dictated by those in positions of dominance, be it politicians, bureaucrats, the powerful and privileged, but by the people themselves," says Lohia. The physical archive, located in a 1,200 sqft climate-controlled space in Bengaluru, now houses material covering projects supported by the IFA in 2011 and 2012, while the digital archive can be accessed at Theifaarchive.org. "The process of dipping into this archive is like dipping into our unconscious—unsettling, rewarding and bringing the gratification of rediscovering forgotten selves. You don't know what you'll find, in fact you don't know what you're looking for until you find it."

Author Stephen Hawking once mentioned that his abiding wish was for humanity to step into the future in a state of collaboration rather than becoming ever more fractured. "To me, this archive resonates that spirit of collaboration and unity," says Lohia. ■