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September 25, 1993.

My dear Reza Sahib,

This time Janine's birthday (and mine!) went without my writing to you - I was away in Cyprus sitting out on an orchard, very quietly, and then in Athens, finally ten days in Moscow which was a remarkable experience - The only way to feel the pulse of a country is to visit it during a crisis - What remarkable people, what fortitude - In many ways one found the situation similar to ours in India, where passions have begun to be swayed by religion (or 'ethnic cleansing'), where the cost of living is totally out of proportion to earnings, where the fortunes are swayed by the greed of politicians... And look at what has happened today to Russia - which was to be expected.

Below the calm, one sensed that there was going to be another massive upheaval.

What shall I write to you of the Art Critics Forum? You must have heard already that Ashok Vaspeyi and I, as the two conveners, held the first session in September 4<sup>th</sup> - early this month. It took a long time, eight months since we spoke of it when you were here - partly because one had misgivings, partly the political climate of opinion. Anyhow, with great determination and planning in 3 months, from May, and the cooperation of the IIC, it finally happened.

At the outset, one was amazed by the interest, the response: thirty-four people attended: Rushe Shohoni, Akbar, Mani Kaul from Bombay, Bhupen Chakrabarti and Ghulam from Baroda, Pranabranjan Ray from Calcutta, Jogam from Shimla, Geeta Doctor from Madras, Nand Kumar from Shimla - and several others. I enclose the signatures.

One day Workshop on 'The Demands of Art' held at the ICC, Sept 04.

The enthusiasm was good, the papers (some of them) serious in intent. I had planned it carefully, revising the lists on / on again (of course we made some mistakes and left out a few names, not deliberately) and got in help from outside (no critic helped) to stick stamps and get addresses, send reminders, cables. We met at the round table conference with lunch outside at the Terrace - All went well till 5pm at the closing session when I was just giving the vote of thanks. At that point, Vivian Sunderam arrived with the Sehmah group; he was billed as one of the original speakers, but had declined to even come. Yet he showed up, and wanted a showdown, ad immediate attention.

The immediate result was to politicise the whole assembly - what he wanted, he achieved: to throw everything into disorder - by accusing Satish Gujral who in turn had accused you and Husain in an interview. My reaction was him: on an individual footing. But as a group, we could not condemn Gujral. start with a political agenda - before the critics Forum had even been born or formulated!

What followed after was worse; the papers picked it up, blew it up, mentioned the ICC and the critics Forum, on and on... The ICC declined to sponsor any more meetings. When great difficulty I have now persuaded them to hold a follow-up session in one day, for the out critics alone, which will be held on October 28. I would hope that we can / will achieve something and a body of responsible people who can take over; and that we can begin publishing something serious - which every critic should know (at least) the opportunity to do, once.

But I am deeply distressed - with the atmosphere vitiated, people divided into camps. I enclose for your perusal, 3 of the papers which you may find of interest. After this, I have to get back to my own work; the younger critics should take the lead.





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The issue of joining the AICA got sidelined as a result of all this high drama. Personally however, I would like to join this, am writing to them and shall send in my \$25.00. You may mention this to M. Leenhardt whenever you should meet him.

Now to other matters: In the course of this past year, there have been some minor gains and losses. The completion of a 12000 word introduction to my book on the Rio contemporary artists - which incidentally, completed in June before the critics Forum) indicates the point of view that art has little to do with politics. This is currently under review by Oxford University Press, i.e. being "considered" for publication.

Murad has won himself admission into one of the best film schools in Paris: ESEC, 21 Rue de Clichy, Paris 75015; and he has also got himself admission and a room to stay at Maison de L'Inde. He is now much more mature really ready to go, and deeply into film. Financially Managing it all has been a major challenge - I have poured my father's small legacy (to me) into paying for the last year's fees. Other people Kenize Murad and Munda's uncle and his godfather, are helping in the other expenses, so he can just about survive on approximately 3,500 francs a month.

Muzaffer has declined to help. He told his son he disapproved; anything learnt in Paris would be "irrelevant" in India. So Murad is now currently earning his own ticket to go - Mani Kaul has in the meanwhile offered him the lead role in a short film - This however compounds the problem, since Munda will arrive on Oct 26 - Ten days late for the session at ESEC. I hope this problem too, will be surmounted; he is very keen to do it, and will surely gain from the experience.

Let me clarify that Murad needs NO FINANCIAL HELP. - All that is arranged with his godfather. It would help however, for him to have a bed on arrival - with people whom I know. Since he arrives at end October, he has deferred his bookings at Maison de L'Inde to Nov. 1st. I am returning from Benares on Oct. 5 - off to Samsat on Oct 9 - i.e. in Delhi, at about Oct 5-8.

Lastly, Just today, Atul Vajpeyi and I were discussing  
the new scheme to publish our books funded by the  
Ministry of Human Resources. He has asked me  
to write a 200 page book on Raza and his work.  
I am inclined to agree, and very excited by  
the prospects!

When will you be coming to India and when could  
we discuss this? Have you records of the  
earlier work and where they can be located, if in  
India at all?? Can we spend a few days in  
Madhya Pradesh if you are planning a visit?  
There are two years to finish the project.  
Other books include Ram Kumar, Husain,  
Akbar, Gaitonde. In November I begin  
structuring my thoughts on this assignment.  
I have booked myself in for one week  
in isolation, at Sanskriti Kendra - which  
is a beautiful place to work - They have six  
artists studios where you should work/stay  
and six writers studios - This is where  
most of my writing in the Introduction was begun  
(but not completed).

Raza Sahib, I hope that Tanvir and you have  
spent another beautiful summer in Arabia -  
Do not please hurry yourself about the  
press reports in India - all of this is of  
the moment, and will pass. The work  
which you complete will stay -  
One request: can Murad stay with you both  
for FOUR DAYS (Oct 26 or 27 to Nov 1st) on  
annual? On Nov. 1st he moves in to Maison  
de l'Inde - as per bookings. Kenzie will be out  
of town, in Italy for the year. Pl. let me know,  
soon, with love to you both. *Jacki.*