**Editors**

**Devina Dutt** is a Mumbai-based corporate communi­cations consultant, writer and editor. She has translated film scripts by Gulzar and Shyam Benegal into English. She writes on the arts and is a regular contributor to *The Hindu*.

**Mukta Rajadhyaksha** is a Mumbai-based theatre critic and media person who has been a regular contributor to *the Times of India,* Mumbai. A translator from Marathi to English, she has translated the play *Mahatma vs. Gandhi* and has also co-directed a three-part television serial on Marathi theatre after 1947.

**Note from the Editors**

When we began work on *Pathfinders*, we were keen that it should not turn out to be a regular ‘coffee table book’ with its trappings of an easy read backed by a barrage of pleasing visuals. Nor did we want it to be an intensely academic, intellectual exercise. What we hoped to produce instead was a ‘culture book’ that would appeal to a wider readership. From the beginning, we were struck by the fact that for a nation as large and culturally diverse as ours, there has been insufficient exchange of views about art and culture, especially with the media (both print and broadcast) in recent times showing declining interest in this vital area. In all humility we hoped that a series like this would have a role to play. As we worked on the series though, we discovered that, like in any historical review, it is difficult to arrive at a clear assessment of the very recent past. And it is perhaps for that reason that the majority of our *pathfinders* belong to the pre-globalisation era, probably because it was possible to trace a cohesive pattern in their artistic outputs, despite their very diverse backgrounds. Making sense of the post-1990s cultural scenario is, in our view, the subject of another series requiring a different approach.

This compilation of significant moments in the fields of art and culture, and the personalities who showed the way over unknown land, spanning the decades after India became a republic on 26 January 1950, has been a chal­lenging task. As we bring it to a close after many months of travail, we are able to turn our backs on the frustrating episodes and delayed deadlines, and appreciate the high points of what has ultimately been a fulfilling and enrich­ing experience.

Our search for contributors and archival material for this series took us to various cities across the country. By the end of it all, we were able to form an idea of the haz­ards of such an exercise. The variable, even idiosyncrat­ic functioning of a range of institutions, both within the public and private sectors in the field of culture, high­-lighted the need for greater exchange and more commu­nication between these bodies. Unfortunately, most such organisations exist in a state of splendid isolation, their original foundational objectives long forgotten and dilut­ed, leaving them incapable of performing the lively role in contemporary culture that they ought to.

Besides, despite the explosion of national pride over the rising power of India’s knowledge economy world­wide, with its attendant concepts like intellectual prop­erty rights, we would do well to recognise the unique and delicate position of art and culture and desist from extending the same theories to them. Intellectual prop­erty rights must have a different meaning in the arts; any interpretation should be based on a concept of shared appreciation where artistic material is regarded as a re­source to be celebrated and studied.

The drawing up of lists is always an exercise fraught with enormous amounts of risk. How does one choose from among so many talents? And won’t there be some subjectivity? The answers are that one matches and com­pares and weighs and thus arrives at what one believes is a fair choice. And yes, the subjective element can­not be entirely done away with. However, we had the guidance of our lead essay writers and we discussed at length amongst ourselves before we made the final list of *Pathfinders* in each section.

The profiles, with their limited word length, do not as­pire to be detailed career-scapes; rather they are impres­sionistic accounts of what makes an artiste a true path­finder. The same applies to the lead essays, interviews and articles. Though the writers and interviewers have tried their best to include as much information as possible, it is quite likely that there are some misses.

Fortunately, we were not called upon to compile or edit the visual aspect of the series (though we did pitch in occasionally), since there was a team that worked on the photographs and images and their captions.

We have made no attempt to grade our pathfinders in the profiles section of the series. Rather, we have for the most part, followed a chronological order, except in a few cases where due to design demands, we have had to com­promise a little.

We are happy to be associated with a significant series like *Pathfinders* and we hope that readers will find some merit and joy as they go through this series.

**Devina Dutt and Mukta Rajadhyaksha**