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What “value” South Asian Arts in Britain?

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Abstract

This article examines the historical and contemporary articulation of the ‘value’ of South Asian Arts in Britain. Having examined the development of minority arts in Britain and in particular ‘South Asian Arts’, I examine how South Asian arts organisations have presented the ‘cultural value’ of these arts to funders and participants. Taking Crossick et. al’s (2015: 13) definition of ‘cultural value’ as the value associated with engaging with and participating in art and culture” this article examines how South Asian arts in the British cultural and creative industries have been impacted by the ‘value’ agenda. I find that even though South Asian arts forms play an important role in enabling audiences who may rarely engage with the cultural industries to participate in relevant arts, South Asian arts organisations continue to be required to articulate their value primarily as part of a commitment to ‘diversity’.

Introduction

On 6th June 2014, the then Culture Secretary Sajid Javid, reflected on some of his cultural experiences growing up as a British Pakistani , and of the impact of a visit to the cinema as a six year old to watch the Bollywood blockbuster Sholay, an experience which left him “transfixed by this amazing spectacle unfolding on the big screen”. In this very first speech as Culture Secretary Javid went on to reflect that “adults from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are significantly less engaged with the arts than their white counterparts … [and are] much less likely to attend a performance or visit a gallery.” He further noted that the fact that BME applicants were awarded just 5.5 per cent of Grants for the Arts awards in 2013 despite making up 14 per cent of the UK’s population highlighted a lack of engagement by those from BME backgrounds with the arts. Reflecting on some of the reasons behind this lack of engagement he wondered if there were sufficient numbers of visible role models, if talent is being developed in the right way, and if the cultural and creative industries

in Britain make enough of an effort to reach out to ethnic minority communities.

This article examines how minority arts, in particular “South Asian Arts” have developed in Britain, and how South Asian arts organisations have presented the ‘cultural value’ of these arts to funders and participants. Taking Crossick et. al’s (2015: 13) definition of ‘cultural value’ as the value associated with engaging with and participating in art and culture where ‘culture’ includes “theatre and dance; film; visual arts; photography; literature; storytelling; music; monuments and murals, as well as museums, archives, tangible and intangible heritage, and more” this article examines how South Asian arts in the British cultural and creative industries have been impacted by the ‘value’ agenda. The aim is to critically understand how ‘South Asian Arts’ have been valued by state actors and by participants themselves. Both community art making and publically funded art are explored, using data collected through structured literature searches and a small online survey.

The literature search was structured around four areas; a) reports and research produced by funding bodies; b) annual reports and ephemera produced by South Asian Arts organisations; c) magazines regularly publishing articles relating to South Asian Arts and d) academic research. Alongside this, an online survey was developed and implemented. The survey was advertised through social media and through the various networks created by the above engagement. As well as asking questions about the different types of minority ethnic events which participants engaged in, questions were asked about how they valued this engagement. The survey ran for two months between May and June 2014 and in total gathered 32 responses, 11 male and 21 female between the ages of 19 and 56. Where relevant, quotations from the survey will be included in the analysis.

“Ethnic Minority arts”

The publication of Naseem Khan's highly influential ‘The Arts Britain Ignores’ in 1976 signalled the first discussion of the place of 'ethnic minority arts' which she described as “an energetic but struggling sub-culture … which exists for the communities alone” (1976: 5). Khan (1976: 6) argued

that a separate funding allocation for 'ethnic minority arts' was necessary in order to:

1. allow 'coloured children' to learn positive aspects of what is "commonly counted a disadvantage"
2. encourage different types of arts
3. provide new influences and experiences for those living in Britain, as ethnic arts could be "a possible source of enjoyment for all." (Khan 1976: 7)

Public funding for 'ethnic minority arts' emerged following the civil uprisings in the 1980s in Brixton, leading to the development of the Arts Council's Ethnic Minorities Action Plan (Malik 2001: 18).[1] As Malik (2001: 19) explains, the role of local councils particularly the Greater London Council's (GLC) Ethnic Minority Arts Committee was significant at this time in boosting minority cultural activities. At the time 'South Asian arts' were included in the 'ethnic minority arts' and 'Black arts' categories. Although there were moves to promote 'South Asian arts' as a distinct category throughout the 1980s and 1990s, this led many South Asian artists to feel that they were categorised by race or ethnicity often placing them in a 'straightjacket of conformity', crippling artistic creativity and confining them to a limited range of themes (Fisher 2010: 63).

For Hylton (2007: 40) this labelling of artists as 'South Asian' was a direct consequence of Khan's report which had conveyed a notion of a self-referencing field of 'ethnic arts' leading funding initiatives to support 'cultural diversity' which implied that normality was white and everything else 'diverse' (2007:23). In 2011, in response to these criticisms and part fuelled by the Equality Act 2010, the Arts Council presented a 'Creative case' for diversity which presented diversity and equality as important factors which helped "sustain, refresh, replenish and release the true potential of England's artistic talent, regardless of people's background" (Arts Council 2011: 3). The distinction between 'mainstream' and 'diverse' art forms remains however. As this article will demonstrate, the

1 Before this, during the late 1970s and early 1980s diasporic dance forms were disseminated through "grass-roots amateur practices in local community halls, temples and specialist venues such as London's Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan" (Prickett 2013:6)

development of South Asian arts in Britain continues to maintain this division as ‘diverse’ art forms remain outside the ‘mainstream’.

A typology of ‘South Asian arts’

As outlined above, Khan did not use 'South Asian arts' as a distinct category, rather she wrote about ‘ethnic minority arts’ which included Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani arts. By 1994 however, Farrell found the term 'South Asian' being “used widely in the context of arts to mean styles of music, dance and visual arts from the Indian sub-continent, i.e. from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka” (1994:1). For Meduri this change occurred during the 1980s as arts officers, academics, venue managers, and funding agencies rechristened Indian forms as South Asian forms (2008a: 299) turning the label 'South Asian' into a dominant institutional category as major dance organisations including Akademi, Kadam, and Sampad, funded by the Arts Council began to use the area studies label to promote Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Odissi (Meduri 2008b:224).

A number of distinctions can be made between different types of ‘South Asian arts’, one being between Marghi and Desi traditions. Marghi (lit ‘on the path’) traditions are highly formalised, often based on ancient texts and are passed down from a Guru (teacher) to a shishya (student) whereas Desi arts are more localised traditions which develop in local contexts. A similar distinction is described by Farrell (2005:117) who explains that for South Asian music “a conceptual divide has long existed between classical and folk music ... expressed by the terms shastriya sangit (classical) and lok sangit (folk).” In terms of desi traditions which have evolved in Britain, by far the most popular is that of Bhangra, which emerged in the mid-1980s (Banerji 1988; Baumann 1990; Bennett 1997; Dudrah 2002; Hyder 2004; Sharma, Hutnyk and Sharma 1996) developing a number of ‘regional’ identities in association with different music scenes and local South Asian communities in British cities; for example, in Southall, London (Baumann 1990), the midlands city of Birmingham (Dudrah 2007), or the north- eastern city of Newcastle (Bennett 1997). It is important to note that these categories are open to interpretation with Iyer (1997: 7) viewing classical styles of South Asian dance such as Bharatnatyam as a ‘marghi’ art forms and British South Asian dance as a ‘desi’ art form.

South Asian arts organisations in Britain

The history of South Asian arts organisations in Britain begins with the establishment in the 1970s of community-specific, culture-focused institutions including the first overseas branch of the Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan in London in 1972. By the 1980s a number of South Asian dance organisations had emerged in response to state funding opportunities including Akademi (established in 1979 as the Academy of Indian Dance), SAMPAD (established in 1990 in Birmingham), AdiTi a national organisation for South Asian dance in Britain (established in 1989 and now dissolved), and Kadam, a Bedford based development agency for South Asian dance (established in 1990). Alongside these South Asian music and dance organisations, a number of British South Asian theatre organisations were established from the 1970s onwards including Tara Arts, Tamasha and the Kali Theatre Company (Hingorani 2010). Many of these organisations were awarded funding in 2014 as designated Arts Council 'National Portfolio Organisations':

Name	**Location**	**Established**	**Discipline**
Akademi	Camden, London	1979	Dance
Akram Khan Dance	Islington, London	2000	Dance
Art Asia	Southampton	1981	Theatre
Asian Arts Agency	Bristol	1997	Combined Arts
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan	Hammersmith, London	1972	Music
Darbar Arts Culture and Heritage Trust	Leicester	2005	Music
Gem Arts	Gateshead	1989	Combined Arts
Kala Sangam	Bradford	1993	Combined Arts
Kali Theatre Company	Lewisham	1991	Theatre
Milapfest	Liverpool	1985	Combined Arts
Peshkar Productions	Oldham	1991	Combined Arts
Rifco Arts	Watford	1999	Theatre
Sampad	Birmingham	1990	Combined Arts
Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company	Islington (London)	1988	Dance
Sonia Sabri Company	Birmingham	2002	Dance
South Asian Arts	Leeds	1997	Music
Tamasha Theatre Company Ltd	Tower Hamlets	1989	Theatre

Tara	Wandsworth	1977	Theatre

Clarke and Hodgson (2012:7) distinguish between these 'public facing' organisations and 'community facing' South Asian arts organisations. They define 'public facing' organisations as those which are funded principally by public money and/or sponsorship, are accountable to public bodies (e.g. local authorities, funding councils) and are not bound to the communities with which they engage and serve. In contrast, 'community facing' organisations are usually privately funded by individuals. These 'community facing' organisations are focused on the cultural needs or aspirations of a particular community where making connections with other communities is not necessarily a priority. As a consequence of funding requirements it is clear that these different types of South Asian arts organisations engage with the 'diversity' agenda in very different ways.

Examining the types of South Asian arts offered by the 'public facing' South Asian arts organisations, it appears that the 'Marghi' (classical) forms are more commonly offered than the 'Desi' (folk) art forms. In this regard, a particular type of South Asian heritage is being funded, produced and re-produced in and through the cultural industries in Britain in which "classical" art forms including theatre, music and dance are often privileged above folk art forms. These types of art forms are part of the authorized heritage discourse (AHD) "a professional discourse that tends to dominate national and international Western debates about the nature, value and meaning of heritage" (Smith 2012: 162). In order to ensure their recognition by the state and to obtain funding, many South Asian arts organisations know they must focus on art forms which are part of the AHD while emphasising the 'cultural value' of their offer to a diverse set of participants. I now examine how South Asian arts organisations in Britain have presented the 'cultural value' of these arts, using four themes outlined by the Arts Council (2014) focusing on their economic value, their benefit to health and wellbeing, their impact on society and their role in education.

Economic value

In terms of attracting visitors, by far the largest South Asian arts events held in Britain are the annual summer Melas with Birmingham attracting 125,000 visitors in its first year, London attracting an audience of over

80,000 and Manchester attracting over 60,000 attendees.[2] Originally celebrations of 'South Asian culture', Melas are now recognised as multi-arts festivals drawing in huge crowds from diverse communities (Qureshi 2010: 96).[3] In their study of the economic and social impact of eleven festivals in the East Midlands, Maughan and Bianchini (2004) included the Leicester Belgrave Mela, a two day Asian cultural and social event established in 1983. Of the eleven festivals examined, they found the Leicester Mela attracting the largest overall audience with approximately 100,000 attendees (2004: 4). They observed a clear link between ethnicity and attendance as most non-white festival goers only attended the Leicester Belgrave Mela and the Derby Caribbean Carnival. Including these two festivals they found that Asian or Asian British ethnic groups made up 11.2% of audiences, whereas excluding these festivals the Asian percentage declined to 1.4% suggesting "a strong need for festivals to broaden their appeal to Asian and Black audiences" (2004: 9). The appeal of Melas to diverse audiences is also evidenced by the non-mainstream sponsors they attract[4] and by the opportunities they provide to health practitioners to engage with diverse groups on issues relating to health and wellbeing.

As well as assisting in the organisation of Melas, 'public facing' South Asian arts organisations regularly contribute to local cultural provision.[5] The influence of these established South Asian arts organisations also filters across into communities with smaller South Asian populations with the

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2 These details can be found at Birmingham (http://www.birminghammela.com/about-birmingham-mela/), London (http://www.londonmela.org/), Manchester (http://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/6388/manchester_mega_mela_returns_to_manchester) and Southampton (http://artasia.org.uk/highlight-6/) - all accessed 05/06/2014

3 Although as Hodgson (2014: 208) found these events need to ensure that they reflect a variety of diverse traditions in order to maintain their appeal or risk becoming 'mono-cultural' as in the case of the Bradford mela between 2009/2010.

4 Details of past and current mela sponsors including including KTC, Savera, Noon Products, Rubicon, Supermalt, Western Union, Pataks, Sharwoods, East End Foods, Tilda, Sahara, British Airways, Kingfisher, Cobra, Khukuri, Virgin Media, Zee TV and Sony TV Asia, companies which would rarely invest in more mainstream arts can be found at http://www.londonmela.org/sponsorship/ and http://www.manchestermela.co.uk/sponsors.htm - both accessed 05/06/2014

5 The study of the Economic value of Birmingham's cultural sector and the examination of The Creative & Digital Industries in Leeds for instance provide little data on how South Asian Arts specifically contribute to local economies.

Asian Art Agency based in Bristol for instance helping South Asian communities in Swindon and Plymouth[6].

Conversely, many of the events organised by 'community facing' organisations are relatively hidden, often advertised within community networks and usually taking place in venues owned or run by members of minority ethnic communities including religious institutions and cultural centres. Consequently there has been little research into their economic impact. Although Voluntary Arts England estimate that there were 49,000 grass roots or amateur arts organisations in England in 2009 often run by unpaid staff (Ramsden et al, 2011) it is unlikely that this number includes South Asian community facing organisations which although providing grassroots arts, rarely label themselves specifically as arts organisations.

Health and wellbeing

In a 2014 report, the Arts Council reported that "participants are attracted to and demonstrate higher levels of commitment to activities that are culturally relevant to them" (2014:30). Indeed, both 'public facing'[7] and 'community facing'[8] South Asian arts organisations provide a number of such 'culturally relevant' activities to improve the health and wellbeing of those who may not otherwise engage in arts activities. Many of these

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6 Another example is Shisha's ArtSouthAsia project, the first international programme of visual culture from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in July 2002 led to "the North West cities of Oldham, Preston, Liverpool and Manchester … [seeing] significant events and exhibitions curated by individuals from each of the contributing countries" (Holt and Turney 2006: 338)

7 Programmes organised by 'public facing' organisations include SAA-UK's 'Khushi project' and Kala Sangam's 'Kala Sukoon' focusing on mental health problems in the South Asian community in Yorkshire. Sampad's Antenatal Music and Movement project for Asian women (Arts Council, 2007:38) ran over 18 months during 2001 and 2002 in areas of Birmingham and Walsall where there was a low uptake of antenatal care from women from "more closed Asian communities … [where] English is often a second language and there is resistance to attending any classes for preparation for birth, and also a high infant mortality rate amongst non-English speakers" (Durdey 2006.

8 Examples include the work of the Pakistan Cultural Society (PCS) in Newcastle who started a twice-weekly wellbeing group to sensitively address 'real issues' affecting the Asian community by delivering a physical and educational programme to help combat such health conditions as obesity, depression, cholesterol problems and heart disease (http://www.ethnicnow.com/lifestyle/health-lifestyle/community-wellbeing-project-proves-to-be-a-life-changing-experience-for-north-east-women/ - accessed 08/07/2014)

activities are more readily accessible to South Asians who may not have a strong command of English and who may not feel confident to engage with health professionals. It is clear therefore that for some British South Asians, culturally specific South Asian events can act as a catalyst to engage in ways to improve their health and wellbeing.

Societal value

Research into South Asian communities has highlighted the role the arts and music can play as markers of collective identity and in challenging common perceptions (Um 2012, Clarke and Hodgson 2012). For Clarke and Hodgson (2012:2) South Asian music and the arts can "represent further different places from which multiculturalism might be experienced and understood." This in turn could help individuals and communities to articulate their identities, to experience and affirm their cultures, to raise the profile of their cultures to wider audiences and to promote or affirm cultural confidence which may also improve cultural well-being (2012: 7). According to Nagle (2011: 157) the need for members of minority groups to be able to affirm cultural confidence comes from the fact that multicultural policy has left many second-generation youth "marginalized in society and lacking the self-esteem required to build bridges with other groups". Indeed, it was suggested following the 'race riots' of the 1980s that if young members of minority groups could gain greater awareness of their 'ethnic heritage' as well as the cultures of other groups they would gain greater confidence in their identity negating the need to turn to violence in order to express themselves (Nagle 2011: 156-157).

Many of the online survey respondents highlighted the importance of their ethnic heritage with a 23 year old female from Leeds stating that it gave her "a sense of grounding, belonging, identity and confidence", a 41 year old female from Leicester viewing it as something which "defines you as a person ... gives you your identity and sense of belonging" and a 19 year old male from Bradford explaining how connecting "with the culture, values and knowledge of my ancestors is equally as important as learning the ones in the place I am born."

Respondents also highlighted how participation in South Asian arts had played an important role in building their self-esteem and self-confidence,

with a 35 year old white female from Wolverhampton explaining how she had “made new friends, learned about another culture, increased my confidence and learned new skills” through her participation in Kathak. A 20 year old female from Birmingham felt that participation in South Asian arts had helped her “to understand my place in a diasporic South Asian community.”

Engagement in South Asian arts may also encourage members of BME communities to pursue careers in the arts/creative industries, an area in which they are severely underrepresented.[9] A 23 year old female from Leeds explained that she wanted “to be involved in the creative industries, especially arts, heritage and culture and preferably with a focus on South Asia.” In filling gaps created by the absence of South Asian literature and music in mainstream British society and in school curricula Prickett (2004) argues that South Asian arts offer potential for a more comprehensive understanding of Britain's multicultural foundations. Participation in South Asian arts can also strengthen social relations and interactions, with melas for instance “drawing in multiple, diverse and intergenerational communities … within a shared atmosphere of celebration” (Qureshi 2010: 7).

For Hingorani (2010:191) South Asian theatre plays an important role in postcolonial Britain as it inscribes 'difference' on the British stage while also contesting homogeneous constructions of national cultural identity. South Asian arts exhibitions can also challenge stereotypes, as Poovaya-Smith and Hashmi explain regarding the ‘Intelligent Rebellion: Women Artists of Pakistan exhibition’ which they curated in 1985. They explain how this exhibition overturned “a number of stereotypes that the West may have, about contemporary art practised in a Muslim country.” (Poovaya-Smith and Hashmi, 1997)

In their examination of participation in local authority arts events by the South Asian community in Blackburn, Syson and Wood (2006: 246) again

9 A recent report highlighted how despite over 50% of Londoners coming from a BAME background, the proportion of people from non-white backgrounds working in the creative industries is half of what it is across the rest of the economy. For further details see: http://creativediversitynetwork.com/resource/a-strategy-for-change/ - accessed 19/05/2014

found a link between ethnicity and participation in the arts. It is probable that any reported high level of engagement in the arts by members of minority communities mostly takes place with minority ethnic arts and in venues away from the mainstream.[10] Examples include "Kavi Darbars" (poetry symposiums) which are regularly organised in community venues across the country including Nottingham, Hounslow, Derby and Kent[11] with little funding from the state. That these arts events are organised by 'community facing' organisations has important implications for the study of these communities and cultural value more generally.

Education

Many 'public facing' South Asian arts organisations highlight the role that South Asian arts can play in educating wider society in South Asian art forms and in encouraging the public "to reassess and challenge its view of South Asian dance and preconceptions of South Asia as a whole."[12] As well as presenting South Asian arts to the general public a number of these organisations also work with schools, with Clarke (2012: 13) noting how Saarang's work with primary schools in Newcastle brings "experiences of South Asian and other world cultures to largely ethnically unmixed areas such as rural County Durham". Learning South Asian arts also facilitates new experiences with Clarke and Hodgson describing how the

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10 The issue of a lack of BME engagement in the arts does not appear to have gone away. In a presentation at a conference on The Creative Case for Diversity in Britain (2011), Dr Victoria Walsh critiqued many of the initiatives which have been undertaken by the cultural sector and noted that "despite over a decade of substantial dedicated funding and activity framed by policies of 'cultural diversity' no significant increase in visits to the art museum by 'minority' audiences had been realised."

11 Further details about the Kavi Darbars can be found here: http://www.nottinghampost.com/Recitals-talks-poetry-event/story-19720780-detail/story.html (Nottingham), http://www.sgss.org/Newsreel.aspx?month=4&year=2012 (Hounslow), http://www.writingeastmidlands.co.uk/events/kavi-darbar-poetry-evening/ (Derby), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0Xi-KiTAMc (Kent) – all accessed 15/06/2014

12 See Akademi's Annual report from 2013 available at: http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Accounts/Ends49%5C0001107249_AC_20130331_E_C.pdf – accessed 18/05/2014. Also the SAA-UK annual report highlights the role played by South Asian arts organisations in exposing those who have not encountered South Asian arts before to new art forms with one attendee explaining "this was my first Indian Classical Music concert" SAA-UK Annual Report 2007/08, page 13. Available at: http://www.saa-uk.org/documents/Annual_Report_2007-08.pdf – accessed 18/05/2014.

predominantly white students of Hindustani classical music at Newcastle University learning from expert Indian musicians "has meant an encounter with another culture grounded in a lived relationship with their teachers" (2012:14). Indeed, students of any background who learn Marghi traditions through the guru-disciple tradition are opening themselves up to new educational experiences as learning to play Indian classical musical instruments for instance would traditionally only have been open to members of musical families.[13]

Learning South Asian arts can also act as an important method of religious and cultural transmission, with David (2012: 90) finding Bharatanatyam classes being used by British Gujaratis and Tamils to teach their children about Indian culture.[14] In Leeds, SAA-UK have implemented classes to teach Sikh women traditional wedding songs which would otherwise have been passed down from generation to generation but which have somehow become lost in the frantic process of migration in the 1960s and 1970s.[15]

As formal structures have not yet been developed for the teaching of Indian classical music in Britain Farrell et al (2005: 117) note that among second and third-generation South Asian musicians in Britain knowledge of, or training in, classical music is not the norm and therefore "musical learning takes place at the interface of a number of formal and informal learning situations: within the community, at religious worship, in schools, colleges and adult education centres, in clubs and recording studios." (Farrell et al. 2005: 117). An important role which South Asian arts organisations can play is to equip South Asian artists with the skills they need to break in to the mainstream, or to become role models and teachers for younger artists.[16]

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13 For example, Roopa Panesar an internationally renowned sitar player "admits her family background is very different to many Indian musicians, where musicianship often runs in families and famous dynasties go back decades and even centuries." For further details see: http://www.mancunianmatters.co.uk/content/0806622-you-know-sitar-now-meet-rest-indian-classical-music-uk – accessed 11/06/2014

14 Katrak (2004: 5) argues these learning these dance forms is als a way to "inculcate and instil certain traditional values about womanhood and the conventionally acceptable roles of wife and mother."

15 For further details see: http://www.saa-uk.org/education_indianfolk.php -accessed 05/07/2014

16 For instance Jasdeep Singh Degun from Leeds who has performed in a number of high

Conclusions

This article has shown that the place of South Asian arts in the creative industries in Britain has changed over the years from being promoted as 'community based' art forms which allow members of minority communities to engage with positive aspects of their culture to the current position where South Asian arts organisations are promoted as being valuable to wider society as they contribute economically and also provide a number of societal, health and education benefits. The imposition of labels for minority art forms has also been highlighted as an issue of concern for those participating, with these labels often being imposed by funders and policy makers. The term 'South Asian arts' for instance has been shown to refer primarily to art forms of Indian origin even as South Asian arts organisations develop ways of engaging with and promoting art forms which appeal to those from non-South Asian backgrounds.

The role of different types of South Asian arts organisations in the creative industries has also been examined with 'public facing' organisations providing opportunities for people of all backgrounds to learn about particular types of South Asian arts whilst also opening these up to new audiences. Examining the cultural value of South Asian arts using the four measures of their impact on the economy, on health and wellbeing, on society and on education has highlighted that these arts can play an important role in engaging those who might be less likely to participate in arts activities. Whereas it has been shown that some South Asian artists may not wish to be pigeonholed as purely 'South Asian', others wish to engage with South Asian arts because it provides them with a link to their heritage. 'Community facing' South Asian arts organisations also play an important role in organising events which may not be labelled as arts events but which play an important role for those South Asians who may not feel comfortable in engaging in more mainstream events.

Despite funders, journalists and politicians regularly raising the issue of the

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profile and has also collaborated with many orchestras such as the National Youth Orchestra and Aldeburgh Young Musicians and also took part in a BBC2 Documentary and performed at Buckingham Palace for HRH Prince Harry as part of Goldie's Band (http://www.saa-uk.org/artist/jasdeep-degun). He recently performed as part of the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall: https://www.soas.ac.uk/news/newsitem93970.html

lack of diversity and BME engagement in the arts, minority arts in general and 'South Asian arts' in particular continuously struggle to find a space in the mainstream. Many of the publically funded South Asian arts organisations are compelled to articulate their 'cultural value' as part of a commitment to 'diversity'. For Berrey (2016) however, the notion of 'diversity' actually hinders conversations about underlying issues such as racial inequality. Is diversity in the arts seen as a positive for the reason that it opens up the possibilities for established 'mainstream' arts organisations to engage with hard to reach groups? Although as this article has shown, South Asian arts forms and organisations play a number of important roles for a variety of different audiences, in terms of their 'cultural value', over 40 years after Naseem Khan's report, they are rarely regarded as being part of the 'mainstream'.

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