

Breaking language barrier through poetry in Mumbai

Kanika Sharma, Hindustan Times, Mumbai | Updated: Jul 22, 2015 23:26 IST



Poets Translating Poets

How much of poetry is language and how much cadence and rhythm? A new cross-cultural initiative launched by Max Mueller Bhavan could offer some answers.

Called Poets Translating Poets, the project will see 50 poets from the subcontinent exchange works with counterparts in Germany and, with both sides sharing their translations on a website.

The event will be launched in Mumbai on Friday, with two German poets — Ulrike Draesner and Thomas Kunst, two Marathi poets — Pradnya Daya Pawar and Aruna Ramchandra Dhere and two Gujarati poets — Harish Meenashru and Neerav Patel sharing their experiences of translating.

The process is derived from what is called interlinear translation. “It involves personal exchange, which helps both poets see the poem in a new light,” says Martin Walde, director of Goethe Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Mumbai.

Pawar reads out her poem, ‘Chirvyakul aekakipanachya hoardingsvar’ (Eternal angst of loneliness on a hoarding), for Draesner to translate. It’s interesting as neither knows the other’s language. An interpreter sits between the two and translates a word at a time.

“As a poet, even when I don’t know the language, I listen to the rhythms and repetitions,” says Draesner, 53. “I understand the sound, and try to re-construct how Pradnya writes—but in German,” she adds.

“My works have often been translated yet this is the first time, when the translation consults me. Also, this is a direct exchange without English; usually the works are translated from Marathi to English and then to another language. Here the exchange is more collaborative and spontaneous.” says Pawar.

WHAT: Readings of poems translated from Marathi and Gujarati to German and vice-versa

WHERE: Max Mueller Bhavan, K Dubash Marg, Kala Ghoda

WHEN: July 24, 6.30pm

ENTRY IS FREE