

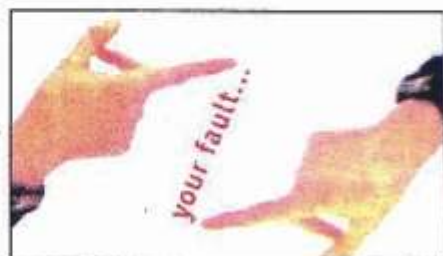


Meet Sandy Kaltenborn, an activist-graphic designer, who believes that art should be used for promoting social causes

The New Indian Express

January 5, 2005

# DESIGN FOR THE PEOPLE



By Ranjini Hariharan

A tall lanky man, a slightly bent figure, stubs cigarettes in a grey ash tray in the Queen's Chamber of Hotel Sealord. One and two, and then he stops. After a brief pause, he takes a mouthful of double Espresso and says: "I am a one boss-one slave-one member union. I decide when to go on strike." This is Sandy Kaltenborn, an 'activist-graphic designer' as he loves to call himself, from Germany. Sandy was in Kochi recently to give a presentation at the Kashi Art Gallery on the power of graphics in creating social awareness.

Sandy designs posters, books, cards and leaflets. But then, many others too do. Well, Sandy is different. For, he is a graphic designer with a purpose. A social critic, his posters and cards scream out openly against racism, fascism, dumping of toxic waste and other environmental hazards. "I don't undertake much commercial work. I am interested in cultural, political and social issues. There are many problems plaguing Germany and other parts of the world, and I have to do my bit in a short span of time," he says.

Sandy works alone from his home which has a computer, a coal kitchen, but no furniture. "I

don't like people working for me. They can work with me. I prefer being alone while designing," he says.

The 34-year-old artist has been actively involved in several political and social movements in Germany for the last two decades. "I believe in Left ideology, but I am not a Leftist. I was part of the German Autonomist Movement which reached its peak in the 80s. It was a reaction to the orthodox, Stalinistic Communist movement which insisted on too much discipline."

However, Sandy is no longer a part of any movement. "I am out of all that. I have no regrets. Now, my designs speak for me."

Sandy now uses his graphics to speak out against issues ranging from the impact of TV culture to racism to war and even discrimination in Germany.

"Several Turks and Greeks in Germany still do not have the fundamental rights. They have been staying there for almost 30-40 years and yet, they don't have voting power. They cannot apply for certain jobs. Only if you are born to a German couple will you be eligible for citizenship. It's blatant

racism," he says, flushing with anger. "My father was a German and mother an Afghan. I have experienced it and so I feel all the more against it." Sandy is also an active member of *Kanak Attak* — a community of different people from diverse backgrounds who share a commitment to eradicate racism from German society.

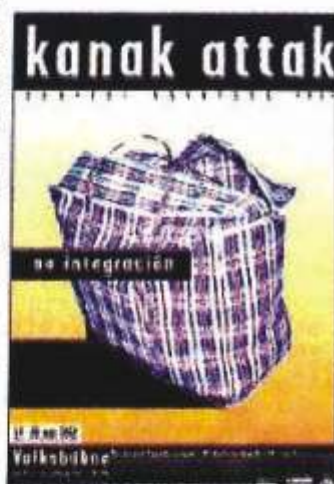
Indian software engineers are also unable to find a foothold in Germany owing to the country's complicated laws. "The party in power has conveniently arrived at a compromise formula between the Progressive and the Conservative group. They made immigration laws so complicated that people come in and return immediately," he says, showing a poster which says, "No man is illegal."

For activists like Sandy, art is politics and so is life. "An artist can excel only if he is sensitive to the surroundings; only if he reacts to the pain and conflicts around him." Well...that explains the depth of his art.

Sandy packs his bag. His next stop is Thiruvananthapuram, where he plans to give a lecture at the Fine Arts College. "Applied art is not advertising. Graphic designers have to get out of stereotypes and reinvent images. They have to be responsible for society," he says.

The activist-artist loves to be in Kerala as he finds "the people here are intelligent, highly literate and amiable." But Sandy is not the typical tourist. For, besides temples, elephants and resorts, he would love to visit universities, hospitals and schools in the State. "Also, I don't look like a typical foreigner. Do I? I have dark hair and I can adjust to any climate."

Sandy is planning another visit to Kerala next December. "I will keep coming here," he says.



design is not enough!



## സാൻഡിയുടെ പ്രഭാഷണം നാളെ

കൊച്ചി: സമകാലിക രാഷ്ട്രീയ-സാമൂഹിക വിഷയങ്ങളിൽ മാത്രം പോസ്റ്ററുകൾ രൂപകൽപ്പന ചെയ്യുന്ന പ്രശസ്ത ജർമൻ ഡിസൈനർ സാൻഡി കാൽടൻബോൺ നാളെ കൊച്ചിയിൽ. ഡിസൈനർ ആൻഡ് പീപ്പിളും കാശിയും ചേർന്ന് മട്ടാഞ്ചേരി ബസാർ റോഡിലെ കാശി ആർട്ട് ഗാലറിയിൽ വൈകിട്ട് ആറിന് സംഘടിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ചടങ്ങിൽ 'ഡിസൈൻ ഈസ് നോട്ട് ഇനഫ്' എന്ന വിഷയത്തെ ആസ്പദമാക്കി പോസ്റ്റർ കലയെക്കുറിച്ച് സാൻഡി പ്രഭാഷണം നടത്തും. കലാപ്രക്രിയ സാമൂഹിക രാഷ്ട്രീയ മാറ്റങ്ങൾക്കായി ഉപയോഗിക്കണമെന്നു നിർബന്ധമുള്ള കലാകാരനാണ് സാൻഡി. ഇമേജ് ഷീഫർട്ട് എന്ന സംഘടനയുടെ സ്ഥാപകരിലൊരാളും ഗ്രാഫിക് ഡിസൈനർമാരുടെ രാജ്യാന്തര സംഘടനയായ കളക്ടീവ് ഡിസ്ക്രിബ്യൂഷനിലെ അംഗവുമായ സാൻഡി വിവിധ രാജ്യങ്ങളിൽ പ്രദർശനം നടത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. പ്രവേശനം സൗജന്യമാണ്.

# മെട്രോ മനോരമ

2005 ജനുവരി 1 ശനി

Kochi, Thursday, December 30, 2004

## പോസ്റ്റർ കലയെക്കുറിച്ച് പ്രദർശനം

കൊച്ചി: ജർമ്മൻ ഡിസൈനർ കാൽടൻ ബോണിബർഗ് പ്രദർശനം നോയറാജ് 6ന് മട്ടാഞ്ചേരി കാശി ആർട്ട് ഗാലറിയിൽ നടക്കും. സമകാലിക-സാമൂഹിക വിഷയങ്ങളിൽ പോസ്റ്ററുകളുടെ രാഷ്ട്രീയ പ്രസക്തി, പോസ്റ്റർ കല എന്നിവയെക്കുറിച്ച് അദ്ദേഹം സംസാരിക്കും. ഡിസൈനർ ആൻഡ് പീപ്പിളും കാശിയും സംയുക്തമായാണ് പരിപാടി സംഘടിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്.

ചതുർത്ഥി • 2004 ഡിസംബർ 31

## Lecture on 'Design is Not Enough'

Sandy Kaltenborn, a well-known social designer from Berlin, Germany, will speak on 'Design is Not Enough' at a programme organised by Design and People in association with Kashi, at Kashi Art Gallery, Bazaar Road, Mattanchery, on January 2, 2005 at 6 p.m. Kaltenborn will make a presentation of his works followed by a question-answer session. Sandy Kaltenborn is the founder member of 'Image Shift' and 'Collective Distribution,' an international network of graphic designers. Entrance is free. To know more, call Design and People at 9847044240, or 9388465953.

Kochi, Monday, January 3, 2005



Aneesha Thampy of College of Fine Arts interacting with German designer Sandy Kaltenborn during a talk on political relevance of posters at Kashi Art Gallery, Mattanchery. Express

