

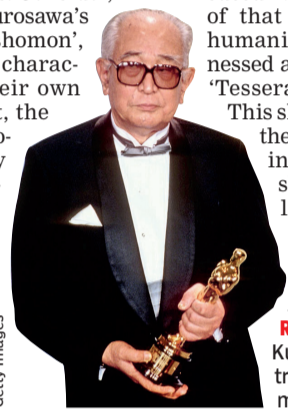
# ‘Tesseract: The Geometry of Truth’, a class act with intellect, empathy, grace — and the audacity of joy

An extraordinary theatrical production, unique from West End to Broadway, fusing art, archive, dance, philosophy, nature and AI, staged in Mumbai & seen by Srijana Mitra Das at Times Evoke:

The search for truth underpins human existence — and our most ancient stories. ‘The Epic of Gilgamesh’, the oldest known recorded legend on Earth, set in the riverine delta between Iraq, Syria and Turkey, featured an emperor searching between sophisticated cities and cedar jungles, flood plains and underworld, for the truth about life. Homer’s ‘Iliad’ followed Grecian warriors battling for honour, land — and truth. The ‘Mahabharata’ in India featured a family fighting to establish regal righteousness — but bowing before ‘satya’.

Every epic captures a restless human mind, raising eternal questions — Why am I here? What is the meaning of my existence? Why do I suffer? How do I gain power? Should I love myself or others? How shall I truly live before I leave? These are not easy questions. As humanity’s archives of literature, art, spiritualism and science show, they offer us a kaleidoscope of answers. Interestingly, most explorations about truth and life, in epics, cinema, laboratory or verse, have been relayed so far through male eyes. Consider, for instance, Akira Kurosawa’s 1950 classic film ‘Rashomon’, which featured four characters, each telling their own version of one event, the story disturbingly violent. The truth, they say, isn’t easy to handle — no wonder for some, the search for it has grown exhausting when we already have so much to choose from. In this era of unending choice, saturated by the glam-

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**RASHO-MAN:** Kurosawa’s truth via a male gaze



**DIFFERENT PAGES IN TIME:** ‘Tesseract’ highlighted the grandeur of the 187-year-old Times of India — and, in a succeeding act, spotlighted the state of the 4.5-billion-year-old planet Earth



in numerous ways but created by every one of us. ‘Truth is power’ precisely as there is strength within us to improve life by uniting mind and heart. These are not separate aspects of existence — they are the complete geometry of veritas.

The startling thing about ‘Tesseract’ — and here, perhaps a female gaze shows with subtle power — is how it explores the quests of the epics but with joy. Just when political crises and planetary melt-downs overwhelm us, ‘Tesseract’ makes a bold statement — if we use wisdom and warmth together, we can create happiness, the truth of which comes from respecting all life. ‘Tesseract’ amazed me by answering the world’s heaviest questions with the lightest sounds, the nimblest feet and the most joyful smiles.

In today’s troubled times, we need a ‘Tesseract’ school of thought — be true to yourself and others. Be clever — and kind. By abjuring one for the other, you risk falling off reality into a ‘post-truth world’, a darkness where no art or intellect applies. Why lock yourself in such hell when you were born into a garden — a paradise which exists only on Earth.

As the dazzled audience rose to give ‘Tesseract’ numerous standing ovations, I thought of the philosopher Jurgen Habermas. He wrote of ‘the public sphere’, a space where private notions meet collective well-being and forge modern life — in times when we are pushed to imagining we can live best only privately, cloistered in comfort zones and plastic phones.

‘Tesseract’ highlights Habermas’ idea of a shared world creating common good. The truth exists inside that world — seek it with a joyful smile and a song in your heart.

Views are personal

our of products and clamour of views, some even speak of a ‘post-truth’ world.

Fortunately, not everyone has succumbed to the intellectual indolence of that — or the frightening end of humanity it signifies. I recently witnessed a unique theatrical production, ‘Tesseract: The Geometry of Truth’.

This show, exemplary anywhere from the West End to Broadway, staged in Mumbai, showcased truth as shaping us every minute of our life. We live within the intricate geometry, the ceaseless calculus of veritas. The question ‘Tesseract’ posed, and why it reminded me of the great epics, is — how can we live optimally with the truth?

Envisioned by Meera Jain, founder of Times Evoke and Economic Times (ET) Evoke, ‘Tesseract’ then embarked on its own journey. It began with the awakening of Sofia (Megan Murray), a researcher in the archives of The Times of India — ‘Tesseract’ first displays its ingenious brilliance here, blending the legendary TOI archives, brimming with records of humanity over 187 years, with the magic of beginning to understand. For Sofia, her moment in TOI is no less than Gilgamesh starting down his mystical river or Odysseus mounting his ship on a sea of tragic victories — this is the origin of a unique journey, yet one shared by many over millennia.

As the TOI archives shift shape, melding into mischievous, magical, flying documents, Sofia struggles to keep pace — till she meets a twin. Her consciousness emerges as an interlocutor (Pia Sutaria) and tells her, human truths were gathered over aeons. Astonishing its viewers, ‘Tesseract’ then takes off — into a world of utter splendour. The two women, traveler and guide, gaze on humanity over the ages, enacted through effervescent song and dance, directed superbly by Shiamak Davar. ‘Tesseract’s’ stunning backgrounds come alive, showing a universe of people who shaped our world — from Leonardo da Vinci’s scientific drawings to humanity’s first space flight, Charlie Chaplin’s penguin-like walk to Audrey

Jobs, every legend comes to life, smiling, frowning, searching, finding, thinking, creating.

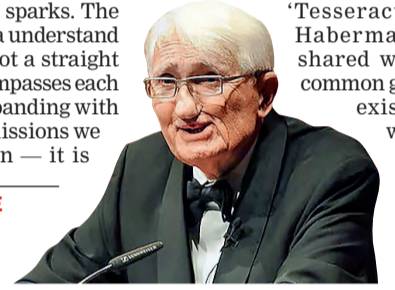
As these slides, infused with the sheer genius of TOI meeting AI, breathe magic into your mind, Davar’s amazing dance troupe sweeps you off your feet. With barely a second between acts, these astonishing performers switch from conveying the meticulous scientific mind to cinema’s verve, the toil of sport and the roil of politics, the power of feminism and the pathos of non-human beings in an inhuman world, all in the flash of an eye and the unified movement of feet. These dancers conveyed complex intellectual questions, both as individuals playing a role and a collective, fabulous whole. As they expressed the accomplishments of every age, Sofia and her alter ego stood charmed, inspired, moved, delighted — and finally, terrified.

For, with time, humanity has forsaken its most fundamental rooting. We invent but also eagerly kill. We grow — and scorch. We rebel against injustice — and repeat it. We scale but also shatter. We start seeing life as ‘classes’, those ‘worth keeping’ and those fit to wreck. We plunder Earth and wonder as our planet growls back. We build intelligence that compresses all our wisdom into awesome networks — and learns to cooperate far better than us.

Is this it, Sofia tremulously asks? Has our genius, our inventiveness, our desire for power led us to this dark alley with only despair? Is this the ultimate truth — or have we missed something vital?

‘Tesseract’ answers in its extraordinary way, brilliantly using light itself — bars, rays, columns that sway — as a character. There is so much more — there is indeed a cube of awareness in the fourth dimension, beyond our usual powers, that can tell us the secret to life. The stage work in ‘Tesseract’ is breathtaking — when Sofia touches this cube’s invisible walls, they crackle with jewel-like sparks. The fourth dimension helps Sofia understand ‘the geometry of truth’ is not a straight line. It is a circle which encompasses each one of us, shrinking and expanding with the choices we make, the omissions we choose. Truth is not a given — it is

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**PANORAMIC:** Shiamak Davar’s dance troupe brilliantly portrayed art across the ages



**LIGHTING UP THE MIND:** Sofia and her interlocutor with the role played by stage light