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Hub India is being hailed as one of the most significant conversations that contemporary art from India has had with the West in recent times



'Crossing Over IV' by Sudipta Das (2020), rice paper, on view at the MAO

By **Avantika Bhuvan**

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As soon as you enter the Palazzo Madama in Turin, you come across Jayashree Chakravarty's 'Personal Space', a layered painted installation, which is the artist's imagined map built of painted strips of paper. At eight feet tall and 40 feet wide, the scroll furls and unfurls across the space. Its imagined history interacts with that of the space—the medieval section of the museum from where the Roman army is believed to have entered. The work acts like an anchor, a womb that you can nestle into. On the diagonal end is Ranbir Kaleka's tri-screen video work that references the transience of time and reality. This is part of Hub India, which is being hailed as one of the most significant conversations that contemporary art from India has had with the West in recent times.

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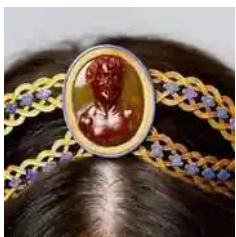
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Blurring the lines between modern and contemporary art, this complex project, featuring 300 works by 65 artists, rejects the colonial notion of linear progression. Curated by Myna Mukherjee of Engendered and Davide Quadrio, and presented in partnership with a host of organisations—the ICCR, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Embassy of Italy in India, Fondazione Torino Musei and Artissima—the project has been divided into two parts. The exhibition 'Maximum Minimum' was held as part of Artissima, the international fair of contemporary art in Turin, earlier in November. However, the museum shows, clustered under 'Classical Radical', are being held at Palazzo Madama, MAO and Accademia Albertina till 15 January, 2022.

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“The display in Accademia is a simple one that brings the work within a transitional space. The crates and the instability of half-hanged works mark the presence of the show in this venue as if “passing by,” says Quadrio. “We are particularly proud of this solution that treats the space of Accademia as if it is an ‘open studio’ where works are just unpacked and are ready to offer their magical experience to the audience.”

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The shows at the MAO and the Accademia are particularly interesting as they look at ‘neo’ miniatures and the various strands associated with this genre—has the form changed while the material has remained the same, has the use of the gold leaf continued, have contemporary miniatures become more abstract and whether storytelling has changed? “One can see works by Anindita Bhattacharya, Nilima Sheikh and also by Manjunath Kamath, who uses a lot of tempera and gouache. There are artists like the Singh Twins interweaving different narratives about migration and the diaspora within a single composite; Baaraan Ijlal whose work embraces gender and politics; Wardha Shabbir and Priyanka D’Souza, who experiment with the form and location of the miniature,” says Mukherjee. She further adds that while Bhattacharya retains the form, embellishment and ornamentation of older miniature styles, she destabilizes the content by shifting the perspective from the centre to the margins, and focusing on that which has

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Jayashree Chakravarty's 'Personal Space' at the Palazzo Madama

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The works at each of the three museums respond to the permanent collections. At the Madama, imagery of Christ and Madonna stands in dialogue with Benita Perciyal's works, which Mukherjee calls "a dark-bodied beautiful Dalit representation of Christianity." She further talks about Samanta Batra Mehta's work, made on commission, which uses the carpet making techniques and motifs of flora and fauna. This 40-foot-long work engages with the museum collection of Islamic art, bowls from Central Asia, and those from the pre-Gandhara period. "There are classical works and radical departures on display, in terms of content, ideas and material. It shows the many ways in which artists can reference the past while also shining a lens on the present and contemporary moment," she says.

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The works, part of both 'Radical' are a cross-section of genres from line-drawings and paintings to miniatures and sculptures; terracotta and metal to paper works and canvas, prints and etchings to digital and AI works. They blur the polarities of religion, caste or race, Asia and Europe, figurative representation or abstraction. Galleries such as the Nature Morte are thrilled to be part of Hub India and the museum shows. "It is a historic undertaking for contemporary art from South Asia in the beautiful city of Turin," says co-director and curator Peter Nagy. The politics of representation was very important to the two curators. It was important to insist on a viewing of work from the subcontinent, which wasn't tokenistic, or limited to one kind of narrative.

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"We also wanted to focus on what was happening socioculturally across the country. There are certain areas where artists are invisibilized. More male artists than female ones make their way to international platforms. But we wanted to



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younger artists but also those with the distilled aesthetics of time by artists like Mona Rai, who haven't gotten their due," says Mukherjee. While there are women artists like Sheba Chachi and Ayesha Singh talking about how urbanisation affects them, there are also works by the likes of Shambhavi and Sangita Maity, who root themselves in the rural. The curators felt such conversations were important for people to understand the many strands underlying Indian art today.

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Mukherjee also wanted to move away from the Eurocentric view of Indian art, where the reference point is always western pedagogy. "It is validating that a platform like Ocula chose Ghanshyam Latua with Bharti Kher as two artists to watch out for. And the museums, after they saw the works, asked for extension on dates as they were happy about how the works entered into a dialogue with their collections.

FIRST PUBLISHED 24.11.2021 | 02:30 PM IST

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Steven Spielberg's West Side Story is deeper and leaner than the 1961 version. Yet, not much has changed



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(from left) Ilda Mason, Ariana DeBose and Ana Isabelle in 'West Side Story'. Image via AP

By Uday Bhatia

FIRST PUBLISHED 14.12.2021 | 11:32 AM IST

In his *West Side Story*, Steven Spielberg indulges the new cinematic fetish for teams assembling. Young punks emerge from boxy apartments and trailers and basements. There’s a blissful tracking shot of five toughs strutting down the street, a couple of them skipping out to dance ahead, cans of paint being passed around, all without breaking step. In five minutes of swoop and glide, the film deposits the Jets, a white American gang, in the territory of the Puerto Rican Sharks. Any question about whether Spielberg would be a good fit for a musical is pretty much moot by then.

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Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, and a 1961 movie by Robert Wise and Robbins. That movie was visibly a stage musical transplanted to screen, but it won six Oscars, including best film and director. Its routines are so deeply embedded in US pop culture that any remake would have to be a reinvention.

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This is not what we get. It looks different—the bright colours of the original replaced by the subtler tones of Janusz Kaminski. It's got better actors; the camera and choreography are more mobile. Yet, it's practically the same film. Spielberg is a far superior craftsman to Wise. But there is a reluctance to change anything fundamental about the source material. The play is essentially *Romeo and Juliet* in the run-down Upper West Side of New York, a romance between Tony, a Jet who wants to leave the gang life, and Maria, the sister of Bernardo, leader of the Sharks. Spielberg keeps everything—their meeting at a dance, the death at the 'rumble', the tragic ending.

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It's of course possible to read into this material an allegory for recent anti-immigrant feeling in the States. The feeling that the Sharks are victims and the Jets are racist thugs is more pronounced than in Wise's film. But any thinking viewer in 1957 or 1961 would have recognized this as the allegory as well. There was nothing like the audible gasps—in an Indian theatre—during the 'King



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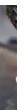


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thunderously effective nods at modern audiences in period dramas. Tony Kushner is a fine writer (he was responsible for Spielberg's *Munich* and *Lincoln*), but this film could have been made a decade ago without altering anything.

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It's a wonder the film survives the lack of chemistry between Maria (Rachel Zegler) and Tony (Ansel Elgort): their first dance is awkward, the first kiss even more awkward. Zegler has an appealing openness but Elgort walks through the film like a smug statue—there's more heat between Riff (Mike Faist), the leader of the Jets, and Bernardo (David Alvarez). The film belongs to these two performers, especially Faist, who makes this paranoid white supremacist oddly sympathetic. Rita Moreno, who played the fiery Anita in the original (a role essayed by the similarly vivacious Ariana DeBose in this film), is Tony's sympathetic employer. It's the one significant tweak in the film—a Latinx mentor instead of a white one—but it doesn't amount to much (besides a likely Oscar nomination for Moreno, who won in 1961).

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The film remains a wall-to-wall musical, not one where songs punctuate the narrative. Spielberg and choreographer Justin Peck build the numbers around the elements of the city. *Cool* is a tense duet on a wooden platform, a large hole drawing the eye even as Riff and Tony avoid it. *America* starts on a fire escape and ends up literally and figuratively stopping traffic. In the 1961 film, the camera



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their dates. But Spielberg is right among the performers; we feel their energy and their athleticism.

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What Spielberg does is masterful. But the lack of challenge to the existing material makes this a timid film. It's possible to be dazzled by *West Side Story* and also wonder how much more exciting an original Spielberg musical might have been.

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Five thrift stores for preloved baby clothes, toys and more

If sustainability is on your mind when you shop for yourself, here are five platforms to help you extend this to you shop for your kids too



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A few entrepreneurs are populating the nascent and fledgeling market of pre-loved baby goods in India (Photo by Mediamodifier on Unsplash)

By Team Lounge

LAST UPDATED 15.12.2021 | 10:30 AM IST

Shopping for children is fun — you get to look at cute prints and socks and t-shirts made adorable by their very virtue of being tiny. But it’s all expensive, not just in terms of price-points but also in terms of the number of wears they get. After all, at the pace at which children outgrow things — physically and sometimes even mentally — is faster than you can say ‘sustainability’.

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It wasn’t uncommon for Indian kids from even as recently as the 90s, to have



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families now, this passing down of clothes and getting the most wears out of each garment, becomes hard. Noticing this gap, a few entrepreneurs have been populating this nascent and fledgeling market of pre-loved baby goods with their community-driven platforms, all claiming to offer proper cleanliness and sanitary checks. Here are some.

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Twice Treasured

Launched in July 2020, this Instagram-native shop is run by three working mothers, Divya Abhishek, Tripti Chordia, and Vaibhavi Prakash. The idea is to connect parents, who quite like themselves, were looking to find more use for clothes and toys that their children outgrew fairly quickly. The trio assures "quality control through safety checks and sanitisation" before re-selling. If you reach out to sell a lightly used item, an automated email with a detailed questionnaire on the status and condition of the product, and requirements for a photograph, and a notification for a video call to follow up on this, lands in your inbox. Only once you send that back duly filled, can you proceed with the selling process. They list everything from educational toys, baby swing sets, prams, high-chairs, cribs and more.

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Tiny Things

Noida-based mothers Bhavna Dayal and Nandita Kodesia started this website in 2020. Their motto: love, transfer, repeat. The duo wanted to create an online community to start a conversation on sustainable practices for parenting. So far, with over 50 brands like Chicco and Tommy Hilfiger listed on their platform, Tiny Things has also secured a first round of seed funding, and as per reports, hopes to expand their presence across India by selling franchises to mothers or “mompreneurs” who can work from home. Currently, their platform sells clothes, toys, books, shoes, and accessories. They offer free pickups of goods you want to sell, but follow a due process of ensuring the product's quality before this.

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Sold Resold

Started by friends Shradha Virani and Heena Kalantri in October 2019, Sold Resold too started as a community-driven platform to get parents to easily buy and sell “preloved and precared” baby products. Mostly active on Instagram, the platform uses one of their ‘Highlights’ section to detail a 4-step method for anyone wanting to sell lightly used baby products like toys, clothes, cots, shoes, sterilisers, and strollers. Products are qualified on the basis of a photo of the product shared with the team, and further communication on what one can earn for their product, is communicated directly.

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Uptot

Founded by Rhea Gandhi, a member of the family that owns the popular Vadilal ice creams, Uptot is one of the more recent entrants into the game. The need to “create a community that would teach every child the concept of sharing and upcycling, right from a young age,” is what drove Gandhi to launch her own platform, which is open to clothing, strollers, books, toys, and even items that do not “...fit into one of our current categories”. Uptot charges a commission of 20% percent of the sale price, including 10% for shipping.

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Prehugged

Informed by a restless toddler, bored of all his current toys and clothes during the initial lockdown months of the pandemic, a young mother started looking at social media groups to buy preloved, affordable and sustainable new toys, books, and more to keep him entertained. But it was all too unorganised. Overnight, she decided to create a platform that accepted gently used toys and books from parents, sanitised them, and curated to sell them on an online platform.

Prehugged differs from the others on this list in that you cannot earn from what you give away. They offer a free pick-up service across Mumbai, Thane, and Navi Mumbai; and reimburse your courier costs of up to ₹200, if you wish to send your donations from anywhere else. When you buy from them, they say, a part of your money goes to a charity for orphans.

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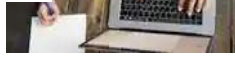
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This is the real problem with India's employment data

A serious issue with jobs data in India is that official classifications can make low-paying, insecure jobs seem like robust employment



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Official classifications in jobs data can make low-paying jobs seem like secure employment. A file photo of migrant workers leaving cities their homes in villages during the covid-19 lockdown in 2020. (HT_PRINT)

By Rukmini S

LAST UPDATED 15.12.2021 | 07:00 AM IST

Faced in February 2019 with a leaked report that showed record high unemployment, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a speech to Parliament declared that the problem was that jobs in the new economy were not being captured by the data.

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It is true that some employment is not adequately understood yet by the National Sample Surveys, but the problem isn’t exactly that the government is missing people in the gig economy. A bigger issue is that official classifications can make low-paying, insecure jobs seem like robust employment. Among the codes in the

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Directors and Chief Executives. By official data, this is the most common occupation for urban men and the third most common occupation for urban women (after domestic cleaners and garment workers). Sounds high-skilled and well-paying? Not so much, labour economists find; it might just be a fancy-sounding way of describing people who run their own small one-person enterprise.

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Of the women workers described as directors and chief executives, 99 per cent were actually self-employed, of which around one-third worked as unpaid family workers. These women were mainly engaged within self-help groups and co-operatives as 'partners', and had thus been recorded as directors or working proprietors, even as their activities for the most part remained confined to food processing and textile and garment manufacturing. A large proportion of self-employed women workers were also engaged in outsourced manufacturing work, typically characterised by low earnings, long hours and lack of any form of social protection.

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Cover of Whole Numbers and Half Truths by Rukmini S, published by Westland.

The gulf between the jobs that people want for themselves and for their children and the jobs that are actually available is enormous, and widening. Across age, location, caste and class—in fact, even more so for upper castes and the rich—the first preference of Indians in terms of employment is a government job.

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In addition to some stability, these jobs also offer better pay. At all levels, but particularly at the lowest education and skill levels, private-sector salaries are below public-sector salaries. Due to a guaranteed minimum salary in government service, a cleaning worker in a government office is likely to earn far more than a domestic servant doing the same work in a private home or business, the IHDS shows. In 2012, a rural agricultural wage labourer could expect to earn about ₹17,500 per year, while the urban non-agricultural labourer



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could expect to earn about ₹60,000. But an illiterate male working in a salaried government job could expect to make ₹144,000 per year.

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Government or public-sector employment also serves as a moderating influence on other forms of social inequalities that market forces exacerbate. While women earn lower salaries in both public and private sector, the ratio of female to male salaries is considerably higher in the public sector than in the private sector. Similarly, salary inequalities among various social groups are larger in the private sector than in the public sector. Regardless of the sector, forward castes have higher salaries than OBCs, Dalits, Adivasis and Muslims. But the differences in government salaries by social group are lesser in the public sector at both lower and higher skill levels.

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For the most prestigious category of white-collar jobs, caste hierarchies have remained largely static over the past five decades. The share of men who are in professional or salaried jobs is already by far the highest among Brahmin, and then non-Brahmin forward-caste men, even with reservation in place for those from backward castes and no reservation for upper castes, on account of the disproportionate access historically high levels of education and income give to the upper castes.

Much of this can be explained by the difference in educational attainment. But this is not a full explanation. In a classic experiment, the economists Sukhadeo Thorat and Paul Attewell found that Dalit respondents to job advertisements were less likely to be called than upper-caste respondents with the same qualifications.

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Since 2011-12, the government has not published a full Employment and Unemployment survey, as the NSSO reports are called, but has moved from 2017 to the PLFS. This aims to provide higher-frequency (quarterly) employment and unemployment data, but statistical aims are at the mercy of political forces. The first PLFS annual report was expected in December 2018, but the government delayed its release until after the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, presumably because the numbers were bad.

The NSSO could do a better job of collecting data from the informal sector (just as it should do a better job of obtaining data on the professions of the superrich). The NSSO has itself constituted numerous committees which have come out with dense reports on ways to improve its informal-sector data. The PLFS, which the government had largely ignored thanks to its unflattering numbers, was supposed to be one step in this direction. Once the 2019 elections had come and gone, the government went back to quietly releasing the PLFS reports regularly and without much fanfare or controversy.



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All of this was pre-pandemic. Although the PLFS was meant to be quarterly, there was no labour data available right through 2020 up until August 2021, as the pandemic threw not just lives and jobs, but also administrative systems out of gear. As a result, many economists have turned to the CMIE, a large sample panel survey that is private, paid and closed. Modi and his administration, on the other hand, have chosen to point to administrative data like payroll statistics.

Modi is right—there is a problem with jobs data. But it isn't the one he claims, that the data doesn't capture jobs. The problem is that the government is neglecting its own data mechanisms, which can capture all the data about real Indian jobs, and suppressing them when they prove inconvenient. India's jobs crisis is two-fold—not enough jobs and suppressed data.

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Excerpted with permission from Whole Numbers and Half Truths: What Data Can and Cannot Tell Us About Modern India by Rukmini S., published by Context, an imprint of Westland Publications.

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In the early 20th century, an Italian shoemaker introduced a recipe for parmesan in southeastern Brazil. Now, the country's craft cheese makers are winning hearts and awards



View of Garrafo cheese in Alagoa, southern region of Minas Gerais, Brazil. 57 Brazilian cheeses won medals at the biennial Mondial du Fromage in Tours, France in September. It's a recognition that put unsung Brazil, a country not widely known for its cheese, second only to France on the podium of the world's best. (Photo by DOUGLAS MAGNO / AFP)

By AFP

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Good luck finding a GPS signal or sign to get to Rita de Cassia's secluded farm in the mountains of southeastern Brazil. The best bet for food-lovers chasing her award-winning handmade cheese is to stop and ask for directions.

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Cassia's "Garrafao" is one of 57 Brazilian cheeses that won medals at the biennial "Mondial du Fromage" in Tours, France in September. That put unsung Brazil, a country not widely known for its cheese, second only to France on the podium of the world's best.

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"What do your cows eat that makes the cheese so delicious?": that is the question Brazil's representative at the event, Debora de Carvalho, says she got time and again from French colleagues.

The bucolic region where Cassia's farm sits, in the longtime "queijo" (cheese) producing state of Minas Gerais, harbors a few answers. Settled three centuries ago by colonists digging for gold, the area started producing cheese when an Italian shoemaker, Paschoal Poppa, arrived in the village of Alagoa in the early 20th century with a recipe for parmesan.

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Today, the municipality of 2,700 people is home to no less than 135 cheese-makers, several of whom have won prizes at recent editions of the festival in Tours. That is generating a nascent gastronomy tourism industry in Alagoa



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whose sleepy streets are now decorated with mini-Eiffel Towers at cheese shops, celebrating the town's newfound status as a foodie destination.

Old-school methods

The prizes "have changed our lives," says Dirce Martins, who has been making cheese here for 39 years. "Nobody used to come here. Buyers basically paid whatever price they wanted for our cheese. Now we have all these visitors," she says, giving a tour of the small room where she ages her multi-award-winning "Fumace" on wooden shelves.

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Her cows graze at an altitude of 1,500 meters (nearly 5,000 feet), on otherwise untouched land rich in soil nutrients. Working alongside her husband and son, Martins produces at most 60 smoked cheeses a day.

Cassia, 32, has a similarly small operation: she and her husband, Marcos, make around 15 kilograms (33 pounds) of cheese a day with their 15 dairy cows, who sport names like France, Spain and Denmark.

"It's hard work -- 6:00 am to 10:00 pm every day, rain or shine, or even

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"And the competition is tough," she adds, as she shows how she and her husband artificially inseminate the cows themselves. She learned the trade from her father-in-law. "It became a passion," she says. "Cheese is almost a living being."

She and her husband credit the silver medal they won in France with luring the big-city suppliers who now brave the rocky valley road to their farm to buy their cheeses at 45 reais (\$8) apiece. "It gave us a lot of visibility," she says.

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'Legalize' cheese

"For a French cheese, winning a prize boosts its value by up to 20 percent. In Brazil, the increase is 300 to 400 percent," says Carvalho, the director of SerTaoBras, an association that promotes Brazilian craft cheeses.

World-famous or not, small cheese producers in Brazil say they are hampered by tough regulations on animal-based food products, modeled after those in the United States, where nearly all cheese is pasteurized.

"You have to meet 000 different conditions," says Carvalho. As a result, most



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pressuring the government to legalize craft cheese nationwide," says Carvalho.

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In Brazil, "you could never get a permit to make a cheese like Cabrales, from Spain, which is aged in natural caves," says Juliana Jensen, research director for booming craft cheese producer Cruzilia.

The company won a "super gold" in France with its "Santo Casamenteiro," a blue cheese with apricots and nuts that looks like a wedding cake.

View of Santo Casamenteiro cheese stored in Cruzilia, southern region of Minas Gerais, Brazil, on December 1, 2021. (Photo by DOUGLAS MAGNO / AFP)

Cruzilia, which has a line of more than 90 products, has increased production by 30 percent in three years. ["Brazilians are starting to look within our own borders](#)



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NEXT STORY

How to run better and other fitness tips

Power up your performance, get better at training and run better with these excellent tips from the experts at Lounge Fitness



Power up your weekend training with these expert tips. (Istockphoto)



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It's another weekend, which means another roundup of fitness tips you can use from *Lounge*. Every Saturday, we bring you the pick of our fitness stories from the previous week that you may have missed. It's full of expert advice and smart guides that will help you take your training to the next level.

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This week is no different. It's winter and weather's getting quite chilly as the year draws to a close. This time of the year usually means two things. First of all, this is the season for marathons and other running events. And second, this is when people take stock of the past year and set new goals for the future. And our stories this week focussed exactly on these two things. [Read on for more!](#)

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Five great resistance band exercises

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How to set your fitness goals for 2022

Ah, it's New Year's Resolution time! We all love to make those, and most of the time, we invariably fail to live up to our lofty ambitions. Nowhere is it more true than when it comes to fitness. We tell ourselves that we will work harder, eat better, be more consistent. All excellent goals, but then, why do we often fail?

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In this excellent story, writer Shrenik Avlani speaks to fitness enthusiasts and coaches about why resolutions fail. He finds that most of the times this happens because we set the wrong goals, and therefore chase after the wrong dream. The best way to set a fitness goal for the New Year is to start slow and modest, and set tangible goals. [Read on to find out how.](#)

Two great shoes for your daily runs

You may be a pro-level runner or you may be the kind who loves running just for the heck of it. What's common is the fact that you both need at least one pair of simple, do-it-all running shoes for your daily runs. Forget about fancy carbon-plated shoes, this is about familiarity and comfort.

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Running enthusiast and writer Sohini Sen has the perfect recommendations for you. She tries out two new everyday running shoes—the [Adidas Ultra Boost 22](#) and the [Asics Dynablast 2](#)—over a few weeks to bring you an authentic review of what works and what doesn't.

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The best exercises for improving your running technique

We've all been here before. We love to run, and we think just strapping on a pair of running shoes and heading out on the track is enough. And then we find out the painful way that like everything else, running correctly, with a proper technique, is an art. It's something you need to work on.

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As Pulasta Dhar writes in this insightful story, much of this technique depends on how well-conditioned your body is. And to ensure your best physical condition, you need to work out. No, running is not exercise, it's a sport. And to prepare for this sport, you need to exercise. And Dhar has just the right workouts for you. [Read on to find out more!](#)

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