

Chennai's Night of Art: La Nuit Blanche Ignites Alliance Française

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Chennai recently witnessed a luminous cultural night: **La Nuit Blanche** at the the Alliance Française of Madras. What started as an idea to bring art into the night became a lively feast of performance, community, and Franco-Indian fusion.

La Nuit Blanche is an all-night arts festival. It celebrates music, theatre, dance, installations, and more. The idea is simple: turn the night into a stage.

In Chennai, the Alliance Française of Madras hosts the event. It aims to blend local art forms with international influences — especially French cultural elements — to engage diverse audiences.

Alli Thilaga — Koothu Reimagined

One of the most talked-about acts was **Alli Thilaga**, by Thilagavathi Palani. She's a National Award-winning artist, and notably, the first female **Kattaikkuttu** performer to graduate from the Kattaikkuttu Gurukulam.

In *Alli Thilaga*, Thilagavathi singlehandedly plays multiple characters — including herself. The narrative draws from **Allirani**, a lesser-known story from the Mahabharata. This is a reinterpretation of traditional Tamil theatre (Koothu) with personal and modern resonance.

Therefore performance ran from 7 to 8 pm within the Alliance Française premises.

Breath – Bharatanatyam Dialogue

Another compelling moment was **“Breath,”** a Bharatanatyam performance by Deepali Salil and Sayani Chakraborty. Thus the piece explores the relationship between breath and emotion. Deepali embodies breath; Sayani, the human form. Together, their interaction reflects how breath shapes our inner life.

Hip Hop, Workshops & Late-Night Energy

Thus the night didn't stick to classical forms only. A **hip hop workshop by Natraj** (Director of Dance Extreme) energized younger participants. Meanwhile other interactive sessions, spontaneous performances, ambient installations, and late-night acts kept the momentum going deep into the night.

The Vision Behind the Night

For the Alliance Française of Madras, La Nuit Blanche is more than a spectacle. It's a cultural bridge.

Dr. Patricia Théry Hart, Director of the centre, calls the event a “vibrant tapestry of Franco-Indian culture.” She sees it as a platform that spotlights local talent while honouring shared heritage.

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