

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 latenight 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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