

The thinking reader's thriller

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Rana Bose, playwright, performance poet, and novelist, launched his second novel *The Fourth Canvas* (Tsar Publishing, Canada, ₹499) at Oxford Bookstore recently. Rimi B Chatterjee, professor of English at Jadavpur University, released the book.

In the author's words, *The Fourth Canvas* is an 'ideas thriller'. In the 1970s, an artist finishes a series of canvases before disappearing in Paris. His body is later recovered from the river Seine. Afterwards, Claude, a graduate student in Montreal, receives a painting. It prompts him to start looking for clues to decipher the mystery surrounding the

canvases — a mystery related to the rise and fall of empires. Described as an intellectual thriller, *The Fourth Canvas* contains kidnappings, murder, conspiracy, a search for ancestral roots, et al.

Chatterjee said while she found the book a little disorienting to start with, she was soon drawn into its world. "Getting into novels from theatre was difficult, especially this one," admitted Bose, who was born in Kolkata and lives in Montreal. His first novel, *Recovering Rude*, was published in 2000. His plays have been published by Seagull and other houses, and performed in the US, Canada, and India.

He has just finished another novel, which is being edited. The new novel is based on three friends who grew up on a street in Montreal. One of them is half-Bengali and half-Armenian. Another is an actor who ends up in Afghanistan.

The book release was followed by Bose reading three sections from *The Fourth Canvas*. His language sounded lucid. The third section comprised two letters. Of these, the one written by Claude sounded rather strange for a letter written to a lover who had just left him. And the character admitted as much in the book. Hopefully, reading the book completely will make the context clearer.



PRATEEK CHOUDHURY

Rimi B Chatterjee and Rana Bose at the launch of Bose's book