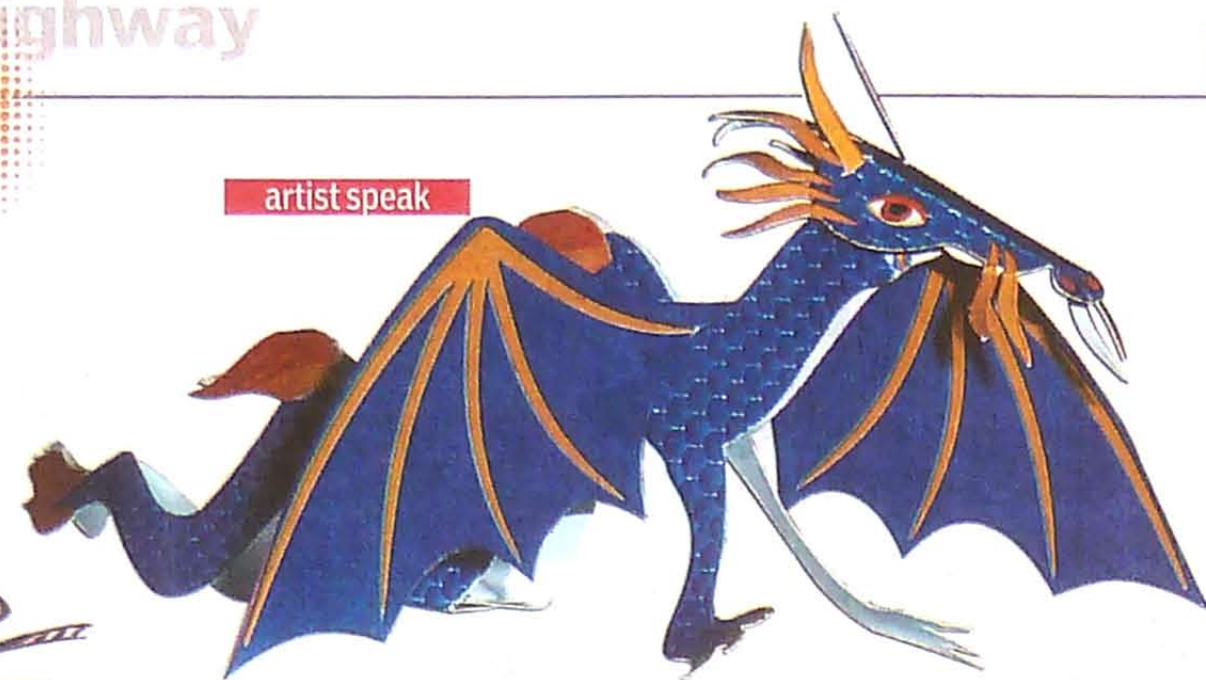


east coast

highway

artist speak



# No child's play, this

Originally inspired by the Tsunamika, 3D toys from AgniJata offer a fun and interactive way to educate children and adults

here and participate in the experience of conscious evolution of mankind that was initiated by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. I also love India for its beauty, sincerity and depth in everything — people, smiles, gods, nature," she offers.

## After the Tsunamika

The idea for AgniJata came to her in 2005 when she was working on

Tsunamika doll. First there were postcards, fridge stickers and small notepads. Later, I started creating educational toys with Tsunamika — checkers and craft sets and later, Tsunamika's friends — lion, elephant, cow and donkey!" she explains. She decided to start her own unit to include other animals like the whale, tiger, kangaroo, monkey, turtle and zebra.

necked lizard—he makes his necklace bright and big, when he is frightened—"explains Vygodskaya, adding that the toys help develop motor skills and the tactile sense and prepares tots for further studies in subjects like geometry and design. "The toys appeal to those aged from 6 to 99, as there is no age limit for fun and happiness! If parents join the game, a simple family evening can transform into a fantastic adventure," she says.



OMBINING fun with creativity, Ekaterina Vygodskaya from Russia makes toys with a purpose. Her year-old brand, named after her Indian name AgniJata, is aimed at adding a generous portion of fun to the process of education. The toys that are 3D cut-outs can trigger your tots' imagination, says AgniJata. "While cutting out and folding a funny toy, a child's mind goes deep into the 3D world, understands shape and volume and begins understanding crafts," she explains.

## Backstory

Originally from St Petersburg, Vygodskaya played with paper—cutting, folding and gluing—as a child, and says she owes her creativity to her father, who spent his last years designing educational toys for blind children. Speaking about what drew her to Auroville, she says, "I first heard about it in 2002 and there was no doubt that I wanted to live

the Tsunamika Project at the Pondicherry-based Upasana Design Studio. "Tsunamika is a small doll that helped hundreds of women living on the sea shore survive after the tsunami. The idea of Upasana was fantastic—that women were producing these funny dolls which were never sold! I had to design paper products with the

## What you get

Available as 'craft sets' (at ₹140 onwards) like Safari, Funny Farm, India, Australia and Cats and Dogs, each toy has region-specific animals introducing tots to geography. "For instance, in Australia you can play with the kangaroo—you see, it is carrying its baby in the pouch on the belly!—and koala, penguin and frilled-

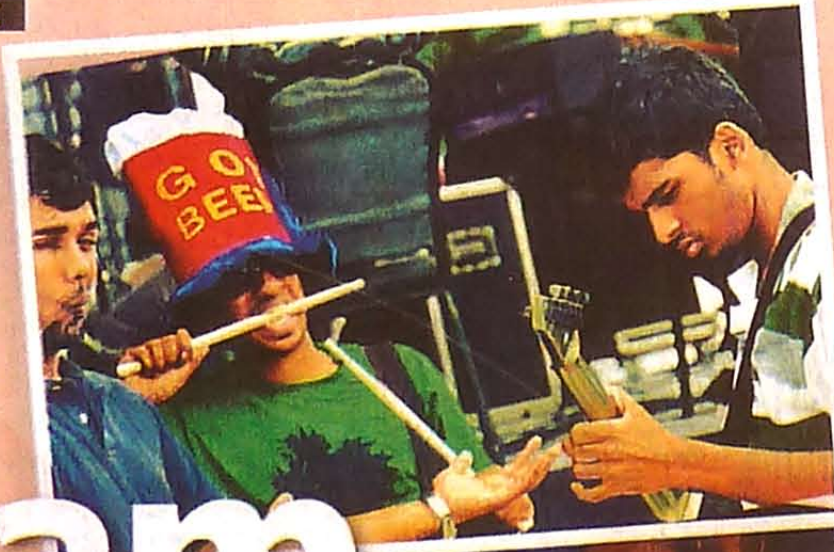


## Up next

"I would like to introduce 'Agnijata — Educational toys' to schools, as the more interesting the process of education, the better results kids will achieve," offers Vygodskaya. She has recently collaborated with Laila Games, Auroville to produce 'Coconaka' for older kids. 'Evolution,' created by a Russian biologist is also ready to be launched. The sets are available at stores like Casablanca, Nilgiris and Aurobo-utique in Pondicherry and Landmark, Naturally Auroville and Higginbothams in Chennai. "We soon plan to include distributors in Mumbai, Bangalore and the rest of the country," she says. Details: [www.agnijata.com](http://www.agnijata.com)

—Maryann Thomas  
[indulge@newindianexpress.com](mailto:indulge@newindianexpress.com)

concert



## Get ready for some progressive rock, acoustic numbers and folk sounds at SecSatPondy tonight

Rock-enthusiasts have another great night to look forward to, with this month's edition of live SecSatPondy featuring four interesting acts. To kick-start the show is a performance of ethnic folk songs from the Bahour region of Puducherry by Balad and group. Louise Robinson from the UK and Jod from France call their music, "a multilingual cocktail of the old and the new, with a twist." Covering popular acoustic numbers like Hotel California, and Aisha, Robinson will attempt to sing the Hindi hit *Woh Lamhe*, "If all goes according to plan," she adds.

Acid Quartet from Bangalore, promises postrock and progressive rock numbers, both covers and original compositions. "We

play anything from classic rock to ambiance music," offers Leslie Alex, guitarist and vocalist. Expect covers like *Open Car* by Porcupine Tree, *Hope Leaves* by Opeth and more. Bangalore-based Black Sun, who are also first-timers at the event, quote Jimi Hendrix as an influence. "Our music is blues-rock with sounds inspired by classic rock from the 80s and 90s, anything from Eric Clapton to Metallica," says Aditya Vishwanathan, drummer, adding that the lineup includes covers like *Sultans of Swing* and *Voodoo Child*.

The July 2011 edition of *Live Music — SecSatPondy* will be held at Le Cafe on Beach Road on July 9 at 7pm. Details: 0413 2917949

—MT

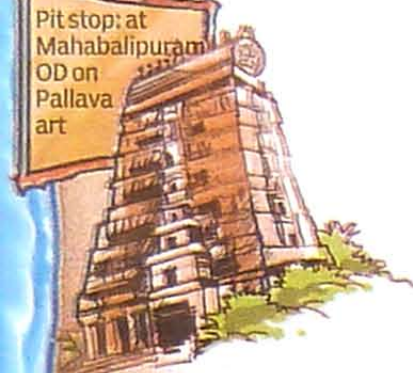
# Jam station



Chennai to Pondicherry: 165 kms



Pit stop: at Mahabalipuram OD on Pallava art



Grilled sardines at Satsanga, Bussy Street

