

Ishtyle

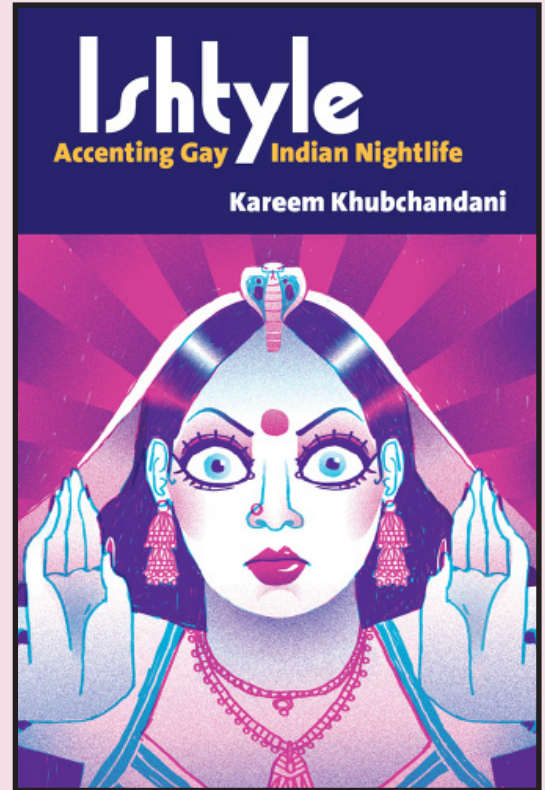
Accenting Gay Indian Nightlife

Ishtyle follows queer South Asian men across borders into gay neighborhoods, nightclubs, bars, and house parties in Bangalore and Chicago. Kareem Khubchandani develops the notion of “ishtyle” to name this accented style, while also showing how brown bodies inadvertently become accents themselves, ornamental inclusions in the racialized grammar of desire. *Ishtyle* allows us to reimagine a global class perpetually represented as docile and desexualized workers caught in the web of global capitalism. The book highlights a different kind of labor, the embodied work these men do to feel queer and sexy together. Engaging major themes in queer studies, Khubchandani explains how his interlocutors’ performances stage relationships between: colonial law and public sexuality; film divas and queer fans; and race, caste, and desire. Ultimately, the book demonstrates that the unlikely site of nightlife can be a productive venue for the study of global politics and its institutional hierarchies.

“*Ishtyle* captures the complex vectors of power—the hierarchies of caste, region, class—that mark the spaces of gay Desi nightlife, even as those who participate in these spaces challenge multiple meanings of normative national and ‘global gay’ cosmopolitan identities. Khubchandani’s own diasporic travels and trajectories are central, as he is both an astute observer and fully embedded, and embodied, participant. He is acutely aware of how gay nightlife spaces are sites of imagining otherwise, even as they are haunted by those who are kept outside its doors: the abjected classed and caste-inflected trans-femininities that are invariably denied entry. Khubchandani brings his own inimitable ‘ishtyle’ to existing queer, South Asian, and performance studies scholarship, and in so doing produces a deeply moving, eloquent testament to the laborious pleasures, and pleasurable labors, of queer worldmaking practices.”

—Gayatri Gopinath, New York University

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