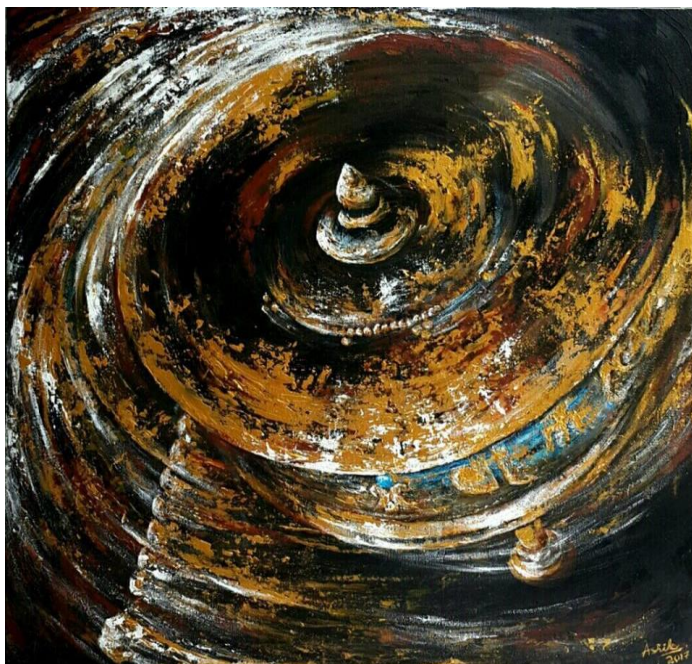


INDIA-BHUTAN CULTURAL EXCHANGE & ART CAMP

PARO, THIMPHU & PUNAKHA
28 JUNE – 3 JULY 2017



Organized by:
The Centre of Escalation of Peace, New Delhi
India-Bhutan Foundation, Thimphu
The Royal Office for Media, Thimphu.



CENTRE FOR
ESCALATION
OF PEACE

CEP



INDIA-BHUTAN CULTURAL EXCHANGE & ART CAMP

About

Following the success of the first India-Bhutan Cultural Exchange and Art Camp held in 2016, a group of 10 distinguished artists – 5 from each country – came together for an Art Camp in Bhutan from 28 June to 3 July 2017. The aim of the Art Camp is to celebrate the rich heritage of Indian and Bhutanese art and culture and for artists to interact and collaborate on creating great works of art.

The Art Camp is part a programme jointly organised by the Centre for Escalation of Peace, New Delhi; the Royal Office for Media, Thimphu; and the India-Bhutan Foundation.

The cultural exchange programme is split in two components. This was the first half of the programme. The second half will take place in India in February 2018.

The five artists from Bhutan were: Gyempo Wangchuk, Ashik Pradhan, Choney Pelzang, Pema Gyeltshen, Tshewang Darjay

The five artists from India were: Manisha Gera Baswani, Pooja Iranna, Kavita Nayar, Venkat Raman Singh Shyam and Mahalaxmi Karn

Objectives

The India-Bhutan Cultural Exchange and Art Camp is a programme that aims to build cultural awareness and positive cultural relations between the two countries by providing a common platform for artists to come together, interact, get inspired and thus expand the scope of their own art form.

The exchange of ideas during artistic collaboration will not only stimulate the creative environment but will also help in maintaining a continuous and harmonious interaction between the two countries, thus strengthening the existing uniquely close and mutually beneficial relationship.

Rationale/Context

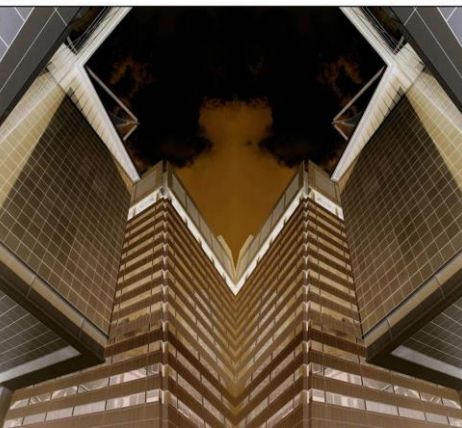
Bilateral relations between India and Bhutan have traditionally been close; we enjoy a warm, cordial and mutually beneficial relationship. Our cultural lineage makes us natural friends and partners. India and Bhutan have a symbiotic relationship, where both learn from each other and grow together, whether in economic, political or cultural relations.

At the CEP, one of our primary aims remains the strengthening of cultural relations through activities that respect and celebrate differences among the two countries through the medium of art.

About the artists



Manisha Gera Baswani: Manisha is a painter, photographer and an occasional writer. Her works are inspired by what she observes/experiences around her. The photo essays that she has been working on carry the viewer through her intimate visual journey of the contemporary Indian art scene.



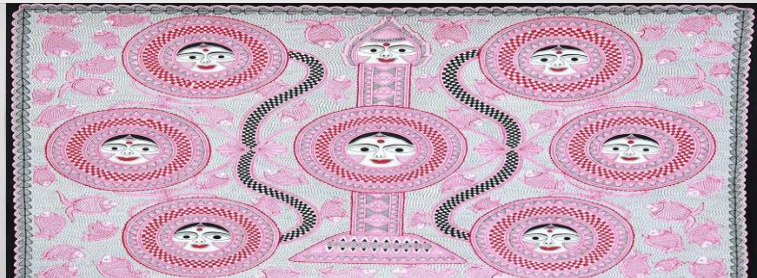
Pooja Iranna: In Pooja Iranna`s world of art, construction and textures play the most pivotal role, giving form and meaning to her creations. Iranna uses various types of media to create lattice like structures composed of lines and forms that intersect, unite and connect in what almost resembles an architectural blueprint. The grids she builds up over her surfaces are never the same; each one seems independent and different from the other.



Kavita Nayar: She has worked in this field over the past three and a half decades and is equally familiar with several mediums - be it oil or acrylic on canvas, lithography, etchings, serigraphy or pastels on paper. She is always trying to innovate and discover herself through her works. As an artist her works evolve a sense of capturing an emotional realm of experience, individual and holistic. Her expression of art is the rendering of the intangible which permeates through the spirit of nature in which her technique is a medium to reach.

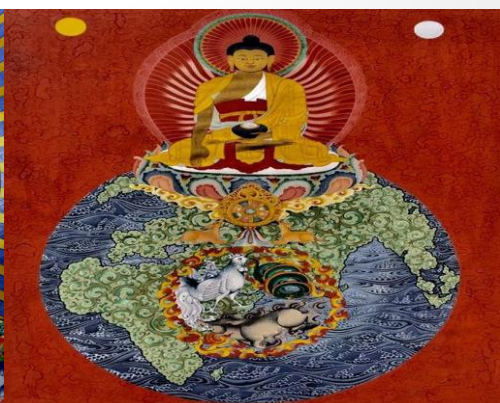


Venkat Raman Singh Shyam: Venkat specializes in Gond Art, an art form coming from Kond, which means green mountains in the Dravidian idiom mainly found in Madhya Pradesh & surrounding states. His art is an expression of their everyday quest for life as well as mythology. They believe that “viewing a good image begets good luck”. Rich in detail, color, mystery and humor, Venkat's artworks brilliantly employ modern means to evoke the pre-modern psyche.



Mahalaxmi: Mahalaxmi forms unique collaborative talent in the field of Madhubani painting. She is continuing to paint in the same painting for the last three years, 2012 till now. Having recently finished a series of 24 paintings in this traditional style based on the Ramayana (a two year long scholarship project awarded by Ministry of Culture, India), she is producing art work of great aesthetic merit that has begun to attract attention in USA and France. She also creates murals using the Madhubani style.

Gyempo Wangchuk: For Gyempo, art is the simplest and only language that people all around the globe can understand. Based on the traditional arts, he intends to fit his expressions, imaginations, creativity and innovations into his paintings, maintaining originality and uniqueness in a style that is close to him. Gyempo prefers to use natural paints rather than commercial ones as they are more authentic and durable than commercial paints. He intends to research further into extracting paints from natural products like plants, leaves, bark, etc. He admits it is laborious but he believes it is how we keep the tradition of buddhist art alive so that it can be passed down from generation to generation, just the way it has been handed over time.





Ashik Pradhan: Colors have, since childhood, fascinate him. Ashik likes to paint subjects from Bhutan because everything he sees in Bhutan is visually appealing and rich, be it in landscape, tradition, culture, or anything. He is still learning and wishes to paint till end.



Choney Pelzang: Mixed media pieces on canvas, wood and other support material are the basis of Choney's artwork. Training and exploration in drawing, painting and graphic design meld to expose her present way of creating. The need to explore these various mediums is equaled by her need to explore her native heritage. Choney's imagery is native, contemporary, personal and unique. Majority of her creations are in graphic design, paintings in acrylic, however, oil paint is occasionally employed. The mixed media pieces are a conclusion of her explorations in acrylic and oil painting, as well as experience with the graphic techniques used in typography and applied to my painting. These works are in various medium including charcoals, pastel and acrylic.



Pema Gyeltshen: Pema is fully engaged in experimenting with different mediums and subject and trying to create his own style of painting. He is fully dedicated to taking modern art into the next level and also wishes to help and work with other aspiring artists to be able to climb up the ladder of modern art in Bhutan together. Pema wishes to continue his journey as an artist and make a difference in his own small way.



Tshewang Darjay: Tshewang believes that art is a wonderful creation, something that lightens his heart and lets him see the beauty of uniqueness. He experiments with all the mediums but enjoys working with paper mache. He hopes that through his art people become happier and would be able to figure out their meaning of life.

PHOTO ESSAY
OF THE 5-DAY
PROGRAMME

DAY 1 – 28 JUNE



On day 1, the Indian artists landed in the beautiful Paro Valley, Bhutan. After tea refreshments they made their way to Thimphu on a delightful drive and picked up delicious peaches on the way.

The artists were welcomed by Asha Kama Wangdi (Founder-VAST Bhutan).

This was followed by an introduction to Vast and its initiatives.

Interactions over dinner progressed with other graphic designers, film-makers and visual artists.



DAY 2 – 29 JUNE

Artists visited the Weaving Center in Thimphu.



This was followed by a visit to Sukhbir Biswa's art gallery.



Subsequently, they went to the Folk Heritage Museum and hiked to the Wangdi Tse Monastery.



DAY 3 – 30 JUNE

A visit to the Bhutan Textile Museum introduced the artists to a collection of antique textile artifacts, exclusive to Bhutan.



The artists learned more about Bhutan's history, progress and development through anecdotes, artefacts and stamps that the country has produced when they toured the Postal Museum.

Later in the day, on route to Punakha the group took a moment to appreciate the mesmerizing view at Dochula Pass.



The artists thoroughly enjoyed the village home stay in Jawana Village, Punakha where riveting discussions took place between the Indian and Bhutanese artists. They shared their inputs and ideas on how to expand the art scene in both countries.

DAY 4 – 1 JULY

The morning was well spent by the River Nyakhulum.



The afternoon saw a visit to the Punakha Dzong – the administrative centre of the Punakha District.



DAY 5 – 2 JULY

On the last day the artists divided themselves into 2 groups - one group stayed in Thimphu where they continued to explore the local markets and also had an enriching visit to the paper making factory while the other group trekked up to Taktsang, a prominent Himalayan Buddhist sacred site.



The July sector of the Art Camp 2017 came to an end over the farewell dinner. There, Asha Kama gave the Indian artists a preview of the artwork that is going to be exhibited at the inauguration of the Bhutan Art Gallery by VAST.

Outcomes beyond the Art Camp

- ❖ A scholarship will be awarded to one talented young art student from Bhutan. This scholarship is a platform to identify new talent in art and it aims to provide the awardee with an opportunity to experiment and showcase their art. The scholarship includes monetary support, mentorship by senior persons in the artist community and the opportunity to establish links with people in the field.
- ❖ Indian artists will contribute towards building a robust Art Library at VAST, Thimphu that aims to create a vibrant nexus of ideas, collections, expertise and space that is open to the artist community in Thimphu. As a starting point, 5 cartons of Art Books are on their way to VAST, Thimphu.
- ❖ A one-month residency programme in Kavita Nayar's art studio for 2 prominent artists from Bhutan has been proposed.



The India-Bhutan Art Camp has proven beneficial once again. It has facilitated the opening of new avenues towards approaching traditional and contemporary art. Furthermore, it has also provided the perfect platform to strengthen relations between the countries as through their interactions both Indian and Bhutanese artists developed a deeper understanding of both cultures.



India-Bhutan Cultural Exchange & Art Camp

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