



Press Release

The Government College of Art and Craft, Calcutta: Sesquicentennial Celebrations

Kolkata, 30th September, 2015: By far the oldest heritage institution imparting art education in Kolkata, the Government College of Art and Craft completes a hundred and fifty years of its existence this year. The genesis of this institution can be traced back to 1864 at Garanahata, from where it changed location several times before getting housed in the present building on Chowringhee Road towards the end of the 19th century. With the patronage of the British government and men of letters of the day, the Art School metamorphosed into a College in the 20th century, soon after India's independence. Under the aegis of Abanindranath Tagore it grew into prominence and was reckoned as a premier art institution across the country. Artists spawned by this College contributed in no small measure to the Indian national movement and the Indian renaissance. It is from the womb of this institution that artists like Nandalal Bose, Jamini Ray, Asit Haldar, Hemen Majumdar, Atul Basu and Jainal Abedin were born. With the passage of time, these names were celebrated as the most luminous stars from South Asia in art, the world over. It is also from these quarters that some of the most talented artists of subsequent decades commenced their journey into the world of art: Somnath Hoare, Ganesh Pyne, Sarbori Roy Chowdhury, Bipin Goswami, Sunil Pal, Shyamal Dutta Roy, Sunil Das, Ganesh Haloi, Jogen Chaudhuri, Lalu Prasad Shau, Dhiraj Chowdhury, Dhirendranath Brahma, Kartick Chandra Pyne, Sakti Burman, Amal Ghose, Uma Siddhanta, Ranen Ayan Dutta and others.

The concluding ceremony of the sesquicentennial celebrations of the Government College of Art and Craft will commence on 29th of September, 2015. The College in collaboration with its Alumni Association is organizing the week-long festivity which will feature inter alia a brief insight into the historical evolution of the institution. There will be an exhibition of the works of prominent artists of the institution, particularly the creations of their student years while at the Art College, and which treasure has been preserved in the College archives since the 19th century. The College campus will be abuzz with a three-day seminar on art and art education alongside various cultural presentations. A special exhibition of the most captivating works of reputed artists and ex-students of the College will be displayed in the prestigious galleries of the Academy of Fine Arts. As many as three hundred artists will be represented including some who are no longer in our midst. The exhibits will be classified periodically and each period will be accompanied by relevant historical anecdotes, embellished with pictures.

Artists who have emerged from this institution over the last so many decades, today lie dispersed across the world, and they are sending samples of their creative works, which will be there on display. Several such works of art from various corners of the nation have already reached us. This exhibition of the artwork of the Alumni members since the 19th century, which is till date, the largest of its kind and also unprecedented in India.'

As a part of this celebration, at an initial programme, we shall be felicitating four veteran artists who have graduated from this Art College: Dhirendranath Brahma and Kartick Chandra Pyne for painting, Uma Siddhanta for sculpting and Ranen Ayan Dutta for applied arts. A signature item of the celebration, and one which has been envisaged in collaboration with the Indian Postal department, is the release of a commemorative stamp and a Special Cover depicting the 150th birthday of the Government College of Art and Craft. A pictorial catalogue - a collector's item for sure - showcasing the prominent art exhibits on display during the festival alongside a brief history of the institution, will be published on the occasion. A one-time grant has also been contemplated for the 'life models' who have served precious years at the Art College by posing as 'objects' for budding artists to hone their skills.

The inauguration of the concluding part of the sesquicentennial celebration will be held in the premises of the Government College of Art and Craft on the 29th of September, 2015 at five in the evening. There will be a simultaneous inauguration of the exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts. The Honorable Minister of Education of the Government of West Bengal, Dr Partha Chatterjee, will grace the occasion as Chief Guest along with Honorable Mayor, Sri Sovon Chattopadhyay and Ms. Arundhaty Ghosh, Chief Post Master General.

For further information please contact:

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