

**Kolkata Centre for Creativity Organizes
'Durga Puja at Shobhabazar Rajbari: A Tryst with History and Heritage' in
Collaboration with RRitobak**

“An illustrative exhibition of the History of Durga Puja at Shobhabazar Rajbari”

Kolkata 25th September: Kolkata Centre for Creativity, a multidisciplinary art space in collaboration with 'RRITOBAK' is coming up with an exclusive art exhibition on the centuries' old history of celebrating the auspicious Durga Puja at Shobhabazar Rajbari. The exhibition will comprise of various artistic illustrations and narratives showcasing the ceremonious puja of Goddess Durga by **Shri Prabir Krishna Deb**, a descendent of Maharaja Nabakrishna Deb. The show will be held at KCC from 25th of September 2021 to 5th of October 2021 from 11 am to 6 pm, and will be open to all.

The Legacy of the Rajbari Durga Puja: Around the time of 1757 during the reign of **Maharaja Nabakrishna Deb** who was the founder of Shobhabazar Rajbari, the first family Durga puja at the Rajbari was held which was the most popular and most sought after Durga puja festivals in Kolkata. A tradition that started years back, still manages to retain the same grandeur which will be reflected through the intricate paintings, illustrations and narratives by Shri Prabir Krishna Deb, a descendent of Nabakrishna Deb. It was the Deb family of Shobhabazar Rajbari who introduced the tradition of celebrating Durga Puja about 250 years back, a precursor of the mammoth celebration of Durga Puja that we see today.

As illustrated by Shri Prabir Krishna Deb, it marked the beginning of Durga Puja being held by independent aristocratic families in Kolkata, erstwhile known as Calcutta, that eventually evolved into the present day public celebration of *Barowari Puja*.

The illustrated narrative would recount Nabakrishna Deb's association with Robert Clive that can be traced back to the time when the former suggested that the latter seek blessings from the Goddess Durga for his triumph over Siraj-ud-daulah in the Battle of Plassey.

The exhibition will aim to locate the gradual transition of the celebration from being an index of aristocratic status to its democratization and thereby understanding the initiation of an undying cultural valve that has become a defining aspect of the Bengali identity.

The exhibition will have an inauguration ceremony on **25th September 2021 from 4pm onwards** which will begin with **chandipath by Ranendra Krishna Deb**, followed by a welcome address by **Ms. Richa Agarwal**, Chairperson, Kolkata Centre for Creativity. The session will be followed by a speech by Chief Guest **Jawhar Sircar, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha** after which there will be a brief introduction by **Reena Dawan, Director, Kolkata Centre of Creativity** on the exhibition, ***Durga Puja at Shobhabazar Rajbari: A Tryst with History and Heritage*** and the artist, followed by a speech by Prabir Krishna Deb and a book release by Jawhar Sircar.

“The illustrations which have been done in this exhibition purely depict the age old Durga Puja celebrations at the Shobhabazar Rajbari which has a long legacy. It has been roughly 3 years since I have been involved in such illustrations and then realized that this could be given a proper shape. This was the time when I collaborated with RRITOBAK who published my illustrations in the form of a book. In such challenging times, such exhibitions are much needed not just for painters but also for art lovers. I feel extremely elated that Kolkata Centre for Creativity will be showcasing art and illustrations which will provide a glimpse of the Rajbari Durga puja to the audience, which I am sure will be loved by everybody”, says Prabir Krishna Deb.

“Puja in Bengal is always a time of the year to look forward to. Showcasing the tradition and heritage of the famous Durga Puja of Shobhabazar Rajbari at Kolkata Centre of Creativity is an honour for us. As illustrated by Shri Prabir Krishna Deb, Durga Puja at Shobhabazar Rajbari is the precursor of the famed Durga Puja of Kolkata as we know it today, approximately 250 years later. We look forward to welcoming audiences to witness this iconic exhibition.” Said Ms. Richa Agarwal, Chairperson, Kolkata Centre for Creativity.

For the other days, on **26th September 2021** there will be a panel discussion on ‘**Durgapujar ekal- sekal/ ekhane – okhane**’ where panellists **Atri Bhattacharya, Debanjan Chakrabarti, Sanatan Dinda** will have their opinions on the topic. On **28th September 2021** there will be a Devi Bandana by Ranendra Krishna Deb followed by a panel discussion on ‘**Shovabazar Rajbari tatha Kolkatar Durgapuja**’ where panellists **Soumit Narayan Deb, Debasish Krishna Deb, Swapan Krishna Deb** will be present to express their views and opinions. On **30th September 2021** the audience will see a Dance performance by Krishna Sanchari Deb followed by *Sruti Natok* by **Soutindra Krishna Deb** and his team. On **1st October 2021** there will be a *Boithaki Adda* by **Soumith Narayan Deb** and other members of the family.

The exhibition would then be complemented by collateral talks on History, Heritage, and Relevance of Durga Puja in the context of positioning of Bengal in global culture. Additionally, events such as Book Release, Debi Bandana, *Baithaki Adda*, Dance Performance and *Sruti Natok* will enrich the experience of the audience. Overall it is a cumulative effort to put into perspective the Durga Puja celebrations of Shobhabazar Rajbari.

About the artist:

Prabir Krishna Deb is an Artist and Photographer. A graduate from Indian Art College is a well-known artist of his generation. His works have earned him accolades in India and abroad. He has held solo shows in Kolkata, Delhi and Hyderabad. An artist to the core of his heart, Prabir Krishna Deb tried his luck with photography and fashion designing as well before settling down to what he does best, painting. A seventh generation descendent of Maharaja Nabakrishna Deb, Prabir Krishna has been illustrating the glorious tradition of his family for a long time in sepia, a tone he loves dearly.

About Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC)

A unit of Anamika Kala Sangam Trust (AKST), Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC) is a multi-disciplinary interactive art and creativity Centre located in Kolkata, West Bengal. It is the first in Eastern India to make Art accessible to visually impaired and differently-abled under their ‘Art for All’ initiative. Spearheaded by Richa Agarwal as its Chairperson, the 70,000 sq. ft. The centre champions the art and cultural landscape of contemporary India since November 2018. It comprises an Amphitheater, Exhibition & Learning Spaces, Dance studio, Conservation Lab, Books & Materials Library, Creative Culinary space, Craft & Design outlet and a Skill Development Maker’s section. Integrating several expressions of art and design to highlight their common creative core – KCC encourages visitors to explore, interact and design ideas on various art forms. KCC works in the areas of Capacity Building, Well-Being, Conservation & Restoration, Craft & Design, Culinary, Visual and Performing Art. It acts as a catalyst for Artistic enhancement through Displays, Presentations, Fellowships, Laboratories, Residences, Conservation, Research and Discourses.

The programs at KCC are designed on the principles of Cultural Diversity, Gender Equality, Conservation of the Environment and Inclusion of people with different abilities.

The Centre offers free entry to the public and is open between 11 am to 6 pm from Tuesday to Sunday. For more information about exhibitions and the conferences, please visit www.kolkatacentreforcreativity.org

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