

Kolkata Centre for Creativity
presents
Durga Festival- Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

To celebrate 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' that has recently made it to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity Intangible Heritage

In collaboration with Paschimbanga Sangrahalaya Samiti (West Bengal Museum Association), Centre for Studies in Museology, University of Jammu and Vedic Studies Department, Rabindra Bharati University

Kolkata 19th November, 2022: Kolkata Centre for Creativity, a multidisciplinary art space in collaboration with Paschimbanga Sangrahalaya Samiti (West Bengal Museum Association), Centre for Studies in Museology, University of Jammu and Vedic Studies Department, Rabindra Bharati University is pleased to organize the Durga Festival – intangible cultural heritage of humanity. This exhibition will be accompanied by National Seminars and Workshops to commemorate the World Heritage Week and the exhibition will be on view from 19 November to 25 November 2022, from 12:00pm – 5:00pm on the 4th floor at Kolkata Centre for Creativity.

Celebrated across the country as Durga Puja or Navratri, the festival surrounding the worship of the Mother Goddess is one of joy and piety. The same festival takes on various colours in different regions of the country from the northernmost part of Jammu and Kashmir to West Bengal in the East. While Durga has been worshipped in J&K since ancient times as the ancient Durga idol (around 1300 years old) found in Budgam district suggests, the first recorded Durga Puja in West Bengal seems to have been celebrated by Bhabananda, the ancestor of Maharaja Krishnachandra of Nadia district in or about 1606 AD.

Durga puja broke free from pillared cortices at Guptipara in Hooghly when twelve young men formed a committee and started Durga Puja, which is known as Barowari ('baaro-yaar-i' or of 12 friends) puja around in the 18th century. From being an extravagant private affair to becoming a festival for all, Durga Puja has gone through a massive evolution. The scale on which the Puja is celebrated in Kolkata has magnified exponentially over the years. The livelihoods of many artisans and craftspeople have come to depend on this festival. Clay modellers, dressers and the Malakars (The people of this community are expert shola craftsmen) who create and adorn the idols of the Goddess depend almost entirely on Durga Puja and spend months preparing for the festival. In fact, the Puja is a melting pot where people from all religions use their creativity and happily produce idols and sculptures of a largely Hindu Goddess.

UNESCO mentions on its website, "Durga Puja is seen as the best instance of the public performance of religion and art, and as a thriving ground for collaborative artists and designers... During the event, the divides of class, religion and ethnicities collapse as crowds of spectators walk around to admire the installations". Keeping up with the changing times and fashions, the very style of Durga Puja celebration has contemporized with the theme puja and its corollary, the art puja, coming into their own. The rich heritage of one of India's greatest festivals has now received greater worldwide recognition through UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Four Hundred and Ninety-Two elements from all over the world and fourteen Intangible Cultural Heritage elements from India are now on UNESCO's Representative List.

Through this exhibition KCC aims to preserve and promote this world recognised culture, and make this intangible heritage something more tangible with the hope that the audience would be able to observe and ponder upon the rich cultural heritage of Durga Puja through the plethora of interpretations that are palpable through the various exhibits that more than the dozen participating organisations/institutions/individuals have showcased.

Celebrating the festive vibes of 'Durga Pujo', Birla Industrial & Technological Museum (BITM), Kolkata will have an interactive wall that plays the iconic sounds of the festival - the beat of 'Dhaak', the chime of 'Ghonta', the reverberations of 'Knashor' and the familiar hum of the 'Shonkho' - all at the wave of the hand! Maritime researcher Swarup Bhattacharyya, who has been documenting boat-making since 1999, will be displaying Dholai/Petnai, Kosa, Goluiya/Berli boats that are connected with Durga Puja. Kumartuli Museum will display a variety of terracotta implements and children's toys which were found 4 to 6 feet below the ground during an excavation. Sundarban Anchalik Sangrahashala will display Unnati Debi. Zoology department of Calcutta University which is celebrating its centenary will display lion, elephant and other animal foetus. These are some of the highlighted artefacts and archival documents showcased in the exhibition.

“We are elated to host the exhibition 'Durga Festival - Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity' at KCC, commemorating World Heritage Week. The exhibition explores the theme of Durga Festival celebrating the fact that 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' has recently made it to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity Intangible Heritage” **said Ms. Richa Agarwal, Chairperson, Kolkata Centre for Creativity.**

List of Museums , Institution and Personal Collection

- Seikh Noor Uddin Noorani Museum of Heritage, University of Jammu
- Vedic Museum, Department of Vedic Studies, Rabindra Bharati University
- Wood Carving Work by Rabi Bhaskar
- Alpona Collection by Rabi Biswas
- Museum and Art Gallery, The Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark
- Birla Industrial Technological Museum, National council of Science Museums, govt. of India
- Society for Heritage Archaeology and Management
- Boat Collection by Dr. Swarup Bhattacharya
- Sanskrit University Museum, Sanskrit Unuversity
- Art work of Tapas Paul and Rajkumar Baidya
- Zoological survey of India, Govt. of India
- Centenary Heritage Zoological Museum, Department of Zoology, University of Calcutta
- Cooch Behar Archive
- West Bengal State Archive
- Kumortuli Museum- Tapan Pal
- Art collection of Samar Bhowmick
- Museum and Archive of Asiatic Society
- Durga Hut – Folk art work of Durga by Artisans from different parts of West Bengal



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. 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

For further information, please connect:

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