

Kolkata Centre for Creativity

In collaboration with

Government of West Bengal

Presents

“Freedom and Awakening”

Kolkata, 27th February, 2023: Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC) in collaboration with the Government of West Bengal had curated an exhibition titled ‘Freedom and Awakening’ during the opening of the Alipore Jail Museum that opened to the public on 21st September 2022.

The ongoing exhibition, which is being displayed in multiple phases, brings together prominent and promising artists from all over India to explore the ideas of freedom on the road to awakening. The fundamental ideals that gave birth to the concept of India are intellectually probed and presented artistically.

On the occasion of the 75 years of our independence, this exhibition—Freedom & Awakening—sought to encourage newer conversations around these oft-quoted ideas of ‘Freedom’ and ‘Independence’ through artworks by distinguished artists that deal with this history of awakening and finding self-expression by engaging with and interpreting these ideas afresh.

Today, KCC organized an interaction and discussion around the exhibition probing the concepts of ‘freedom’ and ‘awakening’ in contemporary life and art at the Alipore Jail Museum.

The artists who contributed to the show:

Arunima Choudhury

Arunima Choudhury completed her Diploma in Fine Arts from the Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship in Kolkata. She learnt about different mediums in Western techniques under the careful guidance of the renowned painter late Bikash Bhattacharya. She began her professional career as an art and design teacher in Patha Bhavana, Kolkata.

Frequent visits to Santiniketan and outdoor works in nature significantly influenced her art practices. Her acquaintance with KG Subramanyan led her to the path she is on today—exploring new and unconventional mediums. She works extensively with themes of nature, and mostly embodies nature in the shape of women, combining her ideas of womanhood with her understanding of nature.

Choudhury strives to remove the barriers between art and craft, and her painting on metal sheets has brought her wide recognition. Her latest exhibition, ‘The Dark Edge of Green’, curated by Nancy Adajania, was held at Emami Art in 2022.

Chandra Bhattacharjee

Chandra Bhattacharjee graduated from the Indian College of Art and Draftsmanship, Kolkata, in 1986, and completed his postgraduate degree in Fine Arts from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, in 1989.

His compositions are influenced by rural and tribal themes, particularly because of the opportunity he had of closely working with the Santhal tribe of eastern India. Thus, Bhattacharjee's canvases are languid and far removed from the urban world.

Bhattacharjee has held more than 10 solo shows till date in Kolkata, New Delhi, Bangalore, and Chennai. He has been a part of a two-person show that toured Bangalore, Mumbai, and Singapore. Amongst his group shows he has participated in more than 60 groups shows across India and abroad, and his work has been included in 'XI Triennale-India', '10th Harmony Show', Mumbai; 'Indian Contemporary Art', UK, to name a few. The gold medallist from Rabindra Bharati University (1986) also received the Taj Gaurav Award in 2008.

Bhattacharjee lives and works in Kolkata currently.

Chhatrapati Dutta

Chhatrapati Dutta earned a BFA in Painting at Government College of Arts & Crafts, University of Kolkata, in 1987, and an MFA at Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, in 1990.

Dutta is a multimedia artist, whose practice explores the issues of post-colonial India, such as the rising consumerist culture of a developing nation through the lens of the city of Kolkata. He employs subtle colours and textures to articulate complex symbols and moods, and is influenced by myriad sources. Dutta is a founder member of the Kolkata Chapter of Khoj International Artists' Association.

He has taken part in workshops, residencies, and seminars in India and abroad— notably, group shows in Kolkata and Bangalore, 2009–11, and four solo shows from 2000 to 2007. Dutta was bestowed with the Greek government scholarship for postgraduate studies, University of Athens, Greece, in 1988.

Dutta is the Principal of Government College of Art & Craft, Kolkata.

Debanjan Roy

Debanjan Roy completed his BVA and MVA from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, in the years 1998 and 2000 respectively.

He works with a range of materials including wood, bronze and fibreglass. He is especially known for examining political and social issues and observations through his sculptures of Mahatma Gandhi. His sculptural practice draws from various global artistic traditions including Pop and Shock art.

His solo exhibitions include 'The Altar of Convenience', Aicon Gallery, New York (20013–14) and 'Looking for Bapu', Gallery Akar Prakar, Kolkata (2010) among others. Some of the

group shows that he has been a part of are 'Reprise', Aicon Gallery (2011), and 'Tale of Two Cities', Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata, Mumbai and Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi (2004). He has received many awards and honours including Navonmesha Puraskar, Kolkata (2007), Nirman Award (2004), and Junior Fellowship from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

The artist lives and works in Kolkata currently.

Debasish Mukherjee

Debasish Mukherjee graduated from the Banaras Hindu University with a specialisation in Painting.

The artist, photographer and poet is renowned for his use of traditional Indian iconography and design while creating conceptual sculptures and installations. He often provides a glimpse into his personal history and his life in Chapra, Bihar. He has conducted extensive research with weavers and artisans across India, especially in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Gujarat.

His recent solo exhibitions include 'River Song' (2019) and 'A Museum Within' (2016) at Akar Prakar, New Delhi. He had also participated in numerous group shows including 'Multitudes & Assemblages' for Hub India at Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti, Turin, Italy (2022); 'Inner Life of Things: Around Anatomies and Armatures' at Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (2022); 'Legacy of Loss: Perspectives on the Partition of Bengal' at Kolkata Centre for Creativity (2021) and 'Gaj Yatra' at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi (2018) to name a few.

The artist lives and works in New Delhi currently.

Indrapramit Roy

Indrapramit Roy studied BFA in printmaking at Visva-Bharati, in 1987, and MFA in painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts of MS University of Baroda, in 1989. Subsequently, he was awarded the Inlaks Scholarship to study MA Painting at the Royal College of Art, London. He also spent a term in Berlin on an Erasmus Exchange Scholarship.

Roy's engagement with painting has always been with materiality, and his works are marked with a combination of drawing, marking, painting and overlaying actions.

His solo shows have been hosted in Aicon Gallery, USA, The Anant Art Gallery, New Delhi, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai, and Galerie-88, Kolkata. He has taken part in group shows in New York, London, Melbourne, and Yangon, and has represented India in Asian Art Exhibition in Macao and the Cairo Biennale, Cairo. Some of the honours and fellowships received by him include Govt of India Junior Research Fellowship (1993-95), the Fulbright Fellowship, USA (2004-05), and Artist-in-Residence at The Siena Art Institute, Italy (March 2013).

Roy has been teaching painting at his alma mater Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU of Baroda since 1995.

Jagannath Panda

Jagannath Panda completed his BFA from the BK College of Arts and Crafts, Bhubaneswar (1991), and MFA from the Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University, Baroda (1994). He also completed an MFA in sculpture from the Royal College of Arts London (2002).

Panda's oeuvre manifests the conflict between the human and natural world, death and desire, and incorporates issues like social and economic inequalities, urbanisation, and shifts in cultural and religious paradigms. He posits contradictory elements like this to destabilise our understanding of them.

Panda's solo shows have been in Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi (2017), Halcyon Gallery, London (2015), Frey Norris Contemporary and Modern Gallery, San Francisco (2012), among others. One of his recent solo shows was 'Visions from India', Ohio (2021). His most recent group shows were in Jeju World Natural Heritage Centre, Korea (2019), Palette Art Gallery, New Delhi (2019), and Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2018). He was a visiting researcher at Fukuoka University of Education, Japan, (1997). Panda has received several awards such as the Centre Prize, CIIC London, and All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society Award, New Delhi.

The artist lives and works in New Delhi currently.

Jogen Chowdhury

Jogen Chowdhury completed his graduation from the Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata, in 1960. Subsequently, he went on to study at Beaux-Arts de Paris, France (1965–67).

He is lauded as a master of lines. Working with various mediums, it is the figure in his work which is always the most important, conveying all that he intends to express. Chowdhury is a painter who has inspired numerous young artists of contemporary India significantly.

He has extensively exhibited across India and the world — Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, Gajah Gallery, Singapore, and Gallerie Mohanjeet, Paris among others. Similarly, his group exhibitions have been showcased at various places including Hart Gallery, Beijing, and Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, and Emami Art, Kolkata. Chowdhury has numerous awards and honours to his name, a few among those are the Banga Bibhushan award by the Government of West Bengal (2012), an honorary D. Litt by Rabindra Bharati University (2010), the Kalidas Samman by the Government of Madhya Pradesh (2001), and the Prix le France de la Jeune Peinture, Paris (1966). In 2000, he visited Japan (Arai Kampo and Tagore Foundation, Ujiie) to deliver a lecture on the art of Kala Bhavana and its relationship with Japan and Southeast Asia.

Chowdhury is currently Professor Emeritus, Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan.

Manisha Gera Baswani

Manisha Gera Baswani is a painter, photographer and writer.

Manisha's visual language is defined by an assertiveness that makes the universe of the mind visible, not just to the eye. Her compositions deal with spatial geometries and move towards an abstraction of realistic details.

Manisha has also been working on a photography project, 'Artist through the lens', for the last 17 years. The ongoing project focuses on photographing Indian and Pakistani artists in their studios and creative spaces. An extension of this is 'Postcards from Home', a project on the Partition of India. Manisha's parents came to India from Pakistan in 1947 when India was partitioned, and even now recall with love their lost 'home'. This emotion was the seed that grew into 'Postcards from Home'. The project comprises 47 artists from Pakistan and India who share a pre-Partition connection and includes short text about their reminiscences.

She also writes a regular photo essay, 'Fly on the Wall', in 'Take on Art', an Indian art quarterly, besides the occasional piece on her practice, on art and artists for various magazines and journals.

Santhosh Theparambil Velappakutty (TV Santhosh)

TV Santhosh completed his bachelor's degree in fine art, specialising in sculpture, from Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan, in 1994. He then studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts of M.S. University, Baroda, completing his master's degree in the same there, in 1997.

Heavily inspired by cinema, news media, art history and popular culture, Santhosh's art is centred on his exploration of present times and crises. He uses images from print media, television and the internet to create realist canvases replete with meaning that make strong statements about the general socio-political situation in India.

He has held several solo exhibitions in India and abroad, namely in Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, Nature Morte, New Delhi, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, Grosvenor Vadehra and Grosvenor Gallery, London, Avanthay Contemporary, Zurich, and at the Singapore Art Fair. Some of his group shows are 'Expressions at Tihar' at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi (2009), and 'My Little India' at Marella Gallery, Beijing (2009). Santhosh is the recipient of Padmini Award (Kerala Lalithakala Akademi, 2010) and Kerala Lalithakala Akademi State Award (1997), among many others.

Santhosh currently lives and works in Mumbai.

Shipra Bhattacharya

Shipra Bhattacharya, a BSc graduate, studied at Government College of Art and Craft, Calcutta University, Kolkata, in 1975. She then went on to pursue Fine Arts at the College of Visual Arts, Kolkata, 1977–80.

Her work deals with women's issues both squarely and subtly. While the female figure forms a central part of her work, it is the inner consciousness of these women that the artist focuses on, using bold colours and smooth brushwork.

Shipra Bhattacharya has had numerous solo and group shows all over India, for example 'Manthan' presented by Nitanjali Art Gallery at Galerie Romain Rolland, New Delhi, 'Miles

Apart' at Point of View, Mumbai, 'Think Small' at Art Alive, New Delhi, and 'EVEa' organised by Gallery Sanskriti at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi; and overseas in London and New York.

She lives in Kolkata currently and works from her studio at home.

Shuvaprasanna Bhattacharjee

Shuvaprasanna Bhattacharjee graduated from the Indian College of Arts, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, in 1969.

The city of Kolkata has always figured prominently in his work. Shuvaprasanna depicts varying moods of the city and its people, and all its facets that make the city distinctive. His themes come from his personal interactions with the urban space with all its sublimity and wretchedness. He was an active member of the Calcutta Painters group.

In the recent past, some of Shuvaprasanna's solo shows have been exhibited in Art Exposure, Kolkata, Art Indus, and Chawla Art Gallery, New Delhi. His recent group exhibitions were organised by Secure Giving, New Delhi, Rajya Charukala Parshad, Kolkata, and at Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai. He has travelled abroad with his exhibitions for NABC, USA (2015, 2014), and to Hong Kong (Indian Contemporary, 2013) and Singapore (Fiidaa Art, 2010) as well. Among the numerous accolades to his name, Shuvaprasanna is the recipient of Banga Bibhushan (Government of West Bengal, 2012), and has been awarded by the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, New Delhi, in 1979.

He is presently the Chairman of West Bengal Heritage Commission, Govt. of West Bengal and Executive Trustee of Arts Acre Foundation.

Tom J Vattakuzhy

Tom J Vattakuzhy completed BFA in printmaking from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, in 1996, and MFA from Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University of Baroda, in 1998. His exposure to the life and works of Benode Behari Das and Ramkinkar Baij and his close association with artists like KG Subramanyan and Somnath Hore significantly impacted him and his art.

After a stage of unlearning and relearning, a crucial step in his artistic career that significantly influenced the formation of his visual language, he devoted himself solely to his art from 2010. He is moved by situations and experiences that he encounters, and his works often carry untold emotional resonances of such experiences.

The painter, printmaker, and illustrator's works are lauded for their use of light effects. He has been the recipient of awards like AIFACS Award, New Delhi in 1998 and 1997, Kerala Lalit Kala Academy Award in 1997, National Scholarship (HRD), New Delhi in 1996, Haren Das Award, Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata in 1995. His most recent exhibition is 'Song of the Dusk' at Aicon Contemporary, New York, 2022.

Currently, he lives and works in Muvattupuzha, his hometown in Kerala.

Anjan Modak

Anjan Modak is a Kolkata-based artist. He completed his BFA and MFA in painting from Rabindra Bharati University (2007, 2009).

Modak feels that the modern society is always going through a crisis. The political and social state of the country sets his thoughts ticking and this has a very strong influence on his paintings.

His work is characterised by his long engagement with the working class, the struggles and survivals of the migrant workers in the big cities of India. For his solo exhibition 'Fragmented Life', Modak transposed the helpless situation with satire, shedding a light of absurdity on the tragedy: the irony of homeless construction workers building homes for others while drifting along sans permanence.

Modak's solo exhibitions have been 'Fragmented Life' (2020) and 'Black, White and More' (2016) at Emami Art, Kolkata. His recent group exhibitions include 'Soma Das and Anjan Modak: Between the Self and Silhouettes', Emami Art, Kolkata (2022), 'Constellations', Emami Art, Kolkata (2021), and at Tamarind Art Gallery, New York (2008). He is the recipient of Creative Art Award, 2009.

Asif Imran

Asif Imran is a visual artist from Lalgola, Murshidabad. He completed MFA from Rabindra Bharati University.

His creativity finds expression through collages of newspaper cuttings, recontextualising lost objects, and taking and manipulating photography. He is particularly interested in exploring colonial architecture. His works often reveal the different socio-economic issues faced by common people in their everyday lives.

For his multidisciplinary project 'Mahanagar (The City)', Imran focused on the colonial and the modern architectures of Kolkata, highlighting the city's structural features, settlements, livelihoods and socio-political realities in different areas of the city. Asif collected pictures, videos and sound bites from around the city and brought them together digitally and manually.

He is a recipient of the KCC fellowship for 'Mahanagar'. Imran has exhibited as a part of Hyundai Motor India Foundation's initiative 'Art for Hope', and is a recipient of the HMIF 'Art for Hope' grant.

Bholanath Rudra

Bholanath Rudra is an art graduate of Rabindra Bharati University, and a member of the Society of Contemporary Artists, Kolkata.

Rudra represents humanity's deep crisis arising from the destruction of nature and resultant ecological imbalance. He hopes to see himself as part of the legacy of Abanindranath Tagore and Shyamal Dutta Roy, two great watercolourists of Bengal.

He is known for his compelling, large-format watercolours. He has developed his signature style using different hues of colour, layer after layer, to explore the watercolour's soft, luminous and transparent quality.

Rudra's solo shows have been exhibited at Society of Contemporary Artists (2018), and Academy of Fine Arts (2013). He was also a part of the Birla Academy of Fine Arts exhibition in 2018.

Deepak Poulse

Deepak Poulse is a native of Thrissur, Kerala. He completed his BFA from Government Fine Arts College, Thrissur, and MFA from Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan.

Poulse creates vibrant paintings in acrylic, watercolour, gouache and oil media. The painter subtly infuses animate and inanimate objects while capturing the encounters in nature, reminding us that the world does not belong to only humans.

'Echoes of the Absolute', Lalithakala Academy Art Gallery, Kozhikode (2022), was his first solo exhibition. His gouache works both celebrate the primitive bond between man and nature, and mourn its slow disappearance. The realm that he conjures up teeters between the real and the utopic.

Poulse received the K. Karunakaran Memorial Scholarship (instituted by Kerala Lalithakala Akademi for art students) for the year 2018–19.

Santanu Debnath

Santanu Debnath was born in a village in Bardhaman, West Bengal. He did his BFA in Painting from The Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship, Kolkata (2018) and completed MFA in Painting from Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata (2021).

Debnath's artworks bring together moments of a lost idyll suspended in time. He incorporates a melancholy to this leisure, a pensiveness about the acute financial crisis, the loss of work and education that hangs like a mist around the pastoral scenes.

His solo show 'A Simple Life' was exhibited at Emami Art, Kolkata (2021). The subject of his paintings come from the village where he grew up. He represents the inherently simple lifestyle of the people. He composes their work, livelihood, gestural attributes in a narrative and insofar simplistic manner.

He was the subject of the solo show at Nippon Gallery, Mumbai (2020), and his group exhibitions include 'Imaginarium', Emami Art, Kolkata (2021), 'Commemorating 71', Fort William, Kolkata (2021), and the Annual Exhibition of Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata (2019–20). Debnath has won the Gita Das Award, Government College of Art and Craft Annual Exhibition (2019) and is the recipient of the Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Scholarship, GCAC annual exhibition (2020–21).

Sayantana Samanta

Sayantana Samanta hails from Hooghly, Kolkata. He completed his bachelors from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata (2015), and masters in Sculpture from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati (2017).

Samanta has been working on global agrarian issues. His prime intention is to create a visual dialogue that advocates the need for socio-ecological sustainability and how the amalgamation of land degradation, rapid urbanisation and climate challenge affects food security.

Growing up, he witnessed firsthand how his village was converted into an industrial suburb wrongfully. Focusing on illegal land acquisition, his works have incorporated industrial material such as concrete, iron, brass, fibreglass, clay powder, and fertilisers.

'The Lay of the Land', Exhibit 320, New Delhi (2020), was one of his latest exhibitions.

Smarak Roy

Smarak Roy is a Kolkata-based artist. He completed his BFA and MFA from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati in 2016 and 2018 respectively.

Roy is someone who's been practising fine arts since childhood. Now he tries to depict everyday life and qualities of people through his art by merging both classical and primitive styles.

His work is characteristically simplistic, animating and vibrant. He mostly works with subject matters relating to daily life happenings which covers social, political, and cultural topics. He has been extensively experimenting with new mediums throughout his art career, and Roy has often used several mediums together in order to achieve a unique quality in his works.

Roy's exhibitions include a workshop exhibition on Netaji's life at Kolkata (NGMA, 2021), online solo exhibition at AM Art Studio, Kolkata (2020), and 'Bahari', a group exhibition, at GC Laha Centenary Fine Arts Gallery, Kolkata (2019).

Soma Das

Soma Das completed her BVA and MFA from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata (2007, 2009).

Through Das' art, we can vividly imagine the atmosphere and culture of the Mughal rule—she is greatly impacted by that period.

Her paintings don't only communicate the ancient age but also showcase modern-day people's lives. The art mainly portrays the different natures of people in soft subdued colours. Das enjoys drawing human beings in different situations with varied emotions. The thoughts of the artist are realistic and anyone can relate to and easily understand them.

Her most recent group exhibition was 'Soma Das and Anjan Modak: Between the Self and Silhouettes', Emami Art, Kolkata (2022).

Suman Chandra

Suman Chandra is a freelance visual artist based in Santiniketan. He completed his MFA from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati in 2017.

The onset of Chandra's interest in researching coal mines happened during his MFA days, focusing his artistic pursuits around the landscape and land politics of coal mine areas. The years of field trips and exploration of these complex, yet mesmerising, landscapes have enhanced his research methods, enabling him to interpolate the more nuanced understanding into his artwork.

He has received the KCC Art Fellowship 2021–22 for his research project 'Coal-Mine Areas: Landscape and Behaviour of Material and People'. He intends to look deep into how the transformation of a natural landscape into an artificial landscape affects the lives of the local residents physically, psychologically, culturally, environmentally, and economically.

Chandra is the recipient of the MHRD scholarship (2018), and the Greenshields grant (2017). Currently, he is working on collaborating with the miners of Dahibari and Basantimata collieries for a project.

Suman Dey

Suman Dey is a Kolkata-based artist.

This self-taught artist believes in improvising his ideas to create attractive art pieces rather than using the basic tools of institutional training only. The arbitrariness of his strategy has taken a definitive shape from his own evolved curriculum of being a self-taught artist. Although he works in the non-representational language of abstract art, the link between the image and the world in his paintings has never been completely severed.

His non-adherence to the basic tools of institutional training has led him to improvise his mode of space construction with a sense of precariousness which he has made into a challenging exercise. Evident in the show 'Fluid Boundary' at Emami Art (2020), his abstract canvases show the contradiction between his quest for the pure form and his concerns about the crises of the world.

Dey has featured in several group exhibitions in various cities of India, like Kolkata and Pune. He has had solo exhibitions in places like Chemould Art Gallery, Kolkata.

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 of 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 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 contact

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