



**KOLKATA CENTRE
FOR CREATIVITY**
A unit of Anamika Kala Sangam Trust

emami*
FOUNDATION

**7th Edition of
KCC's Annual Symposium**

VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM VII



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KCC's Annual Symposium

VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM VII

Co-programmed by
Dr Shwetal A. Patel & Ushmita Sahu

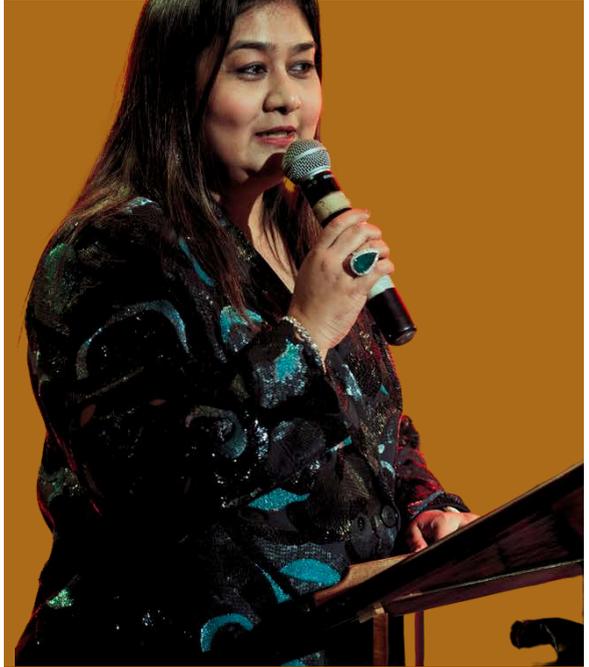
Art
Craft
Design
Ecology
Community
Textile
Architecture

Theme:
The Earth Remembers
A Creative Living Archive

16 – 17 January 2025

KCC Amphitheatre

About VK VII



This annual gathering at KCC examines the notion of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The World is One Family) and a vision of holistic development and respect for all forms of life and practice. The VK VII Symposium explores holistic creativity, cross-disciplinary intersectionality, and policy solutions. Leading voices from ecologically-driven art, design, architecture, and the public sector converge for two days of dialogue and workshops. Alongside and as part of VK VII, the group exhibition *Convergences: A Shared Ground — Lineages, Practices, Futures* presented by Emami Art brings together a wide spectrum of artistic practices from the eastern and north-eastern regions of India.

CURATORIAL NOTE

THE EARTH REMEMBERS

The Earth remembers –
in bark and bone,
in thread and tune,
in the echoes of those who make.

It remembers in hands that harvest,
in songs carried through generations,
in walls weathered by memory.

This is not a forgotten past
but a living presence –
a creative, living archive,
etched into the land
and the spirit of our times.



Building on the theme of the sixth edition 'Intersections & Confluences', VK VII will focus on a region underrepresented in India's cultural mainstream: Eastern and in particular, Northeastern India. This vast and diverse geography—home to vibrant indigenous communities, old and newly expanding urban centres, rich biodiversity, and deeply rooted artistic and craft traditions—offers vital, alternative models of sustainability, cultural resilience, and collective living. VK VII seeks to amplify these perspectives, contributing to a broader vision of inclusive development aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG) 2030 Agenda.

VK VII, *The Earth Remembers: A Creative Living Archive*, explores the deep and often overlooked cultural, ecological, and artistic legacies of Eastern and Northeastern India. At its core is the idea of the creative living archive—a framework that foregrounds memory not as a static repository, but as a living, evolving force embedded in land, body, community, and practice. This edition also highlights Kolkata, a city that not only bridges East and Northeast India geographically and culturally but is home to the largest Northeastern diaspora outside the region. Kolkata serves as a crucial site where layered histories, migrant experiences, and hybrid creative expressions converge and evolve.

VK VII is both a celebration and a call to action. It invites us to listen to the Earth—not as passive observers, but as active participants in a living, breathing archive that remembers, resists, and renews. Together, we envision a future where cultural memory, ecological well-being, and youth empowerment are deeply interwoven.

Dr Shwetal A. Patel

Co-programmer, VK VII





We launched Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam in 2019 to explore the relationship between man and the environment through the minds of leading creators and changemakers. We're now in the seventh edition – and it's bigger than ever before!

Every year I see my team collaborating to bring some of the very best minds in the industry to KCC, encouraging effective conversation and cross-pollination of ideas. It is now evident that this symposium has become integral to the vision and mission of KCC. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — rooted in Kolkata, open to the world, and driven by the conviction that creativity must serve the collective. With this annual conference, KCC remains dedicated to nurturing platforms that recognise the labour of culture, and empower new forms of knowledge production, bridging tradition and innovation.

I am proud of how far we have come and whole-heartedly believe in the power we hold when we listen to one another with curiosity, empathy, and an urge to learn, and share our collective wisdom with those who need it.

Richa Agarwal

Chairperson | KCC

Richa Agarwal, Chairperson of Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC) and CEO of Emami Art, is a distinguished patron and art connoisseur dedicated to preserving Bengal's artistic and cultural heritage while embracing its contemporary evolution. She is the President of the Ladies Study Group for 2025-26 and a distinguished board member of Asia Society India Centre, working ceaselessly on contemporary art, cultural inclusivity and entrepreneurship in South Asia. Her vision for KCC and Emami Art focuses on fostering a deeper appreciation for art, crafts, and cultural practices. She has spearheaded initiatives that span multiple disciplines and approaches, from contemporary and cutting-edge art practices to inclusive programmes.



Since the first edition of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam in 2019, I have been committed to nurturing this platform as a space where diverse knowledge systems, creative practices, and regional voices can meet on equal terms. Each year, the conference has grown in depth and purpose, but this seventh edition feels especially urgent. The Earth Remembers calls on us to listen more closely—to landscapes, to communities, and to the fragile yet resilient cultural lineages that shape Eastern and North Eastern India.

My hope for VK VII is that it becomes a catalyst for rethinking how we understand archives, not as static collections but as living, breathing processes carried in bodies, rituals, ecologies, and creative labour. This edition aspires to widen the circle of dialogue, to bring youth, artisans, scholars, and policymakers into meaningful exchange, and to foreground the region's profound contributions to sustainability and collective well-being.

As we gather in Kolkata, I am reminded that our task is not only to remember but to imagine futures where cultural memory, creativity, and ecological care are inseparable.



CO-PROGRAMMER
of VK VII

**Dr. Shwetal
Ashvin Patel**

Dr Shwetal Ashvin Patel holds a PhD from the University of Southampton (2020) and works at the intersection of visual art and interdisciplinary research. A founding member of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India, he serves in the area of international programmes and partnerships. He is a guest lecturer at institutions including Zürich University of the Arts, the Royal College of Art, and the University of Exeter. He also serves as a trustee of Milton Keynes Museum, the Kakar Centre for Psychoanalysis & Culture, and the Coventry Biennial. He is currently developing his first feature documentary on the late Sudhir Kakar.



Returning as co-programmer for the second year, I am deeply encouraged by the momentum we built together last year, when over 200 participants gathered for two days of thoughtful exchange. Since its inception in 2019, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam has envisioned a space where diverse knowledge systems and creative practices meet without hierarchy.

With this seventh edition, we turn toward the living forms of memory that continue to shape Eastern and North-Eastern India. These memories exceed written record; they are held in materials, landscapes, gestures, and intergenerational practices. This year's focus on archives, community, and the local asks us to attend to memory not as something static, but as something situated, embodied, and continually renewed through people and place.

We are honoured to convene an exceptional group of speakers whose work bridges research, craft, ecology, and community-led knowledge. My hope is that VK VII deepens the conversations we have begun, broadens participation, and strengthens our collective recognition of the cultural and creative labour that sustains the worlds we inherit and the futures we imagine.

CO-PROGRAMMER
of VK VII

Ushmita Sahu

Director & Head Curator
Emami Art | KCC Visual Arts

Ushmita Sahu, Director and Head Curator of Emami Art in Kolkata, has a background in fine arts from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, and has garnered extensive experience as an independent curator, artist, art writer, and mentor before joining Emami Art in 2021. She boasts an impressive portfolio of national and international curatorial projects and has participated in seminars, symposiums, and talks at esteemed institutions, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Sahu frequently lectures at visual art and design colleges including NIFT and NID. She is a recipient of the India Foundation for the Arts research grant, which she used for her research on Riten Mozumdar.

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

DAY 1 - Friday, 16 JAN 2026

10:30 AM ONWARDS

Registration

11:00 – 11:40 AM

Welcome Addresses & Introduction to VK VII

Richa Agarwal, Chairperson KCC
Dr Shwetal A. Patel, Co-Programmer of VK VII &
Ushmita Sahu, Director Emami Art
Welcoming the Speakers + Artisans of VK VII

11:45 – 12:25 PM

Keynote address: Bijoy Jain

There is No Loss
(Architect and Founder, Studio Mumbai)

12:30 – 01:20 PM

Session 1: Dr Ritu Sethi

The Absent Archive: Writing Craft and the Historiography of Making in India
(Scholar & advocate of intangible cultural heritage, editor of Global InCH Journal of Living Heritage)

01:25 – 02:25 PM

Lunch Break

2:30 – 3:20 PM

Session 2: Deepthi Sasidharan

Making Archives: Recent Memory Infrastructures in India
(Art historian, curator, and Founder-Director, Eka Archiving)

3:25 – 4:15 PM

Session 3: Deepika Sorabjee

Expanding East x North East: Conservation Strategies and More
(Doctor, writer, and former head of arts and culture, Tata Trusts)

4:20 – 5:10 PM

Session 4: Gustav Imam

**From Local Roots to Global Reach:
The Transformative Power of Local Museums in Global Cultural Heritage Discourse**
(Convener, INTACH - Hazaribagh Chapter and Curator, Sanskriti Museum and Art Gallery, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand)
*Alongside a demonstration of Sohrai and Khovar painting by artisans **Putli Ganju** and **Anita Devi***

5:20 – 6:00 PM

Panel Discussion: All Speakers from Day 1

Living Archives: Craft, Memory, and the Ethics of Preservation
Moderator: **Dr Shwetal A. Patel**

6:10 – 7:00 PM

Walkthrough of the VK VII exhibition

Convergences: A Shared Ground — Lineages, Practices, Futures

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

DAY 2 - Saturday, 17 JAN 2026

11:00 – 11:15 AM

Address and Summing Up of Day 1

Dr Shwetal A. Patel

(Co-programmer, VK VII; Founding member, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, former consultant to the Kochi Biennale Foundation)

11:20 – 12:15 PM

Session 5: Nandita Palchoudhuri

Crafting a Future

(Social entrepreneur, Ex Chairperson and trustee, India Foundation for the Arts)

12:20 – 01:05 PM

Session 6: Ruma Choudhury

কাগজ কথা | Stories of Paper: The Politics of Found Fibre

(Contemporary artist and independent researcher)

01:10 – 02:10 PM

Lunch Break

02:15 – 03:05 PM

Session 6: Radhi Parekh

Nettle | Thebvo: Wild Fibre of Nagaland

(Founder Director of ARTISANS' Centre for the Creative Arts)

03:10 – 03:55 PM

Session 7: Jatwang Wangsa

The House of Stories: A Museum of and by the Wancho People

(Writer, educator, and initiator of the first-ever Wancho ethnographic museum)

04:00 – 04:45 PM

Session 8: Udit Mittal

When Techniques Travel: A Human Map of Shared Knowledge in the Sundarbans

(Principal Architect of QX Design known for its contextual, bioclimatic, and material-driven design approach)

04:55 – 05:55 PM

Round Table: All Speakers from Day 1 & 2

Lineages to Futures: Reimagining Knowledge, Making, and Memory

Moderator: **Dr Shwetal A. Patel** and **Ushmita Sahu**

Symposium summation by Dr Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty

(Retd. IAS officer; President, People's Council of Education; former Chairman, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi)

06:00 – 06:10 PM

Vote of Thanks

Ushmita Sahu

(Co-programmer, VK VII; Director and Head Curator, Emami Art and KCC Visual Arts)

Slot 1 | 11:30 – 1:00 pm

Sohrai & Khovar Workshop

Slot 2 | 4:00 – 5:30 pm

Celebrating Indigenous Artistry

Facilitated by artisans **Putli Ganju** and **Anita Devi** (REGISTRATION REQUIRED)



MEET THE SPEAKERS

BIJOY JAIN
DEEPIKA SORABJEE
DEEPTHI SASIDHARAN
GUSTAV IMAM
JATWANG WANGSA
DR KALYAN KUMAR CHAKRAVARTY
NANDITA PALCHOU DHURI
RADHI PAREKH
DR RITU SETHI
RUMA CHOUDHURY
UDIT MITTAL

Day 1

Friday, 16 JAN 2026

01

There is no loss

- Bijoy Jain

02

**The Absent Archive: Writing
Craft and the Historiography
of Making in India**

- Dr Ritu Sethi

03

**Making Archives: Recent
Memory Infrastructures in
India**

- Deepthi Sasidharan

04

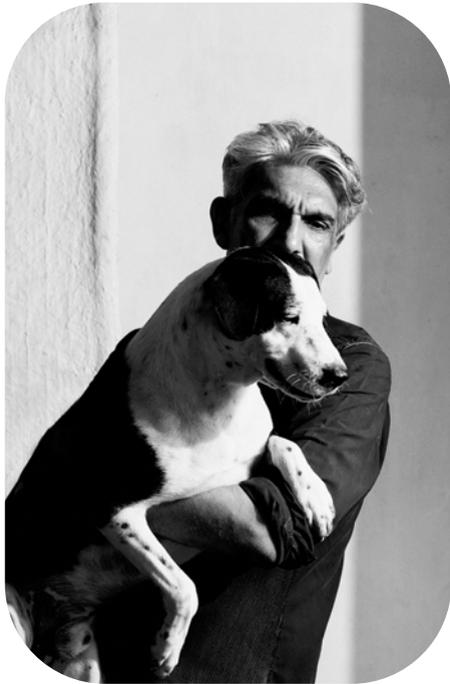
**Expanding East x North
East: Conservation
Strategies & More**

- Deepika Sorabjee

05

**From Local Roots to Global Reach: The
Transformative Power of Local Museums in
Global Cultural Heritage Discourse**

- Gustav Imam



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Bijoy Jain

Bijoy Jain trained as an architect and started his practice in 1996. He founded Studio Mumbai in 2005 as an interdisciplinary practice. His work explores the boundaries between architecture, art, and the notion of movement, body as material and making. His works are part of the collection at Foundation Cartier and Centre Pompidou, Paris; SF MoMa; and MAAS, Sydney. In 2017, he received the RIBA International Fellowship in London, the Alvar Aalto medal in 2021, and the Prix AMO in 2025 for the winery Chateau Beaucastel described as "a sublime project" by the jury.

ABOUT SESSION

DAY 1 | 16 JAN 2026 | 11:45 – 12:25 pm

Topic: **There is no loss**

Synopsis: Using gravity as a source of energy in movement of the body, resonant to the presence of prima materia made from water, air, and light.

An alchemy conjured between entities, humankind in nature, nature in humankind in exchange for their mutual affection and expression.

The pursuit to be plumb to the centre of gravity in this rarefied field of consciousness, is where possibility exists for the transient body to dissolve in time and space. An apparition appearing to disappear and vice versa, to be present to this state of no loss is where the work is.



SPEAKER

Dr Ritu Sethi

Dr Ritu Sethi is the editor of Global InCH Journal of Living Heritage and oversees the Asia InCH Encyclopaedia. Her research interests examine aspects of pre and post-colonial cultural histories of the arts, crafts and textiles, their continuities and interpretations in policy, design, fashion, and the everyday. Her publications include *Handmade for the 21st Century: Traditional Indian Textiles*; *Embroidering Futures - Repurposing the Kantha*; and *Painters, Poets, Performers – The Patuas of Bengal*. She serves on the advisory board of the National Crafts Museum, New Delhi; Asia Society India – Arts and Culture; and on committees in Japan, UK and Europe.

ABOUT SESSION

DAY 1 | 16 JAN 2026 | 12:30 – 1:20 pm

Topic: **The Absent Archive: Writing Craft and the Historiography of Making in India**

Synopsis: This session examines the long-overlooked intellectual history of India's craft traditions and the complex processes by which they have been represented, classified, interpreted within pedagogical frameworks and policy. While India's artisanal practices constitute some of the most enduring systems of making in the world, their historiography remains fragmentary. This absence is not merely a lacuna, but a reflection of knowledge hierarchies that have historically privileged monumental art and architecture over the lived practices of craft communities.

The talk traces the pre-colonial period; the colonial era which redefined craft as economic specimens and ethnographic objects; the nationalist movement which recast craft as the moral, aesthetic, and economic foundation of swaraj; and the post-independence decades that embedded craft within planning, policy and design education. The talk concludes by proposing the contours of a renewed historiography grounded in material evidence, oral narratives of makers and users, institutional histories, the intertwined trajectories of intervention, design and more, to offer a more capacious and equitable account of making in India.



SPEAKER

Deepthi Sasidharan

Deepthi Sasidharan is an art historian, curator, and the Founder-Director of Eka Archiving, India's leading cultural consultancy working across museums, corporate archives, heritage, and training. Under her leadership, notable projects by Eka include Rezwan Razack Museum of Indian Paper Money, Bengaluru; Dr Savita Museum and Library, Porbandar; and Emami Legacy Center, Kolkata, among others. A Fulbright and Fundação Oriente scholar, and INK Fellow, Sasidharan has extensively researched, curated, and written on 19th-century photography, contributing to the understanding of visual culture in colonial India. Her work bridges scholarship, design, and storytelling in the cultural sector.

ABOUT SESSION

DAY 1 | 16 JAN 2026 | 2:30 – 3:20 pm

Topic: **Making Archives: Recent Memory Infrastructures in India**

Synopsis: Archives are dynamic cultural institutions. They form the bedrock of authenticity and historical information and are more important than ever before in present times where we stand a real chance of facts being presented as fragmented, anecdotal, or overlooked altogether. Ranging from the personal to the institutional and serving needs from preserving memory to compliance, archives continue to be vital cultural assets.

This session examines how archives are conceptualised and established in India and why they are important. With case studies and examples drawn from Eka's extensive work ranging from fashion and photography archives to an increasing slew of corporate archives, we look at the stakeholders that birth a new archive, the infrastructures and processes intrinsic to an archive and how archives fare at the forefront of new and emerging digital technologies.



SPEAKER

Deepika Sorabjee

Deepika Sorabjee holds an MBBS from the Grant Medical College and the Sir J.J. Group of Hospitals, Mumbai. She has worked primarily in arts programming and has written on contemporary art for various publications, online sites, newspapers, and art journals. Between 2014 and 2023, she led the Arts & Culture Portfolio at Tata Trusts, helping programs in conservation, art education, and performing arts. A member of several juries, she was also the founder-trustee of the non-profit Mumbai Art Room, and on the Board of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai (2015-2023).

ABOUT SESSION

DAY 1 | 16 JAN 2026 | 3:25 – 4:15 pm

Topic: Expanding East x North East: Conservation Strategies & More

Synopsis: This session addresses greenfield geographies through programme design that translates beyond art conservation and region. How does one lay first steps in art infrastructure with needed urgency, yet build integrity and continuity?

Using the model of establishing the conservation centre – now called KCC Conservation Lab – at Kolkata Centre for Creativity, as one of the five institutes in the Tata Trusts' Art Conservation Initiative, the talk addresses how one approaches sector expansion through institution – something that is needed to imagine beyond programme and ensure growth, and how Covid-19 helped restructure a vital aspect of the programme and subsequently the quick expansion into Sikkim. This translates the thinking and programme design beyond a programme, understanding the constraints ever present in the arts, and frames the approach to any art institution building.



SPEAKER

Gustav Imam

Gustav Imam is the Convener of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage - Hazaribagh Chapter and Curator of the Sanskriti Museum and Art Gallery, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand. Drawn to the critical potentials of museum practices in preserving indigenous cultures, he holds an MA in Museum Studies from the University of East Anglia (UK) and has done a Museum Placement at the University of Cambridge's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. His work with the Tribal Women Artists Cooperative gave him a chance to engage with the tribal communities practicing Khovar and mural painting traditions in Hazaribagh.

ABOUT SESSION

DAY 1 | 16 JAN 2026 | 4:20 – 5:10 pm

Topic: From Local Roots to Global Reach: The Transformative Power of Local Museums in Global Cultural Heritage Discourse

Synopsis: This talk discusses the pivotal role of local museums in shaping global cultural heritage discourse. Through a case study of the Sanskriti Museum and Art Gallery in Hazaribagh, this research demonstrates how local museums can serve as catalysts for community-led cultural heritage preservation initiatives, while also contributing to global conversations around cultural heritage protection. By examining the intersections of local and global perspectives, this paper highlights the transformative power of local museums in promoting cultural diversity, inclusivity, and sustainability. Ultimately, this research argues that local museums are essential stakeholders in the global cultural heritage landscape, and that their voices and perspectives are critical to shaping a more equitable and resilient cultural heritage framework.

This session will have artisans from Hazaribagh demonstrating **Sohrai** and **Khovar** art alongside Gustav Imam's presentation.

MEET THE ARTISANS

supporting **Gustav Imam's** session



Anita Devi

Anita Devi is a Khovar artist from the village of Kharati in the Barkagaon Valley, well-known for its Khovar paintings. Born in a potter's family, she learned the art of making Khovar paintings from her mother, late Jasodha Devi. Anita Devi has developed herself as a professional artist travelling and exhibiting her art across India and abroad through the Tribal Women Artists Cooperative (TWAC) under the guidance of Padmashri Bulu Imam. Recently she painted a large Khovar mural at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Kolkata, along with Putli Ganju.



Putli Ganju

Putli Ganju is an internationally acclaimed artist who has exhibited and worked widely in Australia, Europe, England, and Canada. Taught by her mother Bigni, Putli Ganju paints in the Ganju style and has since 1995 has been a resident of the Tribal Women Artists' Cooperative founded by Bulu Imam at Sanskriti Centre in Hazaribagh. Her Sohrai mural *Hunting Scene* is placed in the Art Gallery of New South Wales; *Animals* in the Australian Museum, Sydney; and *Jungle Scene* was acquired for the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Celebrating Indigenous Artistry

SOHRAI & KHOVAR WORKSHOP

Facilitated by Putli Ganju & Anita Devi

as part of
Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam VII

17 January 2026

Slot 1: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Slot 2: 4:00 – 5:30 pm

KCC Gallery Store

DAY 2 | 17 JAN 2026

Celebrating Indigenous Artistry: Sohrai & Khovar Workshop

ABOUT WORKSHOP

This workshop offers an introduction to the Sohrai and Khovar – the traditional art forms of Jharkhand, originating from Hazaribagh's forest villages. While Sohrai paintings are related to the festival of Sohrai which is celebrated during the autumn months after the Hindu festival of Diwali, Khovar paintings specifically relate marriage rituals among the tribes in the region – both art forms having matriarchal roots and being passed on from mothers to daughters.

Guided by expert artisans from Hazaribagh coordinated by Shafaque Meerza, an associate of TWAC and Life Member of INTACH, participants will get to know the history and evolution of these ancient mural styles and create their own Sohrai and Khovar artworks on paper using natural earth colours.

Slot 1

11:30 – 1:00 pm

Slot 2

4:00 – 5:30 pm

Day 2

Saturday, 17 JAN 2026

01

Crafting a Future

- Nandita Palchoudhuri

02

কাগজ কথা | Stories of Paper: The Politics of Found Fibre

- Ruma Choudhury

03

Nettle | Thebvo: Wild Fibre of Nagaland

- Radhi Parekh

04

The House of Stories: A Museum of and by the Wancho People

- Jatwang Wangsa

05

When Techniques Travel: A Human Map of Shared Knowledge in the Sundarbans

- Udit Mittal

06

Symposium Summation

- Dr Kalyan
Kumar Chakravarty



SPEAKER

Nandita Palchoudhuri

Nandita Palchoudhuri is a social entrepreneur curating and consulting internationally, in the field of Indian folk art, craft, and performance practices. Through her work, large scale craft-based projects using Chandannagar lights, sholapith sculpture, giant animal puppets, Kumartuli clay images, storytelling scrolls of Naya have been presented across India and internationally. A Clore-Chevening Scholar in Cultural Leadership, Palchoudhuri is Ex Chairperson and Trustee, India Foundation for the Arts; Member, FICCI - Art; and Culture Committee, Ford Foundation - International Initiative for Social Philanthropy; Trustee, Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta School of Music, and Alliance Francaise, amongst others.

ABOUT SESSION

DAY 2 | 17 JAN 2026 | 11:20 – 12:15 pm

Topic: **Crafting a Future**

Synopsis: Nandita Palchoudhuri through her work creates cutting edge functional applications using traditional skills to address a contemporary social need and explores the possibility of art to reexamine the old and create new relationships between social engagement and aesthetic gesture – a process that helps to regenerate the craft as well as provide sustainable livelihood for the artisan.

This presentation will look at some major crafts of Bengal and discuss through case studies the innovations implemented systemically to help adapt the form to the demands of the contemporary market and its tastes.



SPEAKER

Ruma Choudhury

Contemporary artist and independent researcher Ruma Choudhury holds a BFA and an MFA in Painting from Kala Bhavan, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan. Notable group exhibitions include *Material as Metaphors: A Dialogue of Art Forms*, NGMA, Kolkata, 2025; *There are Tides in the Body*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2024; *All That is Hidden*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2024; *Departure*, Ganges Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2020; while her solo performances include *h-airy strokes* at Gallery Onkaf, New Delhi and *Multi Hues*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 2018. She received the India Artist Relief Fund 2021 and the Musui Art Foundation Scholarship 2020 among others.

ABOUT SESSION

DAY 2 | 17 JAN 2026 | 12:20 – 1:05 pm

Topic: **কাগজ কথা | Stories of Paper: The Politics of Found Fibre**

Synopsis: This session takes the audience through Ruma Choudhury's oeuvre as an artist and researcher. Choudhury's artistic practice involves collecting and documenting natural materials which are generally considered waste – natural fibres discarded after human use, rainwater, tree bark, stones, skin of insects and animals, bird nests, dry flowers, and so on – and then constructing these archives of found materials into an abstract narration, thus communicating and responding to them. This session approaches paper-making as an act of resistance, remembering, and reinvention. Taking a stand against human greed and overconsumption that thoroughly depletes natural resources, the artist replaces industrially made paper with organic paper that she makes herself, finding potential and promise in the minute details of nature which may or may not be tangible or visible in everyday life. With examples from Choudhury's practice, this presentation highlights the way she records and recycles these collected materials.



SPEAKER

Radhi Parekh

Radhi Parekh is Founder Director of ARTISANS' Centre for the Creative Arts. She is a graduate of the National Institute of Design (NID), India with a career in design spanning two decades, three continents, and evolving technologies, championing localization to build truly global products. From designing and illustrating books for children at Usborne Publishing, London; to multimedia games for children in San Francisco; to the first web applications at Oracle; and online user-experiences at eBay/PayPal, she is a passionate advocate of human-centered design. Parekh teaches design at premiere institutions in India.

ABOUT SESSION

DAY 2 | 17 JAN 2026 | 2:15 – 3:05 pm

Topic: Nettle | Thebvo: Wild Fibre of Nagaland

Synopsis: At one of the highest and coldest places in the hills of Nagaland, stinging nettle is foraged from the wild, and tamed, soft enough to be worn. Indigenous women of the Chakhesang tribe from Leshemi, a remote Naga village in Northeast India, weave nettle or thebvo into shawls on back-strap looms, in a process that remains unchanged to this day. The forest-to-fibre-to fabric-and-fashion journey is a zero-carbon-footprint one. The talk illustrates the process with a video accompanied by their song, and step-by-step images.

This session also introduces a value-based model where ARTISANS' Sustainable Development Foundation (ASDF) x Leshemi Origins, is working to co-create products in Leshemi. ASDF supports an environmentally conscious lifestyle beyond Nagaland, while reinforcing these traditional values within a fast-changing frontier state. As the four-lane highway connects the world to Nagaland, what choices will the people of Leshemi make to direct their own future, as change comes to this last frontier?



SPEAKER

Jatwang Wangsa

Writer and educator Jatwang Wangsa teaches at the government school in Kamhua Noknu, Arunachal Pradesh. He has contributed to *Folktales of Arunachal Pradesh*, *The Heroes of Arunachal*, and *Arun Utsav: The Festivals of Arunachal Pradesh* at workshops by SCERT and ISSE, and the Wancho third-language textbook; co-authored *Myth, Memory and Folktales of the Wancho Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh* pub. Niyogi Books (2024); and was a local collaborator for the Endangered Wooden Architecture Project focusing on traditional Wancho houses, supported by Oxford Brookes University, London. He initiated Tamkai-Kam, the first-ever ethnographic museum dedicated to preserving Wancho traditions and culture.

ABOUT SESSION

DAY 2 | 17 JAN 2026 | 3:10 – 3:55 pm

Topic: The House of Stories: A Museum of and by the Wancho People

Synopsis: Wancho culture is at risk due to external influences and modernisation, coupled with the ever-present fear of losing ancestral knowledge, folklore, craft skills, and identity. This session delves into the making of Tamkai-Kam, a museum like no other in Arunachal Pradesh, expected to inculcate in the present generation the importance of traditional skills and knowledge systems.

Established in 2025 in Kamhua Noknu, Longding, Arunachal Pradesh, Tamkai-Kam (The House of Stories) is the first-ever Wancho ethnographic museum – an initiative originally undertaken by Jatwang Wangsa and later supported by the people of Kamhua Noknu. It represents a visionary effort to preserve the rich Wancho stories, history, folk songs, and oral narratives through the display of traditional cultural objects – art forms, artifacts, basketry, wood carvings, architecture, and even seed banking of locally available edible seeds as supported by Balipara Foundation, Assam. This session looks upon the act of archiving as a cultural bridge between generations, strengthening identity, and ancestral connection.



SPEAKER

Udit Mittal

Udit Mittal is the Principal Architect of QX Design, an award-winning architecture practice based in Kolkata, known for its contextual, bioclimatic, and material-driven design approach. An alumnus of School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, with over a decade of practice, Mittal's work has been widely published and celebrated across India's design community, advocating for architecture that is responsible and contextual. He has won multiple accolades including Glitz Design Honour 2025 – Hospitality Architecture; Smart Design Conclave Winner 2025 – Sustained Ecology & Hospitality; and Best Hospitality Architect – Sustainable Design, for the Sunderbans project.

ABOUT SESSION

DAY 2 | 17 JAN 2026 | 4:00 – 4:45 pm

Topic: **When Techniques Travel: A Human Map of Shared Knowledge in the Sunderbans**

Synopsis: This talk explores how building knowledge travels—across continents, generations, and networks of people—illustrating that architecture evolves not from a single origin but through continuous exchange. It reflects on the role of the architect as a medium in this larger game, weaving ideas into local contexts without claiming ownership.

The first strand of this story is the shallow dome, seen in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, where masons called them "Arbi domes." The second strand is the thatching technique, inspired by Indonesian alang-alang grass panels. The village of Purba Sridharpur has widely adopted bamboo-thatch roofs with mud walls, innovating locally by reinforcing walls with sari fabric to prevent cracking. Finally, ferrocement is included as a third, smaller thread, which has informed certain structural experiments and floor slab designs.

Together, these stories reveal a living network of ideas, techniques, and mentorship. In the Sunderbans, these migrations of knowledge have empowered a community, inspired innovation, and affirmed the architect's role as a connector rather than an originator.



Dr Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty

Dr Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, IAS (retired Secretary, Govt. of India), holds an M.A. (Kolkata), an M.P.A. (Harvard), and a Ph.D. in Fine Arts (Harvard). He is the President of the People's Council of Education and distinguished Professor at Centurion University of Technology and Management, Odisha. Formerly Chairman of Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and Director-General of the National Museum, New Delhi, Dr Chakravarty has played an instrumental role in various cultural and heritage management initiatives in India and abroad. His works focus on the intersection of culture, governance, and sustainable development.

SYMPOSIUM SUMMATION

DAY 2 | 17 JAN 2026 | 5:35 – 5:55 pm

Synopsis: This final session sums up the various topics presented and discussed over the course of the two-day symposium, drawing a conclusion to this edition of VK complemented with insights from Dr Chakravarty's own decades-long experience in cultural and heritage management and sustainable development.

EMAMI ART

 KOLKATA CENTRE
FOR CREATIVITY
A unit of Anamika Kala Sangam Trust

A Satellite Exhibition of the 7th Edition of KCC's Annual Symposium,
Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

Convergences

A Shared Ground – Lineages, Practices, Futures

Anshu Kumari | ARTISANS' Sustainable Development Foundation X Leshemi Origins
Dulair Devi, Malo Devi, Putli Ganju, Rudhan Devi, Sajhwa Devi, (Supported by the
Sanskriti Museum & Art Gallery, Hazaribagh) | Ruma Choudhury | Silpinwita Das
Simi Deka | Ujjal Dey | Ujjal Sinha

January 9, 2026
February 14, 2026

KCC, First Floor Gallery
Gallery timings: 11 AM - 7 PM

Preview: January 9
5 PM onwards

CURATORIAL NOTE

CONVERGENCES

A SHARED GROUND — LINEAGES, PRACTICES, FUTURES

A Shared Ground — Lineages, Practices, Futures is conceptualised around artistic practices and ideas from the eastern and north-eastern regions of India, navigating a continuum of cultural, artistic, craft, and architectural traditions. At a moment when inherited ways of making are increasingly fragmented or displaced, the exhibition turns to convergence not as a theme but as a method. Moving beyond a mere survey of objects or spaces, it explores the framework of production itself as an extension of embodied knowledge, shaped through deep relationships with land, ecology, and communal practices.

The idea of convergence is taken as a strategic model to understand practice as a shared ground. Here, convergence does not imply sameness, but the coming together of distinct lineages through shared processes of making. These practices resist the flattened postulates of modernity and progress by foregrounding continuity, transmission, and care over rupture or novelty. What emerges is not a unified aesthetic, but a shared ethic of working with what already exists.

This shared ground becomes visible most clearly in material choices. The use of bamboo, thread, natural dyes, earth, and fibre is not incidental, but an ethical and cosmological decision, embedding the work within a web of biotic relationships and seasonal cycles. These practices challenge the separation of culture from nature, proposing instead a mode of world-making rooted in conscience and sustainability. Across these practices, certain gestures recur with insistence. Repair, reuse, and remembrance move through the intertwined worlds of art, craft, and architecture. Together, these acts form an ethos and aesthetics of making. To repair is to tend to what is broken with care, binding fragments without erasing their wounds. To reuse is to extend the life of materials, carrying forward their textures, scars, and histories into new forms. To remember is to hold knowledge across generations, resisting forgetting in an age that privileges the new over the enduring. Making here is never only an act of invention, but equally an act of continuity.

The everyday textures of life in the eastern and north-eastern regions of India reveal most vividly these acts of care. These practices express a cultural language in which impermanence is not an ending but a transformation, and fragility is met with resilience. Knowledge is absorbed through lived experience, seasonal rhythms, and sustained engagement with the natural world. Here, innovation emerges not from rupture, but from accumulated experience and adaptation.

Bringing art, craft, and architecture into dialogue, the exhibition foregrounds practices that embrace both vulnerability and persistence. It asks us to see value not only in what is whole or new, but also in what has been mended, reimaged, and carried forward. In this sense, convergence becomes not only a shared ground but a way of tending to/staying with the world.

HIGHLIGHTS OF The Satellite Exhibition CONVERGENCES



HIGHLIGHTS OF VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM VI

Co-programmed by
Dr Shwetal A. Patel & Ushmita Sahu



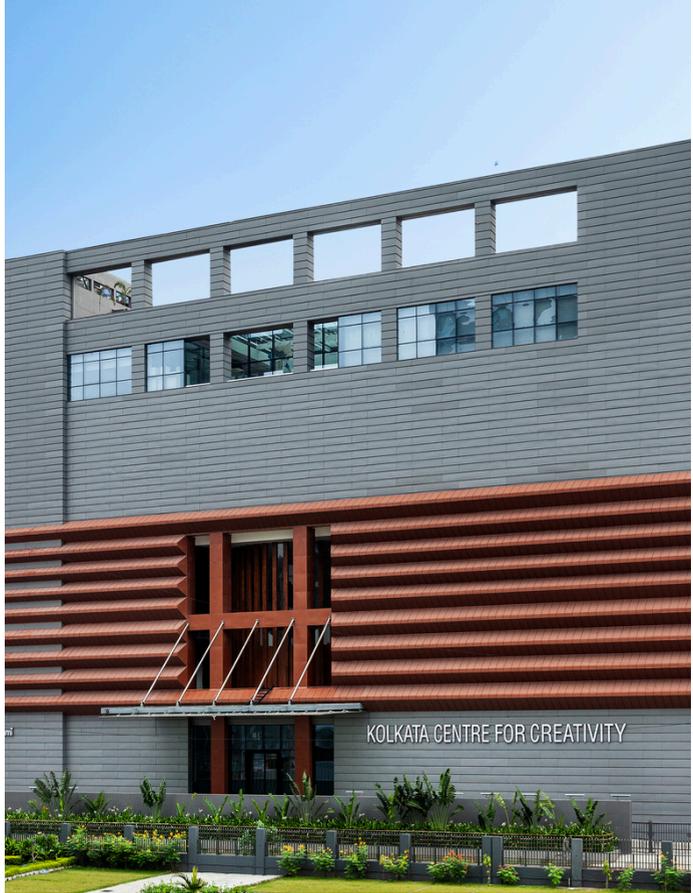


KOLKATA CENTRE FOR CREATIVITY

ABOUT

The Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC) is a multidisciplinary interactive art centre based in Kolkata. As a unit of the Anamika Kala Sangam Trust, a not-for-profit public trust, supported by the Emami group, it promotes research & experimentation while championing inclusivity & accessibility at the intersection of arts & society.

KCC advocates a multidisciplinary approach in the pursuit of creative & cultural practices. Through well-curated programmes, it aims to cultivate an empathetic, optimistic, and informed community. With a trans-local spirit, KCC encourages the cross-pollination of ideas & creativity across borders.



OUR VISION

To build a culture that addresses Glocal (global & local) concerns through Art and Creativity with network of people-public-partnerships.

OUR MISSION

We engage, encourage, and educate through participation in Arts and Creativity using Research, Documentation, Conservation, Display and Public engagement as enablers. Acting as a catalyst we facilitate Capacity Building, Artistic enhancement of professionals with special focus on emerging and mid-career artists.



SCAN TO KNOW MORE

Visit us:

www.kolkatacentreforcreativity.org

kcc@akst.org.in

Kolkata Centre for Creativity

777 Anandapur | E.M. Bypass | Kolkata 700107 | +919674140905

