

KALASETU

THE BRIDGE OF ARTS



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Artists

Ashis Dash

Birender Yadav

Julius Das

Niroj Satpathy

Pallavi Singh

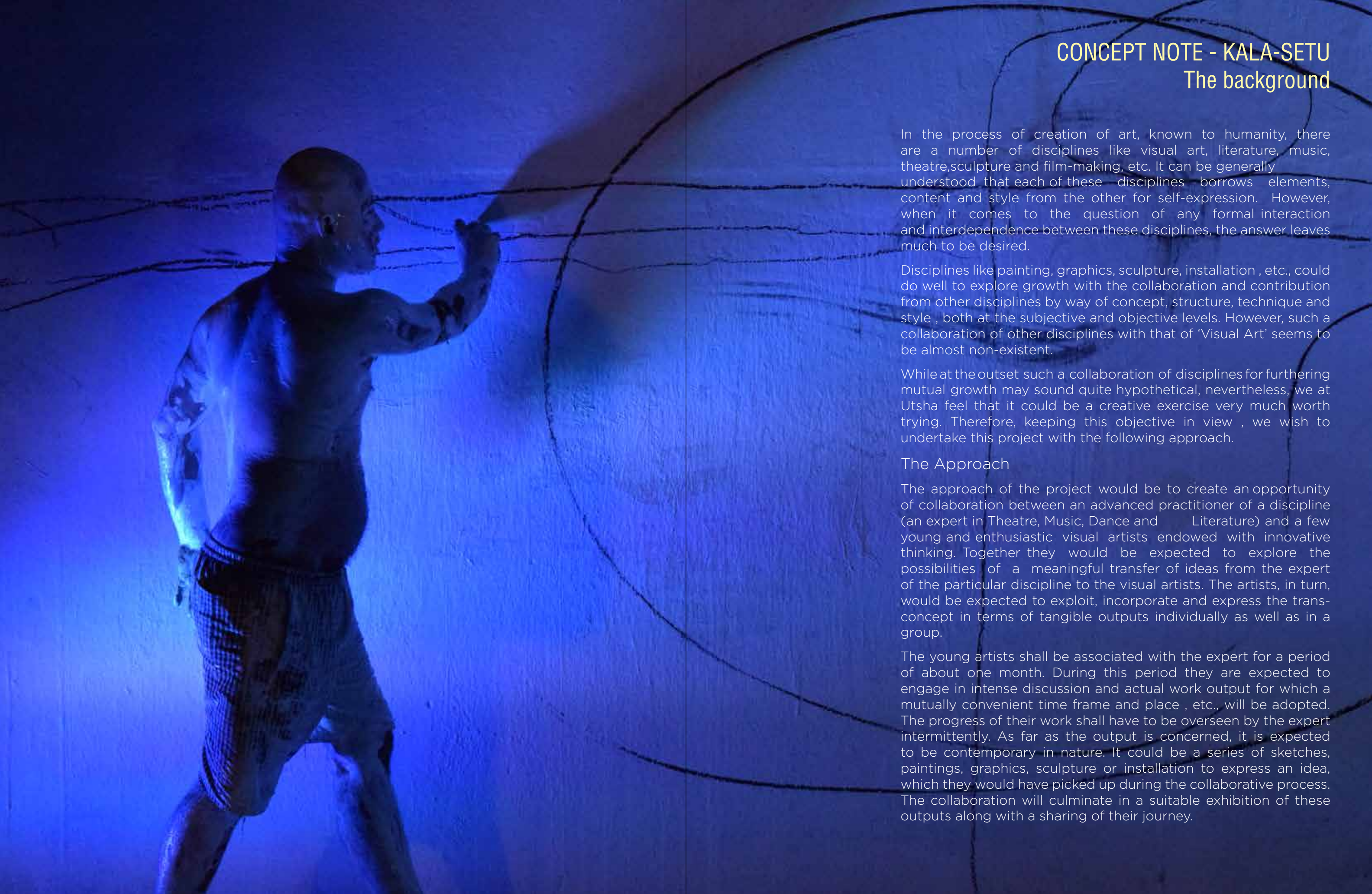
Sibdas Sengupta

Smrutikanta Rout

Supriyo Karmakar

Curator

Kapilas Bhuyan



CONCEPT NOTE - KALA-SETU

The background

In the process of creation of art, known to humanity, there are a number of disciplines like visual art, literature, music, theatre, sculpture and film-making, etc. It can be generally understood that each of these disciplines borrows elements, content and style from the other for self-expression. However, when it comes to the question of any formal interaction and interdependence between these disciplines, the answer leaves much to be desired.

Disciplines like painting, graphics, sculpture, installation, etc., could do well to explore growth with the collaboration and contribution from other disciplines by way of concept, structure, technique and style, both at the subjective and objective levels. However, such a collaboration of other disciplines with that of 'Visual Art' seems to be almost non-existent.

While at the outset such a collaboration of disciplines for furthering mutual growth may sound quite hypothetical, nevertheless, we at Utsha feel that it could be a creative exercise very much worth trying. Therefore, keeping this objective in view, we wish to undertake this project with the following approach.

The Approach

The approach of the project would be to create an opportunity of collaboration between an advanced practitioner of a discipline (an expert in Theatre, Music, Dance and Literature) and a few young and enthusiastic visual artists endowed with innovative thinking. Together they would be expected to explore the possibilities of a meaningful transfer of ideas from the expert of the particular discipline to the visual artists. The artists, in turn, would be expected to exploit, incorporate and express the trans-concept in terms of tangible outputs individually as well as in a group.

The young artists shall be associated with the expert for a period of about one month. During this period they are expected to engage in intense discussion and actual work output for which a mutually convenient time frame and place, etc., will be adopted. The progress of their work shall have to be overseen by the expert intermittently. As far as the output is concerned, it is expected to be contemporary in nature. It could be a series of sketches, paintings, graphics, sculpture or installation to express an idea, which they would have picked up during the collaborative process. The collaboration will culminate in a suitable exhibition of these outputs along with a sharing of their journey.

Curator's Note

Art is where the heart is...

At some point artists work on ideas, I mean the very seed of creation is idea. But that's not all. Ideas alone can never make an art - there has to be intrinsic emotion from within the artist to make the art touch the heart.

A visual artist's creation can be enriched if the elements of other art forms are used wisely and intrinsically. Having this object in mind Utsha initiated a month long exercise by putting eight young visual artists in residency to work in collaboration with four experts of other disciplines of art like dance, music, theatre and literature.

The visual artists are Supriyo Karmakar, Niroj Satpathy, Julius Das, Pallavi Singh, Ashis Dash, Sibdas Sengupta, Smrutikanta Rout and Birender Yadav.

And the four experts are Dolagobind Rath (Theater), Aruna Mohanty (Dance), Sangita Gosain (Music) and Sangram Jena (Literature).

While Ashis Dash and Smrutikanta Rout opted for collaborating with the Odissi Dance Guru Padmashri Aruna Mohanty, Supriyo Karmakar, Pallavi Singh and Birender Yadav preferred to work with the eminent theatre director Dolagobind Rath. Niroj Satpathy and Julius Das wanted to collaborate with the eminent Odissi singer Sangita Gosain, and Sibdas Sengupta went for the eminent litterateur Sangram Jena.

Birender Yadav, besides working with Dolagobind Rath, went for additional collaboration with Sangram Jena.

The month-long Kala-Setu (Bridging the Arts) Project has come to its culmination. The art works are on exhibition today for public viewing.

In his work titled 'Deula', Supriyo has simplified the temple architecture he has witnessed in Odisha into different forms and shapes. During the process of creation new forms and shapes have formed due to overlapping of forms on one another. Whereas Niroj's space is the whole place of the growing up Bhubaneswar city by means of 'Sound-Scape', as the title of his work, he utilises noise of chaos of the city and the voice of the melodious music of his expert singer. Again,

Julius, in his work titled 'Transformation' has also gone for sound, not for its own sake but for its visual transformation on a fabric surface.

Pallavi Singh has titled her work using the Odia number '64', meaning 'Chausath', or 'Sixty-Four' so as to put emphasis on this number in Indian cultural ethos, and thereby has come up with an interactive art work of a wooden box having 64 niches in it, and each niche is filled in with a well made-up male figure. In order to explain her work Pallavi says, "I created 64 characters with multiple layers of thoughts, where curiosity of the viewer is tested".

By some mysterious coincidence, Ashis Dash and Smrutikanta Rout have gone for the Navarasas of human feelings. However, whereas Ashis has tried to identify the rasas within to identify himself in his painting titled 'Who am I!', Smrutikanta has gone for the outer expression of the feelings via his expert's expressions of eye movements in a video installation titled 'Bhava'.

Sibdas and Birender, despite having the same expert of literature to collaborate go diametrically opposite ways to create their art works. Whereas Sibdas through his work titled 'Object, overlapped, surrounding' has gone for understanding of object, and how its meaning changes with shifting the surrounding and the transformation that occurs with that, Birender has tried to document how varied the essential expressions of people towards a particular metaphor. Birender has titled his work as 'Apana Hath Jagannath'.

Both of them have gone for installations, however, Sibdas has opted for video installation whereas Birender's found object installation is juxtaposed with varied sound bytes of people as they understand the meaning of 'Apana Hath Jagannath'.

It's pertinent to say that most of the participating artists of Kala-Setu (Bridging the Arts) project have left their comfort zones and taken up challenges to create something new relating to the tradition and culture of Odisha.

Kapilas Bhuyan
Curator
Kala-Setu



Who Am I ! | Acrylics on Canvas | 3 ft X 4 ft

Who Am I !

Music has been one of the catalysts for me to create art. I developed my style by creating art as a response to the rhythm patterns of different kinds of genres of music. I also have a flair for writing. I was going through concepts and ideas of different disciplines (with focus on Music and Literature) to create an artwork in my style.

I collaborated with Kala-Setu Dance expert PadmaShree Aruna Mohanty to understand the concept of Navarasa. After seeing dance demonstration and reading more about the rasas, I realised it's an interesting concept to work within oneself. I made an inward journey to know myself and the rasas in my inner self. I decided to produce a painting on a canvas. Nine distinct colours were chosen for nine different rasas via my instinct and personal experience. The density of each of the nine rasas inside me has been represented proportionately. I have used forms and lines as symbol to represent the emotion/bhava which is borrowed from my memory, personal experience and practice.

I titled the work "Who Am I!" which talk about my personal experience and at the same time makes the viewer think about if they see these forms and colours as flat tones on a white base or relate their emotions associated with forms and colours.

The nine colours as rasa chosen by me to generate the nine bhavas are as follows:

Shringara (Love): Pink, Hasya (Joy): Yellow, Raudra (Anger): Red, Karuna (Sorrow): Brown, Bhayanaka (Fear): Black, Vibhasta (Disgust): Gray, Adbhuta (Wonder): Sky Blue, Veera (Courage): Orange, Shanta: Aqua Green



Aapna Haath Jagannath | Mixed Media | Variable

Aapna Hath Jagannath

In addition to the interaction with experts, I started interacting with local people at grocery stores, food stalls and market places for inspiration. I noticed and registered the new details that got my attention. The circular Odia fonts written everywhere on signboards got my attention. I get a certain kind of a feeling as I see the letters and words everywhere on signboards, advertisements etc. The beauty of the font attracts my attention but not being able to understand kept my mind curious at many levels. This experience reminded me of the Hindi proverb “kala akshar bhains barabar”, giving me a starting point.

During my collaboration with Literature expert Sangram Jena and Theatre expert Dolagobind Rath, I was exposed to a lot of folk stories, local books, Odia Rudhis to understand the language and words, which gave me more material for better understanding. I came across the proverb “Apna hath Jagannath”. The proverb put me in a visual conflict as the worshipped idol at the famous temple is hand-less.

Based on the story and process behind the creation of the idol, I wanted to collect a similar wood log. During my process of collection, a peculiar wood log got my attention. The cut marks on the log made by an axe reminded me of the struggle, the labourer would have gone through. I asked him about the proverb, he replied back showing his hands that, working for oneself via own hands as the meaning. Later on, I asked and recorded many people from different communities about the proverb. Everyone spoke about the proverb from their perception. For example, working people explained the proverb by citing their livelihood as an example, on the other hand as some related it as masturbation. Many spoke about their religious sentiments being hurt. Through the entire process of data collection, I have come up with multiple works in the residency like Limitations of a Book, 55 kg, Kala Akshar Bhains Barabar, etc.



Transformation

Medium - Animal hide and mix media on board

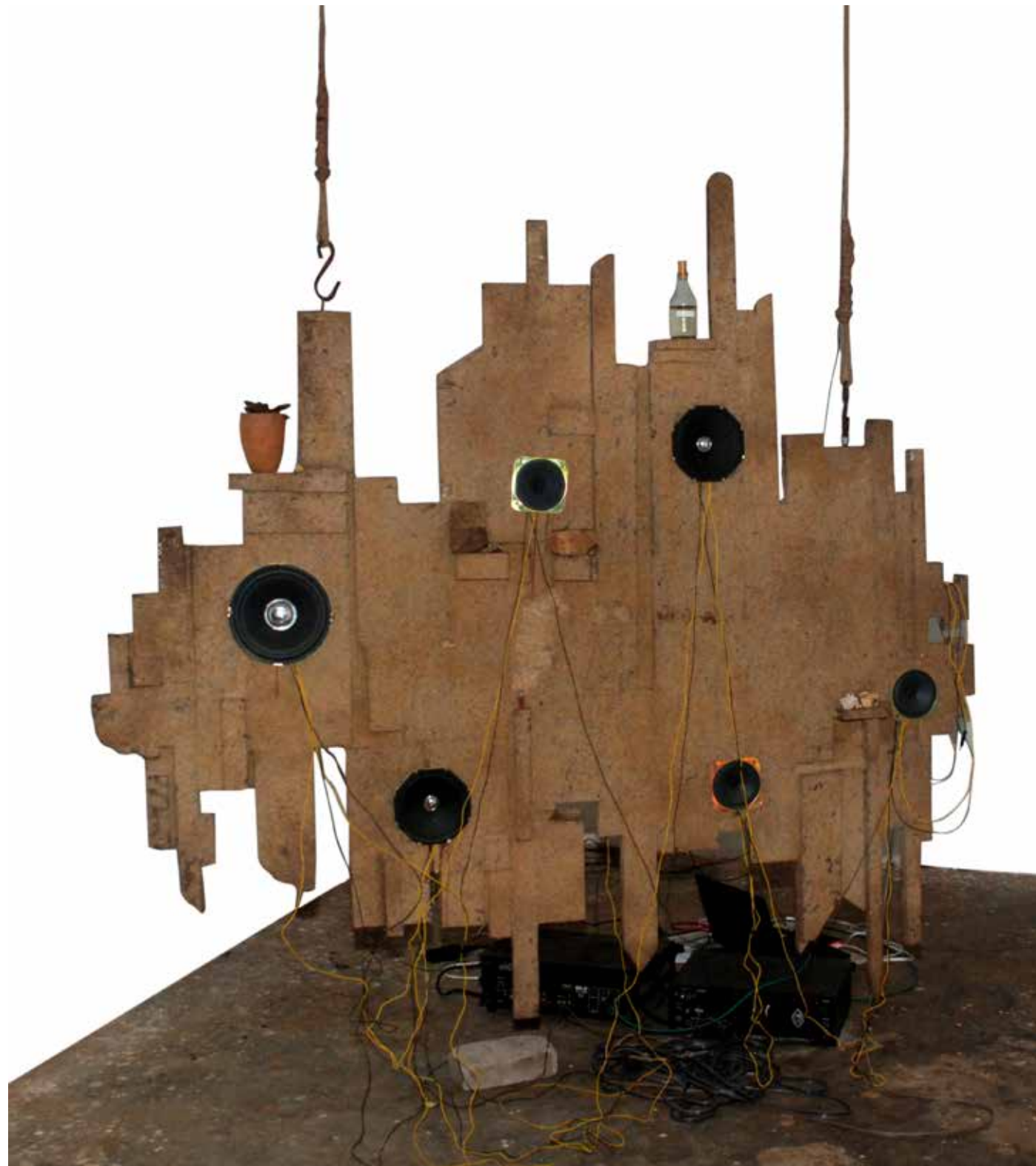
Size - Variable

Transformation

Rhythm creates structural motifs of music by transforming. It can be a form, which represents the current situation of mind. When both elements and state of mind work together with mutual benefit, it projects internal behaviour. That means a music composition mainly shifted with the pitch or volume. May not be more focused with harmony. So that music usually begins with the idea that, music is “organised sound”.

But all organised sounds are not music. It is not entirely composed with sound. Also the pause or silence can function only to organise the sound of music. While silence does not exist, feelings also take place of nonexistence. The emotions are often stimulated by encounters with nature. Nature will not necessarily correspond with feelings. Emotion takes place. And sounds allowed to response faculty. Thus music is not entirely the sound of musical instrument but that of other artificial objects and, sounds of nature. It evokes images and feelings, space or emptiness and also silence. But in space even pure silence does not exist. Music as a means of changing the mind, something that creates a communication, as an activity of sounds to find a way of sound possibilities. Random sounds, being intentionally evoking a specific feeling that react with certain state of mind. In composition, silence is well known as a musical element like rendering a pause, a particular frequency of sound, duration of sound. This randomness of sound is equivalent to music itself. Frequency, measure, pitch, duration, composes the mechanisms of traditional composition. The idea of breaking institutional structures in music, means forget the space between an object and its transformation. Shifting sound from speech, vibration or voice in to music with the using of silence, here silence became a utilitarian tool for compositional use. The nature of silence is a key concept of all musical composition.

Here I consider the formulas of vibrations. It makes sense to work with the ideas of transformations-rhythm of any sources. The main focus is how it works and how it can be a form of visual language. Use of different material to recreate the metaphoric or interpretation relations, mean to make images by philosophical angle and also generate a different piece. Use of mechanical techniques to represent the internal behaviour. When I am going through the conventional way I found the techniques that are broadly used but the part of theories came out with some spontaneous ideas, represent both conventional or non conventional aspect that is provoking to hold the existing part of work.



Sound scape

I am trying to work in Bhubaneswar after 5 years for the Kala -Setu project. My work reflects my observations of the city in the time I spent wandering about reconnecting with a city that was once my own. It is a depiction of the two sides which I encountered in the changing social fabric in the city, which I felt more acutely in the sounds that they produced.

One was the upwardly mobile - Smart City - side of Bhubaneswar that was reflected in its fancy cars, glittering new buildings and malls and visions of the future. The other side was the shadow of this growth that exerted an untold pressure on the mental, cultural, social and economic fabric of the erstwhile Temple City.

In my search for the soul of the city, I recorded sounds from different parts of the city and collected objects from different areas. I realised the dynamic of this changing city rested in its song that inadvertently permeated every aspect of its existence. The multiplicity of the existence of many voices in this song was amplified when I listened to Dr. Gosain explain the various forms of classical music at Utsha Foundation.

Making sense of this Soundscape is an aural perspective that would vary from viewer to viewer. The front part of the work thus speaks to the viewer in the many voices I recorded across the city .While standing behind the work you can hear the melody of Dr. Gosain with her explanations on the nature of music -much like how we try to make the sense of it all at the end of the day living in this city. A duophony of noise and sense can be experienced by the viewer from the side of the object. This is not unlike what I felt, as a stranger in my own city with sense and noise competing with equal strength to occupy my feelings. Maybe even this noise is music to the viewer's ears as they draw a mental map of the city recognising familiar sounds. That must be the Unit 1 haat ? Is that the sound of Jaidev Vihar?

The found objects include holy water from the temple, stones I collected from the Khandagiri and the Udaygiri complex and a fruit from an unknown tree by the roadside. Each represents a unique view of the soul of the city that still shines through despite changing times. The rope has a unique significance to the city and the state being used in temple ceremonies since time immemorial. It pulls the chariots of the Lord Jagannath forward and holds things together at the same time.

So it is, with my city - held together by strands of culture, belief and a past that is inexorably moving towards an unknown future of promise and fear.



Chausath (64)

The title of my work "Chausath" is inspired from the Chausath yogini temple at Hirapur.

The connotation of the number 64 is very fascinating in Indian tradition like Shatranj has 64 squares, Indian art forms are 64 in number, Ganjapa has 64 cards, 64 is a perfect square of 8 and cube of 4, Kamasutra has 64 poses and many more. This became a starting point to bring theatre and visual art (painting) together in my work.

I created 64 characters with multiple layers of thoughts, where the curiosity of the viewer is tested. To present it, I designed a Box/Baksa as a metaphor representing the stage and the "living out of box" life of theatre groups.

Where the characters get transformed from one to another and the places change from time to time.

Thus, the box has 64 frames with 64 characters with no definite narration leaving the viewer to interpret as many ways as they want to.

Chausath (64) | box: 32 x 20 x 16 inch | paper: 64(4.5x5.5) inch



Object, overlapped, surrounding

“Object, overlapped, surrounding” is a work where I’m finding the possibilities of images, that how a site has its own image and documentation with certain time and space, and how it reacts when it shifts from one place to another!

In this scenario, the body of work is constructing its own narrative with its surrounding. Here, Object is an intension that can be seen and touched or a thing to which a specific action or feeling is directed, where it has its own property and relations. A property is a singular thing which travels from one space to another without changing its specificity, which has a state of its own behaviour and a certain approach toward the surrounding.

Overlapped: It’s a play of dimensions that shows how a certain dimension is overlapped in a certain sensation, how sensation deals with presentation, how presentation stays on imagination and how imagination initially starts with a perception. Here, from perception to sensation, every layer has its own specificity and stories to show, like how things change their behaviours with certain action and again how they play with substance. Here the question is, “When something plays with another thing, what kind of layers they have in between!”

Surrounding: Dealing with surrounding is like understanding of object by considering it as a witness of the surrounding or as a mirror that can reflect the conscious, colourful, complex social landscape of the surrounding. Surrounding is to extend on all sides simultaneously or to encircle, where surrounding has its own narrative. Surrounding allows many communities and spaces to exist within it, which travel and shift from one place to another from may time to time. Surrounding can manipulate the things to behave and react to its context. The aspects and interpretations can be changed with the surrounding. Are these aspects and interpretations linear with their specificity or quite non linear with their current narration?



Bhava | Video | Variable

Bhava

At my first encounter with the term Dance I visualised a posture packed with Beats, Mudras last but not the least, the Ornamental attire. With the flow of time and process of shrinkage I stopped on Bhava, the feeling. I found it as the skeleton of this beautiful art.

I talked to Guru Shree Aruna Mohanty. She explained Bhava as the indication of the emotional and the exciting conditions or emotional state of the character portrayed. Lots of Bhava are there as Sthayi Bhava, Sanchari Bhava, Bibhav , etc., I am basically focusing on the Sthayi Bhava which is further classified in nine as there are nine Rasas, each Sthayi-Bhava having a respective Rasa. They are related to Love(Shringara), Humorous (Hasya), Disgust (Bibhatsa), Fury (Raudra), Compassion (Karunya), Heroic (Veera), Terrible (Bhayānaka), Marvellous (Adbhuta), Peace or Tranquility (Shantha).

In the course of progress of my research on dance and Bhava one day I saw madam in Odissi make up. She had put on a thick eye liner. It was like an outline to her eye. In paintings we put an outline in a drawing to make it more visible and distinct. I found the eyes being the best for depicting Bhava. It holds a special place in the hearts of dancers and visual artist. Not only the artist but the commoners also use eyes to convey their feelings. A mother widens her eye to show her anger to the child, partners use it to show their love, some show guilt , others disgust. I find that the eyes are the windows to the soul. It follows, therefore, that it is an effective form of communication between artist and audience in dance.

Dance is purely a dynamic form. And the captive movement of eyes of Odissi Dancers inspired me not to do something static. That's why I choose video as the medium where I can converse with people through my silence. I decided to break my frame into small frames so that I can create a mirage of Navarasa together.

I went for a shooting with Aruna Madam and recorded all the Sthayi Bhavas with different positions of head and different people, and created a collage of those small frames.



Deula | Carved on Burnt Wood 100 | 8ft x 4ft



Performance | Duration - 45mins.

Deula

The work 'Deula' (Odia word for temple) is a reflection of my journey through Bhubaneswar. I was inspired by the varieties of forms and techniques to create the work. The palm leaf engraving of Raghurajpur, inspired me to engrave on an MDF board. I have simplified the temple architecture into different forms and shapes. During the process of creation new forms and shapes are formed due to over-lapping of forms on one another. Black spots formed due to lit lamps (diya) inside the walls of temples inspired me to create a black texture on my work.

Performance

"Visible and Invisible Line" is a performance, where I experience how I can read a visible line and an invisible line? In case of a visible line I can read a shape of circle, rectangle, triangle and many more shapes and forms. But when I am coming to the point of invisible, how can I read the shape of rectangle, circle, triangle and other shapes and forms? If I talk about a line of a railway track it can be read, whereas if I talk about an internet connection or wifi then how can we read it as a line? Is there any relation between the visible and the invisible? How it can be read? Through, this performance piece I experience these questions and continue my journey to find the answers. I collaborated with theatre expert Dolagobinda Rath and learnt a lot about performance, visible and invisible from his experience

KALA-SETU EXPERT BIOGRAPHIES

Aruna Mohanty (Dance)

Dynamism, charisma and astounding talent makes Guru Aruna Mohanty - a Padmashri - one of the finest Odissi Dancers in the field of Odissi Dance. Smt Mohanty has always defied stereotyping. Her perception of dance and choreography is unconventional. Yet, she has been vehemently careful about preserving the basic structure and aesthetics of her beloved art form Odissi. Arunaji has considered dance to be the essence of her soul. The rhythm in her feet connects her to a divine force. The perfect blend of bhava, bhangi, taala and abhinaya radiate from her performances.

She was trained and nurtured under the able guidance of Padmashree Guru Gangadhar Pradhan. She especially excels in the abhinaya aspect of Odissi. Beginning first as a student of the Orissa Dance Academy(ODA), she has grown into a respected performer, teacher, choreographer and administrator. She has received many awards and accolades for her contribution to the arts, including the Mahari Award (1997), Sanjukta Panigrahi Memorial National Award (2001), Fellowship by Ministry of HRD, Government of India, and the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Puraskar Award in 2010.

She is not only an eloquent dancer and performer but also has tremendous knowledge about the evolution of Odissi as a distinct art form in India. Thus she combines extensive research, lessons from her Guru, and innovative thinking to produce provocative choreography. Some of the items in her repertoire include the dance ballet ‘Shrusti O Pralay’, ‘Varsha- Abhisara’, ‘Sravana Kumar’, ‘Kharavela’ , ‘Jatra Baramasi’, ‘Gatha Odishi’, ‘Krupa Nidhaana’, ‘Swargadapi Gariyasi’, ‘ Arjuna Dui Adhyaya’, ‘Pratinayak’, ‘Krishna Sharanam’, ‘Pratinayaka’ and ‘Khamaj Pallavi.

She has travelled all over the globe to present solo and group presentations in addition to workshops and lecture demonstrations. She was a member of Central Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi and currently serves as the vice president of the Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi.

Dr. Sangita Gosain (Music)

Dr. Sangita Gosain, the CEO of the Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre, is a veteran in the field of research and practices of Odissi vocal. Dr. Gosain is well known for rendering traditional Odia ‘Chhanda’ and ‘Champu’ and has created a special place for herself in the hearts of thousands of Odia music lovers. Before taking over as Head of the Odissi Research Centre, Dr. Gosain was serving as a senior faculty at Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar

Sangram Jena (Literature)

Dr Sangram Jena is a poet, translator, anthologist, has authored more than 30 books.

He has six poem collections to his credit which include Basaghara, Dehadoha, Chai Pache Pache in Odia, Poems of Passion (translated into English by Prof. Niranjana Mohanty), Basera (translated into Hindi by Prof. Sankarlal Purohit). His latest collection of poems ‘Walking through the Rain’ written in English has been published in 2014, was selected for exhibition at World Poetry Festival, organised by Sahitya Akademi on March 2014 at New Delhi.

His books of translation to Odia include Nati (first modern novel of India written in 1790) by Hasan Shah, Katha Kabita by Kamala Das, Umrao Jan Ada by Md Hadi Ruswa a Urdu classic, Kodietti Prema Kabita (Twenty Love Poems & a Song of Despair by Pablo Neruda), Maya Malhara (Poems of Maya Angelou), Calcutta’ 71 (poems of Kaiser Haq), Chithi Asena (No one writes to the Colonel, a novel by Gabriel Garcia Marquez).

He has obtained a doctorate degree in Economics. He owns several awards including Prajatantra Bisuba Puraskar, Rajdhani Pustakamela Puraskar, Utkal Sahitya Samaj Puraskar & Sahitya Akademi Award for translation in 2011. Currently he is a senior fellow of Ministry of Culture, Govt Of India, New Delhi. He edits Nishant, a Periodical in Odia & margASIA, a Journal in English published by Centre for Asian Studies, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India.

Dolagobind Rath (Theatre)

A proud product of the prestigious National School of Drama and former faculty member of the Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, he has directed more than 70 plays and scripted three apart from translating six into Oriya. He played a pivotal role in grooming a large number of young directors and actors by constantly conducting theatre workshops throughout the State.

He is the only Oriya theatre director to be featured in a Doordarshan documentary as one of the seven well-known theatre personalities of India.



Text -Artworks - Artist
Photo Credit -
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Printer -

UTSHA FOUNDATION

Utsha is a non-for-profit making organization registered in Bhubaneswar, dedicated to the art fraternity in Odisha, Chaired Jagannath Panda, it has a vision to promote and nurture the art and culture of the region.

Utsha supports a growing network of art practitioners, organisations, galleries, students, researchers and other people. It is unique in the sense of connecting local and traditional practices to global and contemporary creative circuits respectively. It is more concerned with local, ethnic and regional practices that come from remote areas. It also functions internationally to realise objectives through dialogue with people around the world. It embodies a continuing engagement with creativity in different communities and locations.

Barbil Art Project is the beginning of an oeuvre that will set new paradigms for generating alternative spaces for creativity,dialogue, action, exchange and performance.