Upcoming Exhibition

The Body in Indian Art and Thought
6 March 2014 – 7 May 2014
Curated by Naman P. Ahuja

How does a civilization express its thoughts on death and the spirit world, the place of the cosmos (fated by destiny), or does a body have its own agency? And how are the values of the body constructed differently from those of women? These questions are considered in this exhibition through multifaceted understandings ranging from representations of heroic, yoge, ascetic, seductive and dangerous bodies in a display of the richness of India’s art and thought. The body and its representation is revealed not only as the subject of art, but as the keeper of the values, preoccupations and aspirations of times ancient, medieval and modern, popular as well as classical. The complex painting of India emerges which shows the diversity in geography, chronology, patronage, religion and art material that are present in every gallery of the exhibition.

After its successful showing at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, Belgium, this exhibition will be shown at the National Museum, Delhi. Drawings together 220 artworks from 68 museums, archaeological institutes and private collections, in an exploration of the complex understandings of the body. Ranging from monumental stone sculptures carved in the stone coffins of provincial Indian rulers to terra cotta figures, Chola bronze from Tamil Nadu, and manuscripts from Madhya Pradesh, this exhibition provides the spectator with a variety of artworks, many of which have never before been publicly exhibited, now published.

National Museum
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New Delhi, India
Website: www.nationalmuseumindia.gov.in
Welcome

We are delighted to revive publication of the National Museum Bulletin. While the museum has undertaken many initiatives, National Museum today is to make its outstanding collections, representing 5000 years of Indian art, more accessible to the public. Over the last few decades, the role of museums all over the world has undergone a paradigm shift, putting an important challenge to Indian museums which need to innovate and acknowledge the needs of a contemporary audience.

In meeting these challenges, the past year (2013) saw many new initiatives with the opening of new galleries such as the Tanjore and Mysore Paintings Gallery, the Wooden Art Gallery and the Decorative Arts Gallery; organization of exciting new temporary exhibitions such as the ‘Ram-Krishna Balasubramaniam’; ‘The Rajput Portfolio’; ‘The Mughal Madrasa’; and the first ever single object exhibition, the ‘Yogini’. These exhibitions were both, from the rich collections of the National Museum and from objects from other collectors. The Museum’s landscape exhibitions, for instance was curated by Vinita Malhotra, a designer and musician who pulled together the idea of music and its experience through technology presented to displays. It also opened doors to the museum for new and creative ways of showing at the forefront of the country. The faculty and graduates of National Museum Institute were also involved in some of these projects.

The museum experience got better and richer for the public with the introduction of the much lauded Volunteer Guide Programme – ‘Pari Prasunshakti’ and Yuva Sahitya, which now run several batches a day for adults and school groups respectively. In this project, National Museum was successful in recruiting enthusiastic volunteers coming from diverse backgrounds who have been specially trained by experts and experts in turn the guided tours.

The Museum organized lectures, workshops and seminars to engage with professionals and museums practitioners. Educational programmes especially designed for children were also undertaken.

National Museum is now poised to enter into a dynamic phase with the promise of new ventures including the opening of galleries, new exhibitions, publications and outreach activities. With better facilities and programmes on offer, we hope to attract larger sections of our society and encourage them to visit the Museum and engage with its collections.

Vineet Vashishtha
Director General, National Museum
January 2014

New Galleries

Tanjore and Mysore Paintings Gallery

National Museum re-opened the Tanjore and Mysore Paintings Gallery with paintings from the Tanjore and Mysore Schools of South Indian Paintings in May 2013. The new gallery has been curated by Dr. Daljot Kaur and the Deputy Director, National Museum.

The important themes of Tanjore and Mysore Schools include paintings of Vishnu in various avatars such as Krishna, Rama, Vithoba and his other incarnations; Lakshmi and other deities; of Skanda portraying various forms of Abhishekam; Kalashasvarupa; Avatamshas, etc. The works have been selected from the National Museum’s rich collection.

The gallery offers a unique presentation of paintings from the Tanjore and Mysore Schools particularly focusing on the richly decorated paintings from the Tanjore and Mysore Schools, with a thematic arrangement of paintings from the different workshops of the mandalas, as well as paintings from the various periods of the Tanjore and Mysore Schools.

Tanjore and Mysore Paintings Gallery

National Museum

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New Galleries

The Decorative Arts Gallery at National Museum

The Decorative Arts Gallery was inaugurated on 1st July 2013 by the Hon’ble Minister of Culture, Smt. Chandrika Kaur Sethi.

The Decorative Arts Gallery contains an excellent collection of objects which reflects the rich heritage of Indian art from 15th to 19th century. There is a diverse display of objects in different materials like terracotta, metal, wood, ivory, ivory, glass, silver, gold, etc.

The main presentation is a display of terracotta objects. The terracotta objects include statues, figurines, pottery, etc. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest terracotta objects to the latest ones.

The gallery also features a display of metal objects, which include copper, brass, and silver objects. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest metal objects to the latest ones.

The gallery also features a display of textiles, which include sarees, shawls, and carpets. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest textiles to the latest ones.

The gallery also features a display of Ivory objects, which include carvings, sculptures, and inlays. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest ivory objects to the latest ones.

The gallery also features a display of gold objects, which include jewelry, coins, and medallions. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest gold objects to the latest ones.

The gallery also features a display of glass objects, which include vases, bottles, and mirrors. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest glass objects to the latest ones.

The gallery also features a display of silver objects, which include jewelry, coins, and medallions. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest silver objects to the latest ones.

The gallery also features a display of wood objects, which include carvings, sculptures, and inlays. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest wood objects to the latest ones.

The gallery also features a display of paper objects, which include paintings, calligraphy, and prints. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest paper objects to the latest ones.

The gallery also features a display of textile objects, which include saris, scarves, and blankets. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest textile objects to the latest ones.

The gallery also features a display of leather objects, which include bags, shoes, and belts. The objects are arranged in a chronological order, starting from the earliest leather objects to the latest ones.

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New Galleries

The Ethnic Art Gallery - Tradition, Art and Continuity

The Anthropology Department of National Museum has an impressive collection of objects of ethnographic interest that has been acquired over the years through exploratory expeditions as well as valuable gifts from private collections. National Museum will shortly be showcasing these collections in its new gallery called the Ethnic Art Gallery which is being curated by Mr. Jaspal Jha, Deputy Curator, National Museum. It will capture the concept of ‘Culture in Diversity’, a carrier that was envisaged by leading anthropologist Dr. N.K. Bose in 1957, that is, a composite unity of diverse cultures throughout the sub-continent. He came to the conclusion that within the vast expanse of the diverse cultures, there is a similar way of expression, a thread of continuity that binds them together.

The Ethnic Art gallery will showcase rare examples of tribal and folk arts in order to promote and gain recognition in an important yet neglected side of our heritage.

Wooden Art Gallery

A set of eighty two wood carvings mainly from 15th to 20th century have been carefully selected and displayed in the refurbished wooden art gallery that opened recently. The gallery showcases the rich wooden art tradition of India.

Collections on display include decorative and utilitarian objects, architectural elements and sculptures. A square pillar with a capital of five feet height dated 5th century, an idol of Lord Vishnu, a wooden offering vessel on National Museum, objects originating in ‘Naga’, ‘Toda’, ‘Khasi and ‘Ghana’ have also been put on display. The gallery has been curated by Mr. Anandesh Pratap, Curator, National Museum.

Exhibitions

The World of Khamas

The World of Khamas was an important exhibition organized in collaboration with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture during the Jashan-e-Khasmas Festival in February 2003. It celebrated the many legends, heroes, artists and traditions of Khamas in his homeland, the city of Delhi.

Amar Khamas Delhi (2251-1252 CE) was one of the greatest poets of this region who lived in the period which saw a coming together of scholars, poets, artisans, artists, traders, and merchants from Persia and Central Asia. He also saw the merging of two great civilizations and the two盛the most beautifully in his literary works on surpassing the masters from Persia and Central Asia. The diverse range of Amar Khamas Delhi’s work in the fields of culture, science and art provided an understanding of each bends in the 15th-century era and their continuity into present-day India.

The exhibition included 22 art objects including manuscript and decorative art objects from the collection of National Museum. During the exhibition, a Manuscript curated by Mr. Arif Javed Ahmad was organized at National Museum Auditorium.

The Hon’ble Minister of Culture Smt. Chandresh Kumari Kanth inaugurated the exhibition on 22nd February 2013.

Safar Nama: Journeys through a Kalamkari Hanging

Safar Nama: Journeys through a Kalamkari Hanging explored a unique textile that represents the formation of European trade in India during the early 17th Century. A painted fabric of the Indian traditions, where cotton (patta) and made of bamboo) is used for painting the fabric, was crafted from the Coromandel Coast. India to its current location in the French city of Mulhouse at the Museum of Printed Textile in France.

The hanging, full of depictions of plants and animals which reveal layers of memory associated with the symbolism and cultural ethos of different geographical areas, is also a unique piece of the Kalamkari (printed) style. It contains a series of scenes, with a galia of artisans for the European market, along with the dates of different events from miniature painting and murals. The piece also depicts unique features of Persian, Thai, Chinese, Japanese and Malay motifs, along with an affinity with paintings of the Time Fantasy category found in the Mughal, Persian and Decoret schools.

Considering the delicate nature of the artifact, this exhibition was booked not on the fabric, but on the highest resolution digital print of the original. These detailed images showed the cultural and artistic complexity that makes this hanging an extremely unique and valuable object. The exhibition commenced on 30th March 2013 and was on show until the 16th April 2013.
Exhibitions

Ramayana

The exhibition ‘Ramayana’ was inaugurated on 31st August, 2013 by the then Minister of Culture, Shri Chandresh Kumari Katoch and remained on view until the 29th October, 2013. The exhibition showcased 105 masterpieces of the Ramayana theme paintings from the collections of National Museums, which illustrated the theme of the Ramayana. In addition, miniature paintings, namely Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Hanuman, Dashavatara and Pragjyotis, Mahabharata and Garuda, provided a rich dimension to the body of the exhibits.

The Ramayana exhibition is presently on display in the Royal Museum of Art and History in Brussels, Belgium where it will be displayed until 16th May, 2014. A special brochure and an activity book for children were an integral part of the exhibitions and are available for sale at National Museum Book centre and on our website.

Sculptors and Artists of India

Fifteen sculptors and artists from all over the world participated in this exhibition, ‘Sculptors and Artists of India’, which was inaugurated on 1st April, 2013 by the then Minister of Culture, Shri Chandresh Kumari Katoch and remained on view until 31st August, 2013. The exhibition showcased the works of sculptors from India and an other countries to give a feel of the varied traditions of sculpture.

The exhibition was on view till 31st August 2013 in the National Museum and simultaneously in the Delhi Photo Festival being held at India Habitat Centre.

An Excerpt from the work created by Bansi Malhotra

Musical Landscapes

Musical landscapes & The Goddesses of Music: Recent Advances in Musical Art was a unique exhibition bringing together the theme of music by exploring its scientific, artistic, and spiritual dimensions, and the reflections in the Goddess images across five cultures.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Ranjit Kakkar, a celebrated Carnatic vocalist and an accomplished musicologist. At an event held on 28th November, 2013, in the presence of a large number of visiting dignitaries, Ms. Vinita Basu, member of the National Museum, inaugurated the exhibition.

The exhibition provided an opportunity to enter into the world of Indian music through electronic installations, digital images, and sound recordings of performances by masters. The exhibition was designed to appeal to all age groups and was very well received as a unique coming together of expertise in art and music.

The Voluntary Services building was also extended to this exhibition which made for an interactive and entertaining experience for visitors.
Programmes at National Museum

Educational Activities
1. National Museum celebrated International Museum Day on 18th May, 2013. Gallery Talks by the Curators on "Ndulali, Sliho’s Kite ‘Ama and Ama’ and four special films on Rakshakya were organized. On this occasion, Painting Competition for School children was also organized.

2. Summer Holiday Programme "Know Your Museum" Arts and Crafts programme for school students and also for Physically Challenged and Visually Impaired students was organized from 15-24 June, 2013.

3. A special workshop on Remedi Yoga for school students was organized in June, 2013.

4. An outreach programme for school students was also organized at Civil Services Officers Institute from 17th June - 28th June, 2013.

5. Organized Educational Tour for underprivileged children of the age group 5-8 years from an NGO called UDAAN ON 17th June, 2013.

6. Special Gallery Talks were organized for Centre for Cultural Research, Training (CORT) - sponsored Teacher Educators on 1st June, 8th June, 15th June and 22nd June, 2013.

7. A Gallery Lecture was also organized on Decorative Arts titled ‘Bharatiya Suatha Kala’ by Dr. Ambika Patni, Curator of the collection on 3rd August, 2013.


9. National Museum organized a painting Competition on the theme of "A Dialogue and objects of Museum for school children on 25th December, 2013. Nearly 700 students participated in the competition which was held at the central Rama Hall. Winners were given prizes on the 28th January, 2014. Eminent artists such as Arpita Chaur counted among the judges to chose the winners.

New Initiatives

NM Volunteer Guide Programme

The Volunteer Guide Programme called Park Pradarshak was initiated in April 2013 to provide a personalized and educative experience to visitors of National Museum. National Museum put out a call in the public domain inviting interested people from diverse backgrounds to come and volunteer in the initiative. In the succeeding sequence, nearly 800 applications were received and through a selective process batches of volunteers were selected and trained by experts at the National Museum to run the programme.

Today, second thousand visitors have already been taken around the museum by an army of more than 100 volunteers who regularly seal walks in the Museum. They also provide recommendations and suggestions for improvement of the Museum facilities from time to time which are welcome and guide the Museum to perform better for visitors.

It is hoped that the spirit of volunteers for museums is successfully deployed here becomes a template for other museums in the country as well.

The Park Pradarshak is available every day
Tuesday to Friday 10:30 am and 2:30 pm
Saturday and Sunday 10:30 am, 1:00 pm, 2:30 pm and 3:00 pm
Programmes at National Museum Institute

The Department of Museology, NMI organised story-telling and community interaction sessions in Ladakh, J&K and Western Uttar Pradesh.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of signing of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO), a three-day community interaction event was organised at Tshola, Gya, Ladakh and Khadka Village, Western Uttar Pradesh on 27th, 28th and 29th of October, 2013.

In Gya, Ladakh, five village elders were identified as part of the SICH documentation project. They were interviewed in the story-telling workshops as they have significant knowledge and expertise in local and cultural traditions such as festivals around Lhosar (Buddhist New Year), stone carving, weaving, herbal medicinal practice and architecture.

15 students from SICMI (Students’ Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh) participated in this event. The team consisted of students from various parts of Ladakh and included some students from Gya.

Workshop on Miniature Paintings

The Department of History of Art, National Museum Institute organized a five-day workshop on Indian Miniature Paintings from 2nd – 6th September, 2013. The aim of the workshop was to provide an understanding into the art of the miniature painting tradition among young students of NMI, who need to familiarize themselves with an important aspect of the cultural heritage.

For the workshop, national award-winning artist, Mr. Y. G. Acharjee, was invited to demonstrate and train the students in the traditions of Indian miniature paintings. During the workshop, the students were instructed by the artist in the various methods, techniques, style and the process involved in creating a similar art painting.

The History of Art department, NMI signed an MoU with the Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture, Vietnam.

The project proposes to prepare and publish a research catalogue of 50 sculptures from the collection of Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture in Vietnam.

The project will focus specifically on the development of Cham sculptures and its influence with the artistic traditions of India. The aim is to highlight the historic cross-relations between India and Vietnam in the domain of art and to better understanding of the shared history of the two countries. The methodology would focus on the identification and cataloging of the sculptures.

The National Museum Institute of History of Art, Culture and Museology New Delhi held its 20th Convocation on 7th June 2013. The NMI conferred 33 doctoral degrees and 132 master’s degrees to its students. The Hon’ble Minister of Culture Sri Chandresh Kumari Kumari, also the Chancellor of the Institute, presented the degrees at the Convocation at the North Auditorium, Central Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr. Shashi Tharoor was the Guest of Honour at the function. The convocation was attended by Culture Secretary (the then) Mr. Santosh Garde and National Museum Institute Vice Chancellor Dr. V. Venk. The Convocation was held after 23 years.
Publications

Rama Katha: The Story of Rama in Indian Miniatures

Rama Katha, the story of Rama through Indian Miniatures is an activity book for children based on the Ramayana miniature. On each page a miniature from the exquisite collection of National Museum has been depicted and children can write their own Ramayana by looking at them and with the help of imagination.

The format is simple and encourages children to appreciate miniatures and express their ideas in their own language.

It is priced economically at Rs. 50 per copy.

The Museum in 90 Minutes

After a long wait, National Museum has produced a brochure called The Museum in 90 Minutes.

The brochure is free for visitors and is available in English and Hindi. It has a detailed museum map and 23 highlights objects spread across galleries on all three levels.

The brochure will provide the viewer with a possibility to see the museum and not miss its most important exhibits in one short time at hand.

The brochure together with the Volunteer Guide Programmes are aimed at enriching the visitor experience.

The exhibition attempts to show that Indian creativity has grappled with both the material world of the body as well as its physical reality through different social and spiritual forms and aspects of the body as the context of the body ideal as seen in transcendent, eternal and natural contexts and the latter capture of experiencing the body through all its senses.

Dr. Kunwar Prakash

President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Chairman, India-China Cultural Co-ordination Committee

(The Body in Indian Art and Thought, in ROYAL, Researches published by Universitetsforlaget, Norway and Firsten, Norway)