

2022-2023 ● ANNUAL REPORT ●

IN THIS YEAR

- COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
- ART RESIDENCY
- ARTS CONNECT



THEATRE CAMP AT CHOWHATI

B-CAF Organised a theatre camp in Chowhati under the vertical Arts Connect and gathered a group of children on a Sunday morning in an open space. The children came without any idea of what was the plan for the day. They had never seen or experienced theatre before. Through the camp, they learned about it, and they learnt and performed the movements of animals with full interest and energy.



Art's Connect

Why theatre camp for the community is necessary?



How theatre camp is impacting the community.



Further Info: www.bcaf.org.in

WORLD HERITAGE DAY, 2022

Talk Session with Prof. Alope Kumar : 'Nurturing Heritage through Art Leadership'

On World Heritage Day, B-CAF organized a Talk session with Prof. Alope Kumar on 'Nurturing Heritage through Art Leadership'. The discussion on preserving and moving forward with intangible heritage and traditions needs further interventions and thoughts beyond only policy making and conservation, we understood. There is a need of making sustainable life for arts and artisans as well as making them relevant in the contemporary time. Hence, the intervention of an arts leader is necessary who has the ability to think through and create possibilities for contemporary times by not moving away from traditional practices.



To watch the Session, Please [Click Here](#)



Further Info: www.bcaf.org.in

RABINDRA JAYANTI, 2022

To celebrate the birth anniversary we published a blog 'Rabindranath and Santals: A legacy of coexistence.' Written by Boro Baski.

Boro Baski, PhD, is a trustee of Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adibsi Trust and the co-founder of a Non-formal Santal school, Rolf Schoembs Vidyashram, near Santiniketan, West Bengal. The school has an innovative approach to Santal education with Tagore's emphasis on learning through play, music, arts and mother tongue. He has translated three books and written several articles in national and international journals and edited volumes.

Here is a part of the blog –

"The stable connection that exists with Santiniketan since Tagore's days is not with the people but with the birds, rats, mice, snakes, rabbits, and foxes, because the green, bushy and sometimes jungle campus of the university remains an ideal hunting ground for the common Santals. The job opportunities have been created for them by the Santiniketan community, but that is merely for working as housemaids, night guards of the empty bungalows and occasionally



Rabindranath and Santals: A legacy of coexistence.

for dance programmes of Santal men and women for the enjoyment of the educated middle class. Recently the adjacent Santal villages have been included in the official tour plan for the tourists who arrive from outside to visit sites like the Tagore Museum, the Kanch mandir, Khoyai and Bauls. The Government also supports this initiative and popularizes it through hoardings that advertise the visits to Santal villages."

To read the Blog, please [Click Here](#)

WORLD MUSEUM DAY, 2022

Talk Session with

Ms. Ruby Palchoudhuri : Witnessing Art Leadership

On World Museum Day, B-CAF, Bridging Culture and Arts Foundation in collaboration with West Bengal Craft Council has organised a session with Ms. Ruby Palchoudhuri who has years of experience working with artisans and knowledge of leading artisans to create a better future. She was in conversation with Art leader Ms Reena Dewan. The discussion pondered on the different areas of the art leadership process and how it can be beneficial for an artist or an art form.



To watch the Session, Please [Click Here](#)

Further Info: www.bcaf.org.in

FIELD VISIT TO SUNDARBAN

Sundarban is situated in the southern part of Bengal. Geologically this area is a swamp area with estuarian geological features that includes numerous deltas and islands surrounded and intersected by a network of rivers tributaries and canals. A part of this delta area is in Bangladesh. Most of the area is covered with mangrove forests, which makes it the largest mangrove forest in the world. Sundari (*Eritiera fomes*), and Goran (*Ceriops decandra*) are common mangroves in this area. The objectives of this field trip are to understand the ground reality of the Kantha art and artisans of the Sundarbans area and to create a sustainable livelihood practice and skill development program for the artisans. Through the survey, we documented their work and experience which will help us to work further.



Community Leadership Program

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY, 2022

ROLE OF ORGANIC COLOURS FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF ENVIRONMENT ROLE OF ORGANIC COLOURS FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF ENVIRONMENT

On 5th June on the occasion of World Environment Day, we published a blog 'ROLE OF ORGANIC COLOURS FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF ENVIRONMENT' written by Manas Bhaumik, who is a Scientist in the Botanical Survey of India Industrial Section Indian Museum, Kolkata. His field of specialization is Taxonomy, Biodiversity and the conservation of wild plants in the Eastern Himalayas. About 55 research papers and 7 book chapters were published in national and international peer-reviewed Journals.

Here is a part of the blog –

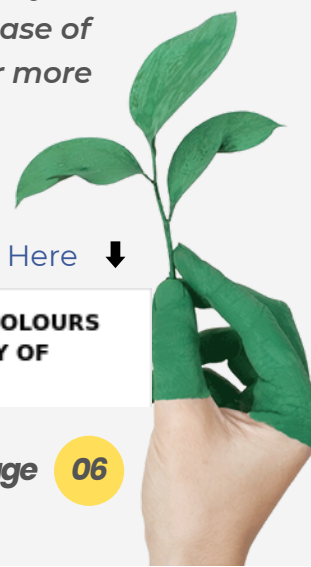
"In our natural resources, we get colours from plants, animals, microorganisms and minerals. The colours obtained from plants, animals and microorganisms are considered organic. There are more than 4500 plants from which we get natural colours. Although all plants possess natural colours which may or may not be useful to us. Some animals also provide excellent colours too. We also get some natural colours as a byproduct of an industrial process.

*Until the discovery of synthetic dye in the middle of the 19th century the natural dyes flourish to a large extent. The blue dyes obtain from indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*), various red sheds from Madder (*Rubia cordifolia*), Brazil wood (*Caesalpinia sappan*) Morinda (*Morinda citrifolia*) Safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*) yellow colour from turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) Saffron (*Crocus sativus*), Barberry (*Berberis aristata*), Myrobolan (*Terminalia chebula*), Marigold (*Tagetes erecta*), Dolu (*Rheum nobile*), different shades of orange-red obtain from Annatto (*Bixa orellana*), orange-yellow from flame of the forest (*Butea monosperma*, Kamala (*Mallotus philippensis*) were very few examples. Different shades of colours may procure by increase or decrease of colorants or mixing of two or more colorants with different combinations.'*

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓



**ROLE OF ORGANIC COLOURS
FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF
ENVIRONMENT**

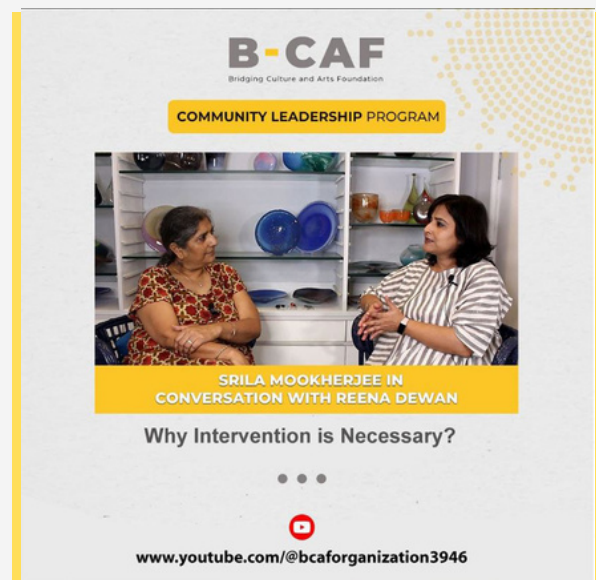


WHY INTERVENTION IS NECESSARY?

Talk Session: Ms Srila Mookherjee in conversation with Ms Reena Dewan

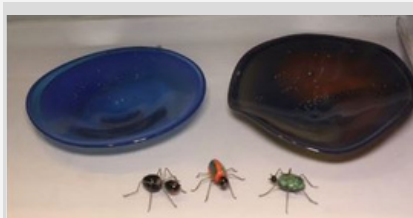
Under our 'B-CAF Community Leadership Program', we curated a series of sessions on engaging with communities to create a sustainable future for arts and artisans. Art leadership can offer space for intervention and innovation. We organized a talk session with Srila Mukherjee, a renowned artist in conversation with our Board Chair Ms. Reena Dewan.

Through our Community Leadership Program, we work with communities to Build Leadership and Entrepreneurship among them, this creates possibilities of decent work opportunities through traditional art practices.

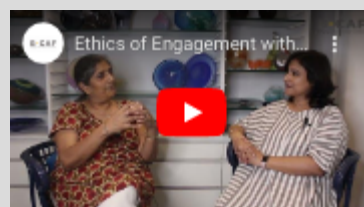


This also fosters innovation and promotes sustained and inclusive Economic growth in line with SGD Goal 8.

Community Leadership Program



To watch the Session, Please [Click Here](#)



Further Info: www.bcaf.org.in

WORLD MUSIC DAY, 2022

A Song Narrates A Story

On World Music Day we have published a blog, *A Song Narrates A Story* written by Aashay Gune.

Aashay Gune is a Communications Professional, working in the development sector and works as Freelance Translator. His areas of interest are Music, Literature, Social and community life, and current affairs.

Here is a part of the blog –

"Working for an organisation that improves the quality of learning of government school children across the country allows me an experience to regard languages both as a fascination and a challenge! The former is for the diversity they present and the latter for the multiple layers of obstruction they create for communicating our cause and an apparent clog in enabling children to read in the language of the state through their transition from a boli bhasha to a pramaan bhasha.



A song narrates a story- World Music Day

BCAF / Jun 21, 2022

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#)

But beyond this antithesis lies an opportunity to explore the multitude of cultures presented by these languages and the literature, perhaps still untapped, they have carried through them across generations. And what better medium than a song to explore the unexplored? Apart from the melodic interpretations and rhythmic glimpses, a song offers a glance into the daily life, struggles, joys and a dichotomy in the life of these communities."

THE 'QUEER' IN 'QUEER ART' – AN ADJECTIVE, OR A VERB, OR A CALL TO REVOLUTION?

A blog written by Indrani Banerjee has been published on our website on 30th June, 2022.

Indrani is a queer rights activist who identifies as a gender non-binary and bisexual/sexually fluid individual. She has been in the queer rights movement for the last 10 years and is a member of Sappho for Equality. Professionally she is an IT professional and works as an instructional designer in an MNC. Apart from work and activism, Indrani is a backpacker and a solo traveller, an artist and a poet, and she uses different mediums of art and performance art (poetry) to express and celebrate herself and to provoke and rebel against the rigid patriarchal oppressive structures of society.

Here is a part of the blog –

The answer is a big resounding NO. Simply defining queer art as art made by people who are homosexual, bisexual or transgender, is pretty reductive, and though love, sex and desire are the strongest themes within queer art, it is problematic to

focus only on this because queer art or 'queering art' is this and much more! Let's take a step back and understand the word 'queer', shall we?

The word 'queer' is defined in the Oxford Dictionary (2021) as 'strange' or 'unusual', but apart from being an adjective, the word is also used as a verb. In that capacity, it then also includes 'queering art' and includes artists and curators who take familiar imagery and ideas and 'queer' them as a part of a deeply political act, which might extend beyond gender and sexuality. So queer(ing) art then includes queer-identifying individuals and allies making art to express, celebrate, provoke and protest the normative, as well as non-queer-identifying artists breaking binaries and deconstructing hegemonic structures in or through their respective art forms.

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#)

The 'Queer' in 'Queer Art'
An adjective, or a verb, or a call to revolution?

The 'Queer' in 'Queer Art' - An adjective, or a verb, or a call to revolution?

EIGHT-DAY LONG SKILL BUILDING WORKSHOP



We organized an eight-day workshop in Kolkata under our vertical B-CAF CLP (Community Leadership Programme), emphasising skill development and design interventions.

In November 2021 we visited Bharatpur village, a remote village in Bankura district of West Bengal, to do research through personal interactions & surveys on the art form of patachitra and the life of artisans of the village. In March 2022, in collaboration with Resource Partner Botanical Survey of India, we organised a workshop, film screening and interaction on deriving Organic Colours from Natural materials.

In July 2022, we designed an eight-day skill-building workshop with a focus on design and product development. Where artists from Bharatpur village participated and were introduced to new design possibilities that inspired them to create new artworks.



KUMARTULI VISIT



Intangible cultural heritage according to the UN body is contemporary, traditional and living at the same time and is community-based, representative and inclusive and has a vital role in maintaining cultural diversity and its understanding can help with intercultural dialogue and mutual respect for other ways of life. It does not end with monuments or collections of objects. It also includes living expressions, traditions inherited and passed on through generations through performing arts, oral traditions, rituals, social practices, festive events and the like. On December 15 last year, UNESCO accorded Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) status to Kolkata's Durga Puja festivities.

The UN agency said that the festival is “seen as the best instance of the public performance of religion and art, and as a thriving ground for collaborative artists and designers”. “The festival is characterized by large-scale installations and pavilions in urban areas, as well as by traditional Bengali drumming and veneration of the goddess. During the event, the divides of class, religion, and ethnicities collapse as crowds of spectators walk around to admire the installations.

The ICH tag brings international attention to the need for the preservation and conservation of the site. It brings tourism to the site, with its accompanying economic benefits to the host country and local area.



We visited Kumartuli, a place in the Northern part of Kolkata where the idols of Devi Durga were created from scratch. The Artisans of Kumartui are the most Skilled artist. The idol preparation in Kumartuli is at its peak among monsoon showers. This year the city is going to celebrate the festival like never before. We reached there to understand the situation and talked to them about their excitement about the new tag of ICH received from UNESCO.

UNESCO x DURGA PUJA

WORLD HANDLOOM DAY, 2022

Talk Session: Raising the income of Indian weavers

Under our 'B-CAF Community Leadership Program', we organized an online session on 'Raising the income of Indian weavers' as a part of the celebration of 'National Handloom Day 2022'. If we want to keep the practice and tradition of the Indian loom alive, we need to ensure that the weavers have the income they need to live healthy lives. Dr Sanjay K. Panda who has years of experience working with handloom artisans and knowledge of leading weavers to create a better future was in conversation with Art leader Ms Reena Dewan during the session. In the program, there was a lively discussion on the current situation and future prospects of Indian weavers and the Handloom industry. In 2015, the Government of India declared that the day 7th of August will be celebrated every year as National Handloom Day. Its main objective is to empower weavers financially and instil pride in their exquisite craftsmanship.

To watch the Session, Please [Click Here](#)



India has a long history of producing vibrant and colourful textiles.

Fragments of woven cotton and bone needles found at the historic sites of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro bear witness to this. India's handloom industry has developed tremendously over time. Weavers wove cloth mainly through hand looms using different types of yarn.

The abundant supply of raw materials and the availability of a cheap and skilled workforce helped to grow the handloom industry exponentially.

CELEBRATING KOLKATA'S DURGAPUJA UNESCO HERITAGE TAG

UNESCO x DURGA PUJA

We ran a month-long social media campaign to celebrate Kolkata's Durgapuja receiving the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ITH) tag from UNESCO. Our campaign aimed to promote the historical significance, cultural richness, and community participation associated with Durgapuja in Bengal and Document it. Through a series of blog articles and videos, we engaged with our audience and provided insights into the history, traditions, and diverse perspectives on Durgapuja.



We published several informative and engaging blog articles as part of our campaign:

First Barorayi/Sarbojanin Durgapuja in Bengal

Our blog article shed light on the transition of Durgapuja from being primarily celebrated by wealthy "Banedi" families to the emergence of public or "Sarbojanin" pujas. We discussed the influence of nationalist sentiments during Lord Curzon's tenure and the establishment of the first public Durgapuja in Calcutta in 1910. This article emphasized the transformation of Durgapuja into a festival that united people and expressed nationalistic Favour.

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓



First Sarbojanin (Community) Durga Puja at Kolkata

History of Durgapuja in Bengal

In this blog article, we delved into the historical background of Durgapuja, sharing the mythological origins and significance of this festival as a time of reunion and rejuvenation. The article also highlighted the evolution of Durgapuja celebrations, including the earliest recorded pujas in Nadia and Kolkata.

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓



10 Traditional Durgapuja of Kolkata

To showcase the diverse traditions within Kolkata, we published a blog article highlighting ten traditional Durgapujas in the city. This article celebrated the richness and diversity of Durgapuja festivities in Kolkata.

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓

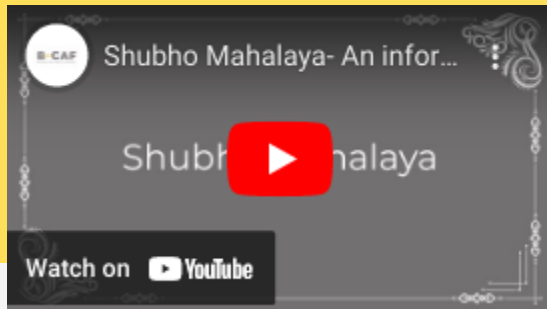


In addition to our blog articles, we created a series of captivating videos to engage our audience:

Concept of Durgapuja by Nandini:

To provide expert insights, we reached out to Nandini, an expert on Durgapuja, and conducted a talk session. We captured this session in a video, where Nandini elaborated on the conceptual aspects of Durgapuja, including the symbolism behind idol making, pandal decoration, and the integration of social issues into the festivities.

To watch the video [Click Here](#) ↓



Bonedi Barir Pujo:

Through interviews with members of a traditional Bonedi family, we captured the essence of their Durgapuja celebrations. We reached out to the family members across generations and documented their customs, rituals, and the significance of Durgapuja in maintaining their cultural heritage. This video provided an intimate perspective on the traditions associated with Durgapuja within a specific family.

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓



Sarbojanin Durga Puja:

To highlight the community aspect of Durgapuja, we interviewed members of a community club involved in organizing a Sarbojanin Durgapuja. This video showcased the collective efforts and community participation that make Sarbojanin pujas a vibrant aspect of Kolkata's Durgapuja.

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓



Durgapuja from the Perspective of an RJ:

We had the opportunity to interview an RJ (Radio Jockey) who shared her personal experiences and observations regarding Durgapuja. In this video, she discussed the festival's impact on the city's atmosphere, the role of music and entertainment during Durgapuja. This unique perspective added an exciting element to our video series.

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓



DESIGN INTERVENTION WORKSHOP

We organized a workshop through our organization B-CAF at a remote Island Village of South 24 Pargana district of West Bengal. Our team planned a workshop on Kantha along with expert designers. We left Kolkata early in the morning and first travelled 80 km by car and then by local boat to reach the island. Then we reached our destination after crossing a 40-minute journey in a three-wheeled van on a very bumpy road. Our team travels to the workshop location via a diesel-powered motorboat which is the only public transport available. About 90 women participated in our workshop. We conducted a workshop on how they can use their skills to develop new products based mainly on fabric reuse and rebuilding so that the product is suitable for the market.



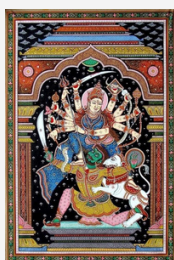
Community Leadership Program



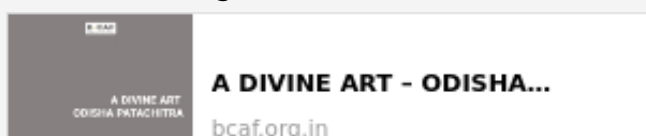
A DIVINE ART - ODISHA PATACHITRA

A blog written by Anita Bose has been published in our website on November 2022.

Anita Bose is an Author, Artist, Researcher, Associate with Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Vivekananda Kendra, Guest lecturer of RMIC, and Course coordinator of Appreciation of South East Asian Culture and Heritage through Ramayana. Former Guide of National Museum volunteer, Bangkok. Associate with Siam Society under Royal Patronage Author of Three important books on Jagannath Patachitra, Ramayana Footprints in South East Asian culture and heritage, Saptapadi. Editor of Global Encyclopaedia of Ramayana, Curtain raiser volume & Bangabhumite Ramayana charcha. More than 50 articles published in abroad and India. She is also related to various social work in India and abroad.



To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓



Here is a part of the blog –

'The state of Odisha, neighbouring West Bengal, is the abode of Lord Jagannatha, one of Lord Vishnu's many forms, and has been sheltering and nurturing an ancient form of art for centuries in the quiet of humility and inconspicuousness. "Anga", "Banga" and "Kalinga" come together as cultural boundaries of Bengal and its traditions. Within these boundaries lies the enigmatic essence of the divine - the Jagannatha Culture. A reckoning force that seeks to promote harmony while reconciling with itself the turbulent nature of life, this ancient communion of Man and God is essentially an intangible feeling of joy and has led to the creation of magnificent chariots, masterfully crafted temples, soulful music, vibrant dances and colorful artworks across the state of Odisha. In this plethora of creative ingenuity, a branch of ancient art called stands out in its apparent inconspicuousness. Originating in the village of Raghurajpur in Odisha, this rarity of Indian antiquity portrays, with vivid colors and deft strokes, the glory and splendour of Jagannatha Culture through the illustration of various tales and folklores.'

THEORISING FOLK: PATACHITRA

We published a blog written by Amitabh Sengupta on our website on December 2022.

Amitabh Sengupta.

Born in Calcutta, in 1941, Amitabh graduated in Painting from Calcutta, in 1963. Later he received a French Government Scholarship to study Painting and Graphics in Paris, between 1966 and 1969. After spending six years in Chennai and Delhi, Amitabh went to Paris, once again in 1976. Later he did Ed.M. from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He spent eleven years in Nigeria as the Head of Visual Arts at the University of Port-Harcourt in Nigeria. His paintings are shown in Nigeria, the USA, Europe and the Far East. He has published four books in UK and India. He lives and works in Alipurduar in West Bengal.

Here is a part of the blog –

'Folklife was seen as the continuing evidence of savage culture, everything in it is to be seen on a lower grade. Observing folk traditions in a hierarchical measure is also pre-existing habit in India. For instance, Brahminical discourses ignored any serious observations on the lower-rank societies that were untouchable. Thus, there is no tradition differentiating folk history in any form. The folk study has several reservations within European scholarships as well. They restricted folkloristics and oral traditions as the main domain. It became similar in India which overshadowed the meaning and context of visual forms within folk cultures, for example, the song and pictures of Patachitra, wall paintings and other artistic objects.'

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓



INTERACTION BETWEEN INDIGENOUS FEMALE KARIGARS FROM SUNDARBAN AND INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS ARTISTS

With the support of the Australian Consulate Kolkata, we organized an exchange program that brought together indigenous artists from Australia and Kantha artists from the Sundarbans in West Bengal, India. The aim of this program was to foster cultural exchange and collaboration between these two indigenous communities.

Community Leadership Program

Sharing each other's stories and exchanging ideas



B-CAF & 

Presents

Interaction between
Indigenous Female
Karigars From
Sundarban
and
Australian
Indigenous Artists

Date - 18-01-2023

Community Leadership Program

The journey to the Sundarbans was an adventure in itself. We embarked on an early morning journey from Kolkata, travelling 80 km by car and then switching to a local boat to reach the island where the Kantha artists reside. From there, we continued our journey on a bumpy road for about 40 minutes in a three-wheeled van to reach our final destination.



Through hands-on workshops and demonstrations, the indigenous artists from both communities learned from each other's artistic practices, exploring the similarities and differences in their techniques, motifs, and cultural narratives. This interaction provided an opportunity to deepen their understanding of each other's heritage and foster mutual respect and appreciation.



The presence of the Australian Consulate-General Kolkata added significance to the program, highlighting the importance of cross-cultural collaborations and partnerships. Their support and presence further enhanced the cultural exchange between the two indigenous communities.



INDIAN PICTURE STORYTELLING TRADITIONS (THE PATACHITRAS): PRECURSOR TO THE CINEMA

we published a blog written by Ravi Kant Dwivedi on our website in February 2023.

Ravi Kant Dwivedi. Graduated in Fine arts from Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan. He is a Photographer, Documentary Film Maker and Cultural Ethnographer. With a rucksack, sleeping bag and camera, Ravi travelled extensively, mostly on foot, to the very remote interiors of rural and tribal belts of Eastern India. For the last four decades, he has been involved in research and documentation of Folk and Tribal art and culture. Had witnessed and documented very rare rituals and cultural practices. Chadar Badar, a unique form of tribal puppetry by Santhal adivasis, was discovered and revived by him. His research papers, articles, reviews and photographs had published in many books, journals and magazines in India and abroad.

Here is a part of the blog –

'Indian storytelling traditions are ancient and venerable art forms that humans have transmuted into a variety of mediums for diverse purposes. From oral traditions to visual arts (paintings, sculptures), dance, theatre, and later to books, cinema, and recently to virtual environments, the method of the narrative has undergone constant technological innovations to present a lived experience.

Traditional narrative pictorial forms from India mainly Patachitra of Bengal and Jharkhand could well be considered precursors to cinematic imagination. Fantastic and vivid, these full-blooded audio-visual dramas unroll themselves in yards, in a multi-coloured, sequential progression, or play with the dynamics of moving forms and changing scales.'

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓



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Here is a part of the blog –

In Eastern India the Chitrakars can be broadly divided into two main groups- the Patuas and the Jadu Patuas. The Patuas serve to the populace 'in general' and Jadu Patuas serves mainly to Santhal adivasis along with other populace of the area. Santhals are one of the largest and oldest among the Indian tribes, spread over Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, M.P. Assam and Jharkhand. The Santhals are mainly horticulturist and nature lovers. For their day-to-day and for agricultural needs they are dependent on other communities like potters, blacksmiths, weavers etc. to whom Santhals call "Harmittang" Har (Harh) means Santhals and Mittang- meeta, friend; Friends of Santhals. These communities generally live either in Santhal villages or in close proximity.

To read the blog Please [Click Here](#) ↓



Jadu Patuas: The Santhal Chitrakars

BCAF / Feb 4

EIGHT-DAY LONG SKILL BUILDING WORKSHOP



After the skill development program in July 2022, we once again took the initiative to organize an 8-day art residency and skill development program for Patachitra artisans in Bankura in March 2023. Throughout the event, we actively encouraged the artisans to adopt the use of natural dyes instead of chemical alternatives to promote eco-friendly practices. Emphasizing traditional art forms played a crucial role in preserving the region's rich cultural heritage while empowering the artisans to explore and nurture their artistic abilities. Through this platform, our aim was to create a sustainable and supportive environment that fosters the growth and recognition of these talented artists and their art.

Residency Program





Bridging Culture and Arts Foundation

***Address - Ground Floor, Flat number GB,176/14/163, Raipur Road
Kolkata - 700 032***

Location- [Click Here](#)

Email Address - bcaf.org@gmail.com

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Further Info: www.bcaf.org.in