

Negotiating Routes/ 2010 - 2014

Ecologies of the Byways

project reader

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Negotiating Routes: Ecologies of the Byways
2010 – 2014

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Introduction/

“The planting of seven thousand oak trees is thus only a symbolic beginning. And such a symbolic beginning requires a marker; the intention of such a tree-planting event is to point up the transformation of all of life, of society, and of the whole ecological system....”

**Joseph Beuys-7000 Oaks, Documenta 7,
Kassel 1982**

7000 Oaks functions not just literally in environmental terms, but also symbolically as inspirational imagery. It embodies Beuys' utopian and poetic metaphysics of a social sculpture, designed to initiate a revolution in human consciousness, by means of its permanence and longevity; "the human being as a spiritual being." The work also sought to render "the world a big forest, making towns and environments forest-like".

In 2006, the Taiwanese artist Wu Mali floated the idea of diverse artists groups planting trees across the Tropic of Cancer: a queen's necklace adorning the earth – a project that was the outcome of individual initiation and could work as an intimate, small scale project, as well as a highly ambitious, potentially vast undertaking intended to be replicated elsewhere.

At the time of its inception, the Negotiating Routes project was inspired by this sentiment: the need to render "the world a big forest, making towns and environments forest-like". First conceived as a two-year project, Negotiating Routes: Ecologies of the Byways, initially invited artists to reflect on the anxiety of the 'development' as embodied in the rank infrastructural changes taking place across India, and the tenuous coexistence of this development with local ecologies. The impetus for the project was responding to a major National Highways Development agenda, in which the Road Transport Ministry chalked out an ambitious plan whereby 15,000 km of roads and highways would be developed across India, resulting in the golden corridors which will run north to south and east to west across the country. To expedite the implementation of over 165 projects under the National Highway Development Program (NHDP) during the year, steps were taken to put land acquisition on fast track, shifting of utilities, obtaining clearances and taking legal and police action against non-performing contractors, displaced villagers and tribal's alike.

Negotiating Routes: Ecologies of the Byways aims to create an alternative road map where artists and communities come together and are involved in discussions on the regeneration of the local ecology of the cities or villages that they inhabit. The projects in Negotiating Routes

are site-specific and have an inter-disciplinary approach that combines research and art creation by artists and local communities, addressing the visible and invisible transformations currently taking place in their immediate environments.

Encouraging the archiving of local knowledge and mythologies about various ecologies like the flora, fauna, home remedies, stories and folklores, to date artists have established community interactions in 19 sites over a period of five years. Using the nomenclature of the National Highway or NH1, each site, ironically, named NR1, NR2 and so on, forms the nodal points of this alternative mapping as they connect to each other metaphorically, a route marked by art where transfer and exchange of knowledge has taken place.

In 2015, Khoj felt the need to pause and reflect upon the work achieved thus far under the Negotiating Routes umbrella. Thus the Negotiating Routes: 5 year meeting was conceived as an opportunity to bring together participants from all 5 editions of the project and create a forum for dialog and exchange. Over the years, the range of projects undertaken, have given rise to pertinent questions related to the nature of the project. This includes the use of methodology and resources; the role of theoretical and practical knowledge; the implication of community, collaboration and 'local'; the tenuous relationship with process and time; and the measure of impact and value of a project rendered. The questions apply not only to the nature of the Negotiating Routes project, but seek to address the burgeoning shift towards social practice in contemporary art today. The 5 year meeting serves as a moment to consider the future of Negotiating Routes program at Khoj, and the growth and changes being experienced in social practice today.

In 2010, the Negotiating Routes project was initiated by Varsha Nair and Pooja Sood at Khoj. Subsequent editions of the project have been curated by the Khoj curatorial and program team.



Planting



Open Day Play

NR1

From ground up

From sky down : Points of connection

📍 *Wadhvana Wetlands, Gujarat*

Collaborators

Varsha Nair

Born in Kampala, Varsha Nair's solo and collaborative works have been exhibited internationally and in Thailand where she lives currently. Exploring issues of home and displacement, Nair continues to document the changing environment of Baroda, where she grew up. She has presented at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2011), Bangkok Art & Culture Centre (2009), Tate Modern (2006), and National Review of Live Art, Glasgow and Perth (2006, 2005, and 2004). Varsha has been an editorial board member of the web art journal Ctrl+P since 1997 and has curated and co-organised several art events.

Dr Jitendra Gavali, Botanist and Co-author of the book, "Trees of Gujarat"; **Ms Harshangi Yagnik**, Scientist; **Ms Asmita Raval**, Architect and Environmentalist; **Dr Shishir Raval**, Eco Landscape Architect. (With input from Forestry Dept and Members of Birding Community)

Site History + Context

Accorded the status of 'Wetland of National Importance' (Protected Area Update No.54, April 2005); the man-made reservoir at Wadhvana is a significant site of bio-diversity attracting both indigenous and migratory species of birds. The Gujarat Government has earmarked the site for development and as a tourist destination; a large number of people are expected to visit the wetlands in the near future.

The area around the lake has been primarily open, with fields, clumps of vegetation and trees growing in various places. Some rare plant species growing here are in danger of being affected or altogether disappearing from the area as a result of the development that the government has embarked on.

Project + Process

The proposal for NR1 was to create an on-site installation by planting trees and grasses at Wadhvana Wetlands and to allow the creative process to be informed by the migratory routes of the birds and other water bodies (native and introduced); resting points, departure points, arrival destinations and travel paths. The data collected informed and impacted the artistic processes which took place.

The work brought together individuals and groups and was perceived as 3-way collaboration between art + community + science. It focused on the transference of knowledge via activities that were situated in the immediate locality, but also reached out and drew attention to global ecological concerns.

Workshops were a core component of the artistic and educational interactions of the Wadhvana Wetlands project with student participants from nearby schools in Shimoliya, Manjrol, Wadhvana, Gopalpura, Akotadar and Kukkad villages.

In July 2010, the artist and the collaborating team led several workshops that focussed on raising awareness about the local ecology of the wetland; mapping and map reading skills were also introduced. The activities were planned to coincide with the winter migratory patterns of birds and tourists flocking into the city. Saplings were planted by the students and teachers of 7 schools in the village next to the water. The students were provided with diaries and drawing materials and asked to record data from the wetland reserve over the course of a week. These diaries became an important tool and remnant of the project, in which the workshop participants recorded their interactions, learning and thoughts. Student participants were also invited to interview their family elders and teachers about the sites' history, provoking them to consider the changes that had occurred over time, and thus



Ex-wadhvana students and teacher



Planting Wadhvana School

draw connections between the preservation of ecology and the possible environmental degradation with the onset of tourism. The students were asked to express their thoughts and wishes for Wadhvana Wetlands and their village. The diaries were left with them for a week, after which they were collected and reviewed by the artists; once the data was collected the diaries were returned to the students and they were asked to continue mapping and recording data. Dialogue and interactivity were at the core of this project, with the artist and her collaborators urging the local community to reclaim ownership of this threatened site by engaging with its natural ecological vitality and significance.

Residue

Planting around the lake took place from July 22 – 24, 2010. In December 2010 a final event was programmed to coincide with the arrival of the migratory birds, a workshop took place where students were encouraged to recognise bird species and interact and connect with their migration patterns.

The planting of native and rare trees and grasses emulated the form of a bower and were positioned around the lake. Logs and branches were positioned around each 'bower point' and were defined by a particular identity in terms of the diversity of species used to formulate that spot on the map. These bowers transformed into sites that one could mentally and visually string together, forging a constellation.

The installation was based on collective input from various scientists and creative practitioners, in collaboration with the local community. The goal of the project was to encourage an understanding and appreciation of the importance of bio-diversity and the local ecology of this wetland, whilst also standing in as a source of inspiration and knowledge. The project aimed to stress the importance of an ecologically sustainable future for all generations to come. The bowers took you on a journey from different vantage points, from land, to sea, to air – each element informed and responded to the processes happening around it. It was important that the community learnt to appreciate the wealth inherent in their immediate surroundings; through the artistic process attention was paid and drawn to the environment, instilling pride in the local residents. This project served as a catalyst for encouraging and inspiring involvement from

the community to tackle other environmental issues such as pollution in the area. The community was asked to volunteer and partake in the caring and nurturing of the plant bowers, therefore actively becoming involved in the project.

An exhibition of the student's diaries, maps and previous workshop outcomes were exhibited at the Forestry Dept Centre near Wadhvana Lake and at CSC, Vadodara.



Gharelu nuskhe & Muft ki Salah



Gharelu nuskhe & Muft ki Salah

NR 2

Gharelu Nuskhe *aur Muft ki Salah*

📍 *Chamba, Uttarakhand, 2010*

Collaborators

Aastha Chauhan

Aastha specialized in sculpture both for her B.F.A, completed at the Government College of Art in Chandigarh, and her M.F.A. at New Delhi College of Art. Between 2004 and 2010 she headed the community based art initiatives at Khoj International Artists Association in New Delhi.

Her independent curatorial projects include- Extension Khirkee, 2012, in collaboration with **Matteo Ferrarasi**; an independent street art festival and Antarrashtriya Khirkee, 2014, in collaboration with **Malini Kochupillai**. She was recently awarded the Brooks International Fellowship with the Tate Modern, in collaboration with Delfina Foundation. In 2011 she was awarded the Inlaks scholarship.

Site History + Context

This project was situated in the area of Chamba, in the Tehri Garhwal region of Uttarakhand. Although this green belt boasts a rich biodiversity and is home to many plants and herbs that have historically been used for medicinal purposes, the importance of this natural resource is gradually being lost in the haze of middle class aspirations for products being sold on TV. People within Chamba no longer have the time or the patience to wait for these herbal remedies to take effect. Allopathic medicines are gaining popularity and are being chosen to speed up the process of healing and override the use of herbal remedies and plants.

Project + Process

The idea of this project was to work with the Hernalvani Community Radio Station in Chamba to produce a radio programme of Gharelu Nuskhe & Muft ki Salah (home remedies and free advice), by and for the community of listeners that this radio station has cultivated in the Hernal valley over the past twelve years.

The team at Hernalvani was eager to expand their audience and share content with the online community by setting up a website. As they were unable to afford the costs of a website, the artist was requested to train the team to build and maintain a free blog on which they could upload their radio programmes.

Through interviewing over fifty people from seven different villages in the neighbourhood of Chamba, Chauhan collated a number of home remedies and health advice from the local community. This was then transferred into audio content that was broken down into 30 clips of 1 minute duration and broadcast over Radio Hernalvani 90.4 MHz, devised as a campaign which addressed the depleting natural habitat and the endangered traditional knowledge of the valley.

Despite ecological deterioration, this belt of the Garhwal Himalayas was still abundant with medicinal plants. There were a number of state supported nurseries for medicinal plants and ayurvedic hospitals, which assisted in maintaining these high numbers. A number of plants that repeatedly came up in conversations between the artist and the local residents and were commonly found in the area were temru, chulu, kala jeera, bhimal, kala bans, haldi, lasan, akhrot, dhatura and dhaniya. Some ayurvedic plants

were endangered which to some extent explained why these plants were no longer used in medical treatments, however the artist found that even those in abundance were no longer used for home remedies in the present day.

Chauhan developed the following questions to assist her research into the local medicinal plants. The following are the answers from some of the patients.

1. Why are you not using these plants?

They are known for their medicinal values and they will not damage your kidney.

If I don't take my daughter-in-law to the doctor every time she has the slightest problem, she complains to my son. We never needed to see a doctor... we didn't even have a doctor in the region.

2. What are they using these days.... fair & lovely is it? ...

I never needed anything for my skin; we ate pure butter and fresh vegetables. Look at me...I am eighty and my skin still glows.

These home remedies take too long. We are becoming an impatient society and need quick solutions and quick remedies.

Ever since the Television sets invaded our lives in the 90's the middle class aspirations for the shampoo Aishwarya Rai uses and the fairness cream Shah Rukh Khan is selling, is way more attractive than grandmother's remedies.

Residue

During the two months spent in Chamba, the artist collected home remedies, helped Henvalvani set up their first web presence and invited and assisted Riazat Ullah Khan (Art Director of Ogilvy & Mather) to conduct a stop - motion animation workshop with the Henvalvani team. A script writing workshop was also led by Riazat after being initiated by Aastha with the Henvalvani team in July, in an effort to deliver content that was less repetitive and offered more narrative structures.

Chauhan also recorded a large number of uses for the local plants, some of these were popularly known but rarely used and others were not as known or used despite their growth in various backyards across the village. The artist also documented and recorded fictional stories that had developed and survived over time, primarily centered round the magical qualities of the surrounding forest (people claimed the forest had cured cancer and that some had even found a cure for AIDS).

This radio campaign was an attempt at popularising the local knowledge. The audio clips came with the public disclaimer "No form of medication is guaranteed to cure. These home remedies cannot perform miracles, please consult your physician in case of an emergency".

Before Chauhan left Chamba, she was invited to be on the board of the radio station, an honour which she gratefully accepted. She is currently working with the station manager to raise funds for a Community Multimedia Centre at the Radio Station.



Images from Restless



Images from Restless

Restless

📍 *Chungthang and Dzongu regions, Sikkim, 2010*

Collaborators

Frame Works, New Delhi

Frame Works is a New Delhi-based collective, whose practice lies at the intersection of film, research and art. Their works are centered around questions of ecological transformation and sustainability, development and cultural practice.

Frame Works is **Ruchika Negi**, a filmmaker, visual artist and researcher who also writes on gender and policy-related issues; **Subhashim Goswami**, (worked with Frame Works from 2007-10) is currently pursuing his PhD in sociology from Delhi School of Economics; and **Amit Mahanti**, a filmmaker, cinematographer and editor, who has worked on documentary films and video installations that explore questions of ecology, culture and development.

Site History + Context

The Frame Works Collective chose to look at various narratives of changing ecologies in the mountain state of Sikkim, where dam sites were transforming according to the new mantra of development. The project was located at Chungthang in North Sikkim – the site of the largest dam in the State, the 1200 MW Teesta III Project. The team also looked at Dzongu – a 40 sq km protected area of the indigenous Lepchas, a tribe whose numbers were fast dwindling. The choice of these locations was considered and intentional, as the collective were interested in documenting the transformation of both the physical and the social landscape, in an active dam site area. In the beginning, these two sites presented contrasting images of one another, which was another reason why they were chosen.

Both sites became interesting points of contrast and departure.

Project + Process

The original proposal was to travel to these places and collect narratives of ecological myths, practices, histories, associations and/or material objects from the areas. The intention was to archive these in the form of a 'Green Book,' that was produced collaboratively with the locals; however, throughout the research process the team were surprised by the prominence of the dam upon the people's lives, especially in Chungthang.

The general mood was that the dam provided various opportunities for the community and the best had to be made of it. The problem with this approach as outlined early on was the general neglect of ecological awareness in the area. The collective felt it was a pointless task to search for stories that did not exist and rather decided to try and capture the intangible changes that were taking place, as a consequence of these projects. A sense of unease and anxiety was perceived by the artists in these areas and amongst the local community -- it was almost as if people were not entirely sure what was going on around them and how these changes were impacting their lives. They felt that the ephemeral nature of this transformation – intangible yet faintly palpable – needed to be spoken about. Understanding this anxiety became an integral part of the project and the social and artistic interventions and considerations of the area. The idea of a 'Green Book' thus readapted itself into a catalogue of their own impressions – impressions that were gathered primarily through conversations with people who belonged to the area and through



Images from Restless



Images from Restless

photographic documentation in the Chungthang and Dzongu areas. Through conversations with the local people, it was realised that ecological histories in the area had corroded over time. Almost everyone who was involved in the project was also involved in the dam in some way or the other. Young men did petty contractual work for the company; women became labour contractors for the site, old settlers of the town watched from the peripheries having been given monetary compensation in lieu of their land. Despite the general spirit of acceptance towards the dam, there was also a degree of unease and anxiety regarding the transformation that the town was undergoing.

Questions were posed by the locals to the artists:

Wasn't the dam good for the town?

If the wall of the reservoir broke, would their town get submerged?

Won't tourists come once the dam is complete?

Despite being complicit, no one seemed to be sure of what was happening around them. Being in Chungthang and interacting with the people there encouraged the artists to interrogate the very notion of ecology. Simply 'collecting' narratives of ecology was no longer seen as enough; ecology began to denote the network of lived realities and interdependencies as well as the web of unease and anxiety that hung over these towns. The place, in a sense, set the tone and provided the framework for working. The conversations and photographs that were collected in the process came together in a book called RESTLESS. Conversations with the people that the collective had interacted with were reinterpreted in various textual forms which were included in the book.

The collective brought back saplings that had been given to them by people that they met in Chungthang and Dzongu, which were planted at the Chorten monastery in Gangtok, a symbolic testimony to the turbulent changes in the ecological landscape of North Sikkim and as a memorial to these places which were losing their ways of life and living. The saplings

were positioned as gifts from the various people who had moved through the work and contributed in various ways; it was a way for them to leave their mark.

Residue

The initial idea of the collaborative 'Green Book' changed after the artists met with the people of Chungthang and realised that the dam had taken pre-eminence over the people's lives and was seen by many as a lucrative opportunity. The link between the people and ecological environment was tenuous – the collective sensed that ecological awareness was not easily articulated, or perhaps wasn't at all present in the community. The search for 'narratives of ecology', as originally planned, was no longer suitable, given the climate. Instead, Frame Works tried to capture the tangible and intangible changes taking over the environment as a consequence of these projects. The artists felt it was imperative to capture the narratives of the present and to explore what happens to the larger social ecology of a place, when definitive processes of change are set in motion. Therefore, the artists chose to position themselves at significant departure points in RESTLESS - as a way to document the process honestly and to also capture the ambivalence, restlessness, unease and anxiety that was being felt. These were the underlying themes of RESTLESS.

In Chungthang Frame Works also met an eco-tour operator/guide named TL, who was trying to visually document and catalogue the various types of flora and fauna found at different altitudes in the mountains. The next step in his process was to create an informal archive. This collection was shared by Frame Works with a local school in Gangtok – the intention, moving in a circular motion, was to once again re-instate awareness, knowledge and generate discussion and discourse. A copy was also given to the Research Wing of the State Forest Department in Gangtok.





Tree Planting



Rootless Rituals, teardrop protest

NR 4

The Katte Project

📍 *Bangalore, Karnataka, 2010*

Collaborators

Maraa is a Media arts collective based out of Bangalore, Karnataka, with a focus on technology based community media and visual and performing arts. Maraа engages in initiatives and campaigns for gender, environment and resistance in the urban Bangalore area. Through its activities it aims to create a space for diverse publics.

This project was facilitated by **Deepak Srinivasan**, who is an artist, media practitioner and researcher. Deepak's experience in media comes from his days as content developer with Worldspace Satellite Radio and projects at Maraа.

Collaborators on this project include **Elisabeth Lengheimer** and **Tanja Dinter** from Salon Emmer, a Vienna based participative community art group.

Site History + Context

This project took place in the local neighborhood of 1Shanthiroad Artist Residency space in Bangalore. The impetus for the Katte Project grew out of Maraа's involvement in a 2009 environmental campaign initiated by Hasiru Usiru, a Bangalore based collective to preserve urban green. While engaging in the campaign, Maraа realized that citizens of Bangalore wanted to express and voice their thoughts about the environmental loss they were witnessing, but not enough spaces were available to allow people to speak about the changing city. Maraа worked with the city's urban artists to build a community, foster exchange and collaborations and encourage more usage and imagination within public spaces, especially parks and gardens. Thus emerged the concept of the

Katte or traditional community centers around trees; these spaces that had worked as spaces of pause, communication and connection to the social, cultural and the ecological.

Project + Process

Project leaders from Maraа and Salon Emmer collaboratively explored and imagined notions of creative public protest through performance and utilization of the body as a tool of aesthetic protest and "voice" to address urban ecological issues. Interventions and actions took different forms and were collectively devised through community engagement workshops that aimed to engage a diverse range of participants. One action was '81 Maps of Shantinagar', which rose out of a series of walks and interactions with the surrounding areas of 1Shantiroad. Suresh Jayaram, visual artist and historian took the artists on a neighbourhood walk and a tour of the Lalbagh gardens. Been provided with this context of the visible Shantinagar and its landmarks, the attempt was to trace "invisible parts" of the neighbourhood and get residents from different urban classes in the area to participate in a collective process of mapping. Another action was 'Rootless Rituals', where the collaborators went out to specific site which had lost trees to infrastructural development and demonstrated their dissent through movement, visual triggers and facilitated dialogue.

Through the actions and initiatives carried out, the Katte Project team was faced with the challenges presented to their particular form of activism, which was either misinterpreted or considered as problematic for a variety of reasons. This particular method was not working in their favour to



Rootless Rituals, Suryanamaskar, Katte



Deepak, Lisa, Tanja

involve citizen participation, but was in-fact alienating them further from the root of the problem. To re-examine the nature of ecological importance within an urban cultural space, a tree festival that involved lateral and parallel imaginations of the importance of ecology was conceptualised. The festival tried to engage many urban groups including artists, students, eco-activists, educators and everyday citizens. The program was organized in collaboration with the interest of the participants, and took place over two consecutive weekends in June and July of 2010. The "Around a Tree" festival programmed a wide range of activities. On the first weekend, a screening session or Vriksha Chitra was organized at the 1 Shanthiroad gallery space. Films and video art relevant to the topic of tree-conservation were shown, with conversations facilitated by the project team. During the same weekend, a mobile poster gallery or Marangala Meravanige (A procession of Trees) was organized. The idea was to use the imagery of the posters to take conversations to any densely populated site within the city, and strike up conversations and dialog in a guerilla fashion.

The second weekend of the festival was held at Cubbon Park and featured a musical interpretation of famed Indian poet Kabir's ecological reminiscences; workshops on eco-art and theatre for children, and a participative public art installation at a site marked for tree felling.

Residue

During the course of the project, one of the most significant community activities that took place in a public space was a community -led tree planting festival. A park was identified in a part of the city that was considered exemplary for the politics that accompanied its ownership and use. Two local bodies, who could have shouldered the responsibility of developing the park, claimed the authority lay with the other. The group chose that particular park because there is no threat of road widening; an exercise widely being undertaken today, and one that is utilized as an all too-simple solution by the city's planners. The tree planting was an important opportunity to

show that most citizens only require a small impetus to act for positive change. The activity was also a chance for neighbors to familiarize themselves with one another, and realize the potential they created when combining their energies. In addition to planting new saplings at the park, the resident's group was able to raise a sum of sixty thousand rupees as a corpus to maintain and further develop the park space. It was also a course in citizen activism where they without waiting endlessly for the corporation to develop the park they have themselves taken the ownership. The residents of the locality eventually formed a committee for the maintenance of the trees in the park, which has even inspired them to develop two other spaces for community use.

This action led to the realization that community tree planting could be an exercise that brings people together for a common cause in an increasingly alienated urban social structure.

The ideas and actions first initiated through the Katte Project eventually grew into a city-wide tree festival called Neralu (meaning shade). Aside from artists, community stakeholders such as ecologists, academics and college students have shown a committed interest in the festival and its values. The project has evolved from the intentions of the Katte Project, and has a life, vision and momentum of its own, and has shown the potential to grow in future years.

This project aimed to explore and investigate what the process was like for an outsider participating in the everyday life of the Santali community. Secondly it opened up a space for artistic engagement, activism and interaction within the community, through an aesthetically and economically considered space.





Meeting in Pearson Palli



Participation in Hul Utsav in Vidya Dharpur, Kopai, Birbhum

NR 5

Aakilaarsi: *Mirrors of the Mind*

📍 *Birbhum, West Bengal, 2011*

Collaborators

Sanchayan Ghosh is an artist and a lecturer in painting at Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan. Inspired by the community rituals of Santiniketan and the workshop methods of Third Theatre of Badal Sarkar, his work process focuses on exploring methods of participation in multiple public and private sites and evolving site-specific art activities, community events and installation performances. His present concerns revolve around transformations of land, history, memories, people and home.

Baidyanath Murmu is a visual artist who lives and works in the Fuldanga village of the Santali community. He received his BFA in visual arts from Kala Bhavan, Visva Bharati, Shantiniketan.

Site History + Context

Aakilaarsi is a research and workshop-based art project set within the Santali community. The project explored the notion of home in the minds of Santali women, whilst also trying to understand the changing patterns of domestic and social life in the Santali community. The primary research area was the Birbhum district of West Bengal, where exposure to institutional knowledge had changed the social life of the Santali. Moreover the impact of globalisation had created a rift between the older way of Santali life and the new generation of Santali who were being exposed to digital entertainment and communication.

Project + Process

As a way to explore these changing lifestyle patterns and to establish a platform for

interaction, Ghosh conducted a series of collaborative workshops based on paper-making with bamboo leaves, as well as theatre performances with the younger generation of Santali men and women from various economic backgrounds and levels of education. Ghosh also explored the notion of home through an embroidery workshop with the women of the community.

Part of the project was to utilise materials that are local and familiar to the Santals, and perhaps introduce new ways of working with and interpreting these materials. The main material which was considered and explored during the course of the project was Bamboo, which is an essential tree for the Santali. Traditionally Santali homes are constructed using the leaves and shoots of the plants. Even objects within the home, such as furniture and utensils are cleverly created by manipulating the natural fibres. Additionally, dry leaves of the Bamboo tree are also used to stoke and build cooking fires. Ghosh introduced new ways of using the traditional material, through paper making workshops. Through the course of the workshops, the project team also created a platform to gather the community and reflect on the changes and threats that traditional Santali life was being faced with.

After careful selection of appropriate site and the construction of the base-structures needed to make paper, workshops were held for school-children from three Santali villages (Fuldanga, Pearson Palli and Boner Pukur Danga) around Santiniketan. Ghosh also introduced the technique of creating watermarks on the paper. After the completion of each workshop, an installation of the bamboo water-marked paper was created in each individual village. The installations were planned in collaboration with the participants and



Public Interaction in Balipara Hul Utsav



Pearson Palli & Balipara

worked as an interface between the different generations of the Santali community.

During the early meetings between the artist and the community there were lengthy discussions about the purpose of holding such workshops, the main question was how this experience would provide any financial benefit for the locals. The community was used to government organisations and NGO's providing compensation for knowledge enhancing workshops; therefore any workshop based activity was assumed to generate a similar outcome.

When the community was advised this activity would take place during their leisure time there were initial hesitations; however once Ghosh began building the workshop space, the villagers themselves began to assist the construction and slowly out of curiosity people began to join in. The overall experience of the workshops was quite well received by the community. The experience concluded with a procession where the villagers carried watermarked, bamboo leaf paper lanterns. Two processions were made in two different Hul festivals (Hul means revolution and it was initiated on the memory of Shidu and Kanhu who were the two main martyrs in the Santali revolution in 1855).

The concluding procession was sentimental and emotional conclusion to the project, which also held a symbolic significance to the project artists. The Santali community was granted the opportunity to look back upon their changing environment and to put measures in paths to utilise their limited resource in a creative and functional way. During the Ballpark Hul, members from the two villages of Fuldanga and Pearson Palli joined together to show and share the work. They also demonstrated the process of bamboo leaf paper making to visitors of the fairs from the surrounding villages. After these initial activities the communities of Fuldanga and Pearson Palli were both interested in transforming the physical workshop space into an active cultural centre, to continue the processes which were initiated and to share it with others from their own villages as well as the surrounding localities.

Residue

It was intended for the works created through the bamboo workshops to be installed in between two public sculptures based on Santali life by Ramkinkar Baij inside Kala Bhavan. This final installation would become a temporary platform and an interface for dialogue between the institutional framework of the University and the community life of Santali. The Installation would play host to a one-day interactive session between the Santali community and the neighbouring residents of the University. Unfortunately, the planned interaction with the University could not happen due to local political turmoil in the Santali villages during those days. The project team continued to facilitate informal interactions between the faculty members, students and the workshop participants, especially through the events organized in conjunction with the Hul festival.

By sharing the knowledge of transforming bamboo leaves into paper Ghosh was trying to participate in the everyday life of the Santali community and to explore their interpretation of the material as a process of knowledge-sharing. Through the process of the water-mark, the project documented the designs, texts and images that were imperative to the community and addressed issues such as conflict and the contradiction of contemporary Santali life. The marked bamboo paper also existed as an archive of traditional designs and patterns of Santali cultural heritage.



Dead Fishes



JCB

NR 6

Lake Tales

📍 *Jakkur Lake, Bangalore, Karnataka, 2011*

Collaborators

Surekha is a contemporary Indian video artist whose works showcase themes including Indian identity and Womanhood. She has been a full time artist since 1996 and her video works have been shown at galleries outside India since 2001. Surekha has been exploring the possibilities of the video form, negotiating the public and private, locating the body as a site of contestation and appropriation. She uses photography and video to archive, document and perform. Surekha was born in Bangalore, and has studied art at Ken School of Arts and Santiniketan, VisvaBharati University. She has shown her works both in India and many international shows. Surekha lives and works in Bangalore.

Site History + Context

Jakkur Lake is in the north-eastern part of Bangalore and is one of the largest and cleanest water bodies in Bangalore. It is the main lake in the chain of lakes comprising of the Yelahanka Lake upstream and the Rachenahalli Lake downstream. The lake has great historical and ecological significance to the city, and is used for extensive domestic functions by the inhabitants in the adjacent village of Sampighalli. In 2011, the lake was a selected site to be 'restructured' from a natural body to an artificial body, an undertaking which is part of a larger scheme of 'City Beautification' and 'Lake Development Projects'. In the due process, the functional purpose and the natural existence of the lake are both jeopardized and curtailed.

The 'recreative' element replacing the 'functional' and 'domestic' aspect of the lake is also a reflection upon the man-made alternatives offered as a choice at the cost of

the notion of farming; and how the latter is of the least priority to the governance.

Project + Process

Surekha's relationship with Jakkur Lake began many years before her project through the Negotiating Routes program. From 2008 onwards, the artist had been regularly documenting the changes that had been taking place at the lake. Through her lens, she was attempting to capture two parallel narratives that were occurring around the lake: that of the physical changes taking place at the lake site as it was transformed from a natural geological form to an artificially created one; and the changes that were occurring in the lives and livelihoods of the people who had depended on and lived with the lake for so many decades. The lifestyle of the people around Jakkur lake experience a forced shift from being a farming community to being something uncertain, after the farming land around the lake were acquired for the purpose of urban and residential developments. The lake is currently a site of peculiar internal Diaspora, wherein the change in it has made the settlement and people around it undergo an ecological, professional and hence a cultural and emotional displacement, while still very much retaining the sense of belonging there, due to the presence of the lake though in a modified version.

At the same time, the Bangalore Development Authority speaks a language of development of the lake, preserving it from pollution, increasing the storage capacity, saving the land from real estate encroachers; and also preparing it for an articulated public utility. To fulfill these requirements, walking pathways, islands for migratory birds, a boat-jetty and a separate



WIP



De Watering

idol immersion tank (Kalyani) have been constructed.

Surekha's explorations focused on a process of documentation, recording and re-tracing the history of the lake. The intention was to create an inter-disciplinary record and understanding of the changes that the lake was facing, using interviews, empirical history, memoirs, myths and the religious – belief system narratives on video-audio interactions with various generations of villagers, in whose lives the lake has always been an omnipresent factor.

Through the course of the project, the artist maintained an interactive blog which traced her journey and recorded her experiences of learning the Lake's history. Several persons, including local villages, environmental activists, ecologists, and even members of the BDA were interviewed and recorded. These recordings were made available on the artist's website, along with other traces such as photographs, mappings and recordings of the birds that would visit the lake.

Residue

As a culmination of her project, Surekha displayed her work in an exhibition organized at Bar 1 in Bangalore city. Works on display included photographic images, video interviews, archival and mapping materials, collection of oral – anecdotes from the Jakkur Lake community, and interviews taken with the Bangalore Development Authority. In addition to her own works, the artist curated a show of work from other young Bangalore artists, whose work each responded to this issue of ecology in crisis. Included in the exhibition were the works of Deepak R., a young artist skilled at creating aquarium-like structures; Chaitra, whose works were investigating the natural habitats of local snakes near water bodies; Kushal Kumar, an enthusiastic amateur ornithologists studying migratory patterns of sparrows; Naganagowda Patil, who created models of the areas around Jakkur Lake; and Deepak D.L., a sound-based artist who created works using the ambient sounds at Jakkur Lake.



Direction signage for the 5 Dharas



Indra Dhar , Bhrigu Dhar

NR 7

Badri Jal Abhiyan

📍 *Badrinath, Uttarakhand, 2011*

Collaborators

Asim Waqif

Delhi-based Asim Waqif studied architecture at the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi. His recent projects have attempted a crossover between architecture, art and design, with a strong contextual reference to contemporary urban-design and the politics of occupying/intervening/using public spaces. Concerns of ecology and anthropology often weave through his work and he has done extensive research on vernacular systems of ecological management, especially with respect to water, waste and architecture. He has worked in sculpture, site-specific public installation, video, photography, and more recently with large-scale interactive installations that combine traditional and new media technologies.

Vaibhav Dimri

Vaibhav Dimri is the founder and principal designer of a young and dynamic architecture and spatial design consultancy, based in New Delhi, called Anagram along with Madhav Raman. Their practice has won international acclaim as one of the top emerging practices in the world. Recently their design for the South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre, New Delhi has won the 2nd Prize at the prestigious Wienerberger Brick '10 Awards and a nomination for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2010. Along with traditional architectural practice, Anagram is also involved in design for film, television and theatre, installation art and planning. Vaibhav Dimri graduated as an architect from the School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi.

Site History + Context

Badrinath at an altitude of 3415 meters in the higher reaches of Garhwal Himalayas is one of the 4 most revered shrines for pilgrimage for Hindus. The Alaknanda River, one of the 2 main branches of the upper-Ganga, originates a few kilometers upstream, and a holy dip in the river is an essential part of the pilgrimage. It is believed that one's sins are washed away by bathing in the holy waters of the Ganga. Ganga-jal (ganga-water) is considered to be the purest and held to be very auspicious for a Hindu household. The pilgrimage to Badrinath has gone through an incredible transformation in the last few decades: an exclusive experience has been transformed into mass-tourism. This mass pilgrimage has created new situations and realities for the local people and environment. One of the most visible effects has been the exponential increase in non-biodegradable waste. Unfortunately very little has been done about the safe disposal of waste so far in Badrinath in spite of a proposed Badrinath Master Plan.

Project + Process

For this project, the artists concentrated on a single commodity readily available in Badrinath: Water. In Badrikashrama, the water is considered to be the purest and most holy. Holy is related to belief which is in abundance among the yatris (pilgrims); purity is its physical state. Dripping from ancient glaciers and flowing down mountain slopes, the waters of the Alaknanda are full of minerals and herb-extracts. There are also 2 springs nearby that have clean and clear water. Unfortunately, over time the contemporary pilgrim-tourist chooses to consume bottled water that is brought up from the plains while at Badrinath, the



Jai Plastic Vishal



Signage at Kurm Dhara

Ganga-jal that is considered to be the purest and holiest water is severely polluted by human generated waste. This dichotomy is where the project begins: The pilgrims come to Badrinath because it is a holy spot and the waters of the Alaknanda are so pure that they will wash away their sins; but the act of the pilgrimage itself kills the purity of the water.

The first part of the project involved extensive research of the people, the place and its ecology. The artists interviewed various people, like the CEO of the Temple Committee, local NGOs, district administration, religious groups and many local people. They tried to investigate what different stake-holders felt about the issues being addressed. Their research had indicated stories and legends associated with the various streams and water bodies in Badrinath, which they decided to use as the basis for the signage. During their time in Badrinath, the artists also conducted tests for potable water, from the various springs, rivers and streams. The results of the tests were positive, indicating that the natural water sources were safe for drinking. The artists felt that in order to awaken the pilgrims to the reality of the ecological challenges being faced by natural resources, it was necessary to illuminate the various natural springs, Piyas and sources of potable water available to them, and thus consider the threat that they were under.

One of the springs, Kurm Dhara, was identified as the centerpiece site for the project. Information boards for five identified springs/streams of potable water were installed. Each of the boards recalled the legend associated with it and also gave information on the quality of water. The artists also installed direction boards on the main path leading up to the temple, so that pilgrims could easily find each spring/stream. Finally, signage was installed on the municipal drinking water taps, along with drinking water glasses for the ease and use of the pilgrims.

The artists set up the free drinking water point (Piyau) in a shed along the line of pilgrims that forms to enter the temple. This space was graciously donated for the duration of the project by the Temple

Committee. This worked greatly to the artists' advantage, as they got a stamp of approval, being associated with the temple. At the Piyau a group of rotating volunteers distributed the spring water from a copper container and also told people about the advantages of using locally available resources as compared to packaged commodities. The Piyau also had different boards with information on them, such as the potable water tests conducted, maps of Badrinath showing the various springs, maps of the municipal taps, general information about Himalayan spring water, etc. Four glass jars containing water from Benares, Rishikesh, Alaknanda near Badrinath and the water from the Kurm Dhara clearly showed the progressive pollution of water as it flowed from the hills to the plains. At the rear of the stall a large LCD screen showed an abstract video of the waste that is dumped into the river at Badrinath. This video was accompanied by a voiceover that talked about how the pilgrimage had changed over the years as also the importance of water in Hinduism. Recycled bottles were filled with the water from Kurm Dhara and distributed too. Any pilgrim with an empty bottle could refill his bottle from the Piyau. They put labels on these bottles with the name Kurm Amrit indicating that it was not for sale and that user should try and refill the bottles rather than buy new ones.

Residue

As the limited timeframe for the project could create only a ripple among the constantly changing population that streams through Badrinath, the strategy employed by the artists was to use the project as a means of leaving behind objects and ideas that could continue to have an impact even after their departure. This is one of the reasons that they decided to install permanent signage. The temple committee was inspired by the initiative and continued to distribute free water from the Kurm Dhara for the rest of the pilgrim season even after the team had left. The activity associated with the project inevitably attracted a lot of attention, which became a valuable catalyst to generate conversation with the locals and pilgrims about heritage, water and ecology. One of the most unexpected, but successful



Urvashi Dhara

strategies, was the introduction of the brand of Kurm Amrit bottled water. The bottles worked well in the context of the project, acting as a talking point, trigger, and in some cases, a souvenir carried home by the pilgrims.



Tara School



Anand Dayi Shala

Dongratli Gani

(Songs from the hills)

📍 *Villages near Khopoli and Panvel, Maharashtra, 2011*

Collaborators

Shilpa Joglekar was born in Mumbai in 1968. After finishing her schooling, she did her M.A. in Ancient India Culture from University of Mumbai and has been an alumnus of the Sir J. J. School of Arts Mumbai where she completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1989. In 2005 Joglekar was instrumental in founding Rachana Sansad's Academy of Fine Arts and Craft and was heading it till December, 2010.

As a part of the Art College curriculum she initiated several workshops and public art projects in the city as well as in nearing villages. Over the last decade Joglekar has been seriously involved in land art as a part of her personal practice. She was invited to Lazarea, Romania for an International land art residency in July 2009, International Environmental and Art project, Chen long Wet lands Taiwan, April 2010 and Land Art Residency for the Geunguam Nature Art Biennale, South Korea, 2010, Jara Island International Environmental Art Project-2013, Primitive Sense International Environmental Art Festival and Art Islands Tokyo, Japan 2013, Barbil Community Art Project Odisha India 2014.

In the recent past Shilpa has been actively working on several community art projects and created work involving tribal and municipal schools.

Site History + Context

The objective of this project stems from the artist's belief system of conserving national heritage. Although due attention is given to the preservation of the country's physical heritage, there is a rapid loss of aural and

visual cultures, especially that of traditional folklore. This project attempts to capture some of this intangible heritage, documenting the illustrious inheritance of lengthy mythologies, fables, music and poetry. As today's youth are the forbearers of conserving this rich cultural tradition, the artist selected to work with village schools in the outskirts of bustling, hypermodern Mumbai. Around 80 kilometers outside the city, three-village school nestled in the foothills near Khopoli and Panvel were identified as primary sites of interaction.

Project + Process

The first part of the project was to collect stories, songs and folklore from the villagers that have not been documented, and are only preserved by being passed on from generation to generation.

Joglekar observed that most of the stories that people were narrating were coming out of some superstitious beliefs. These kinds of legends were not what the artist had expected to encounter, a realization that also shaped her understanding of how contemporary folklore is interpreted over time.

Joglekar eventually asked the school aged children to share stories and songs that they had grown up hearing in their homes, especially those that had been shared by the grandparents and the older generations of their families. The school children responded to the artists' requests by sharing the poetry of famed Marathi poets, such as Bahinabai, G.D. Madgulkar and V.V. Shirwadkar. It was apparent that in the initial earmarked sites, school children's education was focused on learning culture through canonized texts, and the preservation of traditional aural cultures had already seen



Recycled Material



Tara School

significant decline.

As the objective of this project was to focus on the lesser known but equally enthralling folk stories, verse and songs, the artist continued her search. After traveling through many small villages, she came across a site that was surrounded by small Adivasi villages or Padas. Joglekar identified the Padsare Zilla Raigad School, which has a student body of almost 350 children, the majority of whom hail from Adivasi families. Although shy and hesitant at first, the children eventually gained confidence to open up and sing their traditional folk songs. These songs were very impressionistic, and had a possibility of creating associated imagery, accompanied by visuals and colourful illustrations. Most of these songs began with descriptions of nature, and then changed into humorous contemporary situations. Some songs discussed events from their daily lives, or elucidated themes of farming. The children also shared songs that were traditionally sung at times of celebration such as marriages and weddings. The songs had the flavor of their environment, and utilized a dialect that was different from widely used forms of Marathi. Based on the narratives of these songs, and the surrounding natural atmosphere, the artist created a variety of illustrations for the school children.

Play Areas made from Recycled materials:

The second part of the project was to create play areas for the Adivasi School children out of the recycled and natural materials found in the surrounding areas. After doing research on the availability of materials found around the villages, and taking into consideration the durability of the material and cost effectiveness, Joglekar decided to create play structures with recycled tires.

The process of cleaning the area, selecting the material and installing the play areas was completed with help of the school children, local people and in some cases with the teachers. During the entire time spent in these villages this activity set a buzz and almost everyone in each of the villages came to see and visit the schools. The officials from the Zilla Parishad heading the education departments came as well and

insisted that the artists extend this project in all the schools in the surrounding area.

The play structure literally became an attraction for young and old in the village and after the work was finished there was full attendance in the school, as the children couldn't wait till they could actually come and play on it.

Residue

One of the most challenging artistic endeavors today is to be able to create a work outside of the 'white box' and create a different kind of aesthetics that is appropriate and suitable in a public space. For Joglekar, the entire process of interacting with the people, gathering knowledge about their lives and witnessing the sheer joy that they could experience through the work became the real aesthetic. The process of creating the play areas became a metaphor for the artist's initial interest in researching.





Akshay Rathore



Harvest Time

NR 9

Abstract Reality: *The AULINJAA Project*

📍 *Aulinjaa, Madhya Pradesh, 2012*

Collaborators

Akshay Raj Singh Rathore (b. 1978) is an artist and activist based between New Delhi and Paris. He received his B.F.A. from the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S.University, Baroda and a PG in Animation from the National Institute of Design, Ahmadabad.

Flora Boillot (b.1983) is an artist based between New Delhi and Paris. She holds a B.A. in Political Sciences and International Relations and an M.A. in Culture and Development, from the Institute of Political Sciences in Lille, France.

Site History + Context

The project takes its name from Aulinjaa village, which lies in the Bundelkhand Region of Madhya Pradesh, India. It is situated in the Betwa river basin, which has one of the most fertile plains in the state and farmers can easily take two crops per year. The area is a major producer of Sharbati Wheat, considered of highest quality. Even though groundwater is scarce, the region has two perennial rivers and many lakes.

Given the large produce of food-grain, it is paradoxical that the area has the highest rate of malnutrition in the country. The NR project "Abstract Reality" was initiated to understand this challenge. The village was chosen due to artist Akshay Rathore's familiarity with the community there and also being a site where issues of environment, society and politics meet.

Project +Process

The project proposal sought two objectives: firstly, raise awareness among the local farmer community on the richness of their

traditional resources and strength as opposed to harmful 'new ways'; secondly, raise awareness within urban circles on the agricultural issue because what one eats shouldn't be seen as an abstract reality.

The project worked on a research and documentation process consisting of the following points:

1. Land and its sharing.
2. Subsistence agriculture.
3. Village Ecology.
4. Water management.
5. Anthropological readings.
6. Village economy.
7. Architectural practices.

These were crucial in determining the goals of the project.

To start a dialog with local community and to develop a creative space for village children, wall painting of the government primary school was undertaken, producing wall murals in association with the artist and the schoolchildren.

A common public platform to address local concerns was created by renovating a room in the fallen fortress. The site was chosen due to its links to village history and architectural heritage it offered.

To learn more from the organic movement of Navdanya, a site visit to their 'Beej University' was organized. Their seed bank format was envisioned for the Aulinjaa Project. A collection of indigenous seeds was organized to document the local diversity.

In absence of Navdanya's expertise, Agriculture and Horticulture Department of Madhya Pradesh Government was invited to conduct an organic farming workshop in



Navdanya's Farm



Navdanya's Farm

Aulinjaa. The Farmer's Training Centre run by Punjab National Bank in Vidisha was also helpful in imparting knowledge and set up awareness stalls during the Open Day event.

A short film on the village harvest was made and screened on the Open day to celebrate the local participation. On the suggestion of environmentalist Pradip Krishen, the film *Microcosmos*, by Claude Nuridsanye Marie Pérennou was also screened.

An exhibition of indigenous seeds and their photographs was mounted at the Open day event. The seeds were photographed with a Macro lens to create a larger than life view of these miniscule life forms.

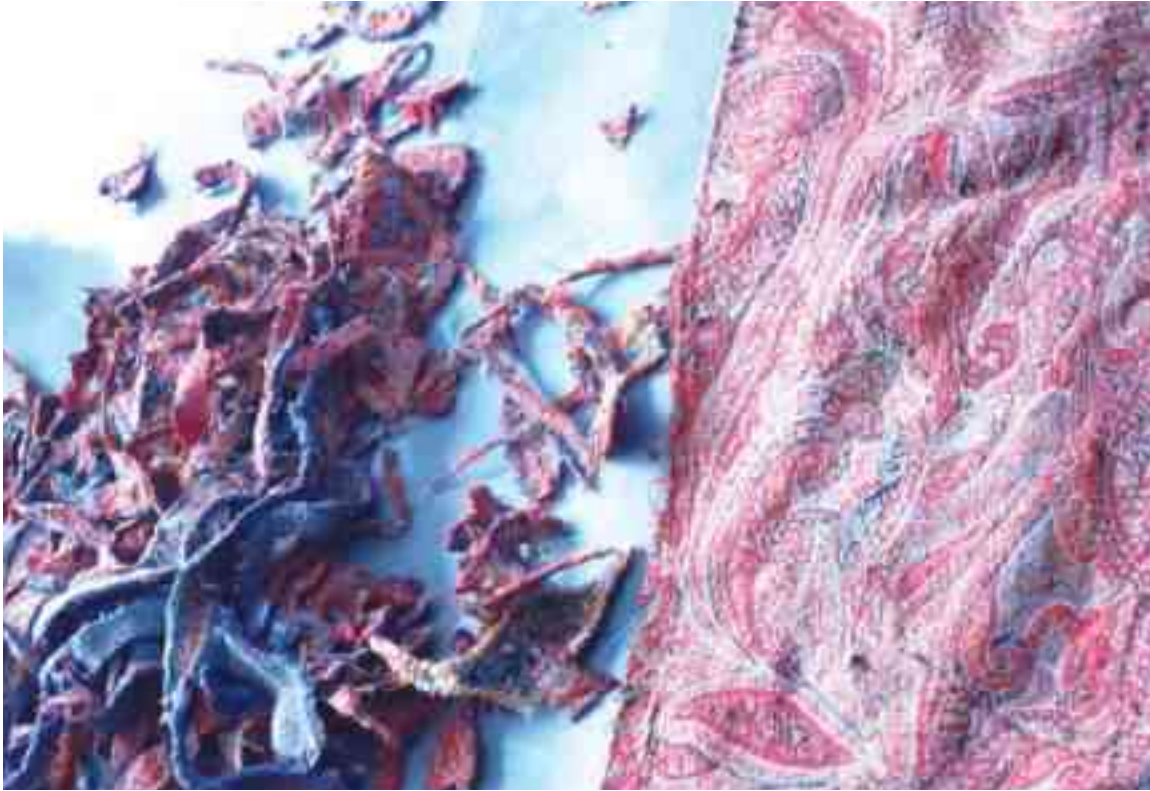
Saplings of indigenous fruit trees were distributed to students to create an ecological relationship within the village.

Other activities undertaken throughout the project were:

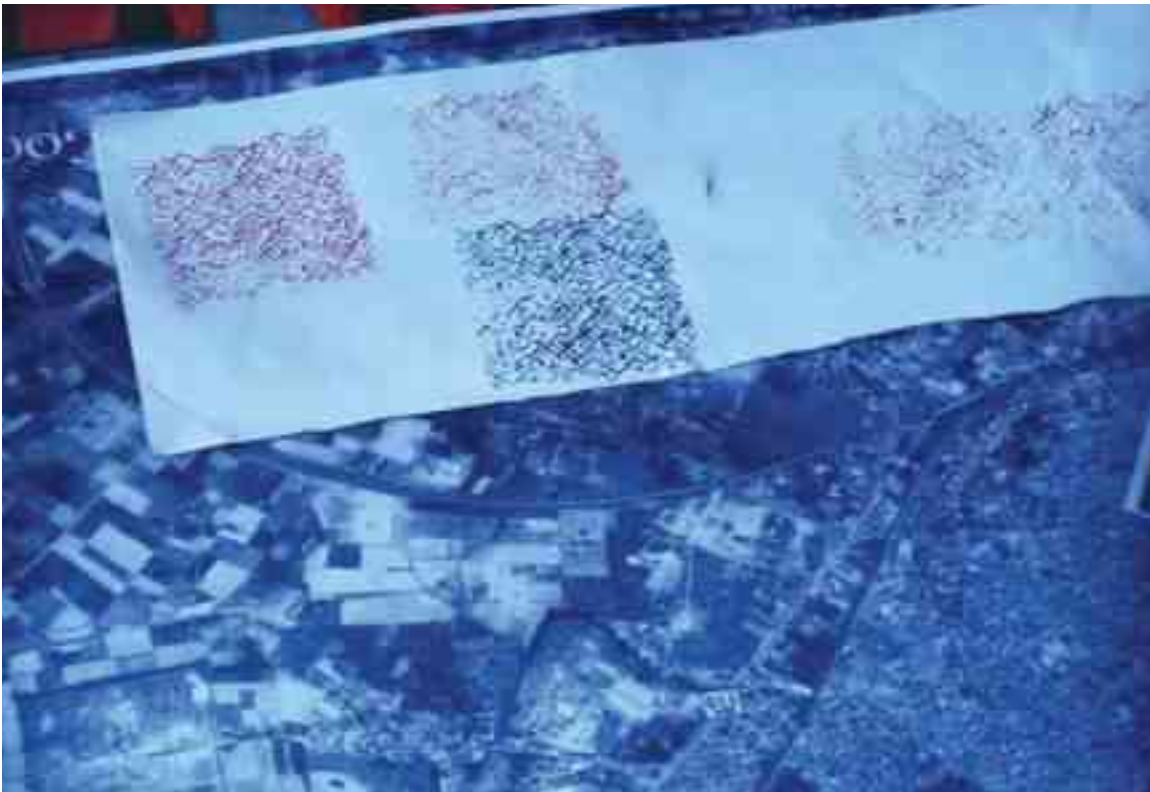
1. Documentation of village trees.
2. Documentation of artisanal communities.
3. Documentation of subsistence farming techniques.

Residue

After the Open Day, the project reached its targeted closure. The artists plan to make Aulinjaa festival a yearly exercise with future artistic and performative interventions. The project has been showcased at Rooting: Regional Networks, Global Concerns exhibition and symposium in Chicago, USA and 'The Knowledge Project' collateral exhibition at Kochi Biennale, India.



Images from Making the Invisible Visible



Images from Making the Invisible Visible

NR 10

Making the Invisible Visible

📍 *Najibabad, District Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, 2012*

Collaborators

Priya Ravish Mehra is a textile artist and weaver, researcher and designer based in Delhi. She is a textile consultant to several projects related to Handlooms and Handicrafts in India. She has also created 'New Delhi Residency', a space to facilitate partnerships and cultural exchange for artists visiting India working in various creative mediums and disciplines. Priya is a Fine arts graduate (Textiles) of Visvabharti University, Santiniketan, West Bengal. She studied Tapestry weaving at the Royal College of Arts, London and the West Dean College, Sussex UK under the aegis of Commonwealth Fellowship and Charles Wallace Trust (India) Scholarship. Also recipient of the Asian Cultural Council Grant to study the maintenance and preservation of Indian Textiles, especially the Kashmir Shawls in Public and Private Collections in U.S.A

Project + Process

This collaborative research project aimed at highlighting the practice of the Rafoogar community in Najibabad, through engaging them in a process to create a collection of contemporary works, using their traditional darning skills. The impetus for this project came from the artists' identification of preservation of a disappearing traditional craft.

The artist saw an urgent need to promote the work of the Rafoogars by bringing their invisible craft to the forefront that might otherwise vanish with the time. The objective of the project in Najibabad on one hand was to create an awareness within the Rafoogar community about their incredible skills of darning in 'repair' and renewal of damaged precious textiles and on the other hand also to acknowledge the important role of the Rafoogar in the context of sustainability, a current issue and concern towards ecology applicable to various cultures across the continents.

Site History + Context

'Rafoogari' is the traditional skill of darning in the maintenance and preservation of textiles by the Rafoogar community in India. It is still practiced all over the country by traditional darners, who repair and restore old and new damaged textiles, keeping the darning tradition alive. The research journey started in 2003 with documenting the work of the Rafoogars from the artists' hometown Najibabad, the most important but unheard shawl repair centre in the country. Najibabad, a small market town in district Bijnor was established by a Rohilla Chief Najibuddaula 250 years ago. It has the distinction of having a large population of Rafoogar community and is also the hub for Kani Shawl trade.

First and foremost, it was important for Mehra to connect with local Rafoogar community through their invisible network of personal narrative and private reflections about the town and their own darning practice. This was accomplished by asking them to reflect on their own work through their experience and observation with living memories. An old fabric was circulated amongst the Rafoogar community for their signatures to make them aware of the project and confirmation of their participation. Local Rafoogar community was then involved and motivated to search for their family trees, old Town Maps and stories related to the Town. The idea was to create a Map of the town on an old recycled cloth, marking the historical and important landmark. After several meetings and



Images from Making the Invisible Visible



Images from Making the Invisible Visible

discussions it was decided to distribute the work between several Rafoogar families, as they were reluctant and unwilling to work together as a group due to business/trade rivalries. Several tasks were assigned amongst the individuals who implemented various steps like drawing, tracing, printing, dyeing, painting, darning, needlework, in the workshop.

The workshop concluded with a 'Rafoogar Bathak' in Najibabad .It was organized in the courtyard of a school building of our family Dharamshala .It was well attended by large number of members from the Rafoogar community and some of the local residents. This was the first time ever that this kind of event took place in the town. Darning demonstrations and display of some of the exhibited shawls brought excitement and interest to the local residents of the town. Banners, Pamphlets and Invitations were used for the publicity of the event. A questioner was distributed to the participants and visitors in the Rafoogar Baithak to get their feedback and response to such an event.

Residue

The project in Najibabad played the role of the 'Rafoogar' in joining various fragments of the 'Fabric of life 'of the Town. It was an effort to create a seamless relationship between the place and its people through the medium of Cloth and the process of darning. The workshop project gradually developed from individual participation to collective project.

The 'Rafoogar Baithak' in Najibabad marks a new beginning for the Rafoogar community of the town. It was the first time ever that this kind of event was organized in the town where the craftsmen participated in large numbers and had an opportunity to demonstrate their work to the people of the town. It was an opportunity to strengthen their community bonds and create a collective impact about their darning skills in a public domain.

It was an eye opener and awakening for the Rafoogar community to get this special attention and importance from the local public, outstation visitors and Press reporters about their unnoticed and overlooked skills .The local public realize that

could bring change, transformation and improvements in the town by their visibility. It is a stepping stone to have several workshops in future where the men, women and children of the community could be equally involved to create several new works by using all their knowledge, techniques and skills for innovative works. There was also tremendous unexpected support and contribution from the residents of the town that actively volunteered and participated with enthusiasm to make the event successful.



Monument to the river



Final WRMP NR III UR

NR 11

Where the River *Meets the People*

📍 *Domahani, Jharkhand, 2012*

Collaborators

Uma Ray is a 2006 MFA in sculpture from VisvaBharati University, Shantiniketan. Current socio-political uncertainties - that lead to introspection and self-examination, and enquiry of one's identity and the social positioning of the self at such times - pique her interest. In her work, she questions the real and the unreal or the hyper-real, a feeling of individual crisis that arises out of and in reaction to financial globalization, probably challenging the real essence of the things. Her works evolve from her immediate experiences. Issues addressed in Ray's works include traces left behind through a passage of time and memories juxtaposed with self-preservation and/or the need to move out of self-imposed boundaries and the continuous cycle of life.

Site History + Context

The city of Jamshedpur was named after its founder, Jamshetji Nusserwanji Tata. The township grew out of a small village in Kalimati and went on to become an industrial hub of many small and large factories. Countless indigenous and tribal people were displaced as a result of this expansion and urbanization as their lands were taken over to set up factories and house their employees. The Tata group of companies trained many of the displaced people in various skills and offered them employment in the factories. This movement has changed the socio-economic structure of the community.

Every morning at Domahani, where the two rivers Kharkai and Subarnarekha meet to flow onwards into Chandil lake, hundreds of people from the neighboring villages cross the rivers to reach the town in time for school, college or the morning shift at the

factories. The river acts as a passage with their only contact with the city, and also as a means of possibly maintaining privacy in their own lives. For some time now, there has been talk of a new bridge coming up. The lives of these people would change irrevocably when that happens. Development induced displacement due to mining activities, industrial and real estate development has become commonplace in these people's lives.

This project aims to highlight the contribution of the people of the land who have silently played a very important role in the industrial development of the town and the country. Their lives are at the crossroads of change.

Project + Process:

The artists' endeavour was to introduce an urban (and sometimes disconnected) audience to the lifestyle and traditions of the people living in Domahani, and to promote respect for a traditional life that may be unfamiliar to city dwellers. Central to this project was the intent to initiate a two way dialogue with the community, one of which was to harness the creative instincts of some of the youngest minds of this society in a collaborative art workshop/ project. Ray's project attempted to delineate the relationship between the water, land and its people as well as to share the stories and her experiences through narrative, pictorial and video documentation.

This project was a site specific initiative conceived and developed on the social structure of the place with the aim of understanding the intricately woven interrelationship between the river and its people. Ray's work took into consideration how the life of these people and its quality has been affected: from marriage to social



Where the river meets its people



Final WRMP NR III UR

customs, as also means of economic development for many people and education for children. While bringing the benefits of civilization within their reach, the proximity to an urban milieu has also been responsible for the younger generation moving out in search of better prospects.

The first part of the project was conceived as a process of documentation, both in written and video forms, to create a better understanding of the complex lifestyle patterns of the locals, and shifts between rural-urban environments. The project highlighted the experience of the Tusu festival, which was also the starting point of Ray's project. The video also served as a tool to highlight the essential elements of the project: the river, the people and the journey across the river. Thoughts, interactions, observations and learning were also recorded in a blog that the artist regularly updated during her stay in Domahani. During the course of Ray's interactions with the residents of Domahani, the artist developed a relationship with the students of a local school from Dobo village across the Subarnarekha River. Ray conducted a mask making workshop, which was deriving from the tradition of masks which exists in Jharkhand. The children would immediately be able to identify with the masks, through the Chou dance performances held in various villages from time to time. As such endeavors in village schools are rare; the artists received a tremendously enthusiastic team of students who enjoyed the process to its last detail.

From the moment of inception, Ray had been considering creating a site-specific installation at the river site as a culmination of her project. The intention was to create a work in collaboration with the residents of Domahani, and use the process as an opportunity to exchange and bring out traditional cultures and practices of the local community through the installation process. Ultimately, Ray created amorphous metallic structures which echoed the movement and vitality of this all important water body. The work, entitled 'Monument to the River', was a sentimental piece for the artist. The sculpture was initially planned to be installed on site during the dusk hours near the water tank on the Gamharia side across river Kharkai. The material which she chose

for it was wire mesh that would blend in with the river - like water it would reflect the light from its surroundings. The idea was not to leave any trace of the artist's intervention and to leave the site in its pristine form. The installation was dismantled within a few hours after being set up.

Residue

During the course of this project, Ray had the opportunity to watch closely the work that various people and organizations are carrying out in order to enable a safer and a better life for the indigenous communities around the Domahani region. At the crossroads of modernization/urbanization, communities often run the constant risk of losing their cultural identity. The exposure, on the other hand, to the new and the kitsch in many cases lead to a cultural influx that is not at all desirable for many to see. During the interviews with students and "gram pradhans" Ray had a similar feeling about their traditions, music and folklore that are fast disappearing and being replaced by the more commercially popular films and songs.

This project was a means of getting familiar with the people who have contributed so much in making Jamshedpur what it is today. It also provided an understanding of the complex dichotomy of the situation – on one hand the economic independence and growth that was brought about due to industrialization, on the other the threat that this rapid growth of city limits and growing number of industries were posing to their natural habitat





Performance Workshop



Street Play 'Nag Nadi ki Kahani' 2

NR 12

Hamari Nag River

📍 *Nagpur, Maharashtra, 2013*

Collaborators

Alag angle was founded in 2007 in Nagpur, Maharashtra by three young artists, **Lalit Vikamshi, Tanul Vikamshi and Milli Pandey**, with the vision to create a space to encourage new art practices. Alag Angle is an open art space for anyone who loves to create and experience art which is experimental and is able to question the norm. The ethos of the space is to create an informal, alternative educational environment to support innovation and experimentation within contemporary art, in the context of Nagpur's cultural sphere.

Site History + Context

The story of the Nag River is not different from the story of any other river of India: it is severely polluted due to irresponsible attitudes & gross mismanagement. For the majority of its course, the Nag River flows through the urbanized part of Nagpur, a city with an approximate population of 2.5 million people. The Nag river eco-system is under great duress, due to the social and economic activities carried out by people from a diverse population of city residents. It is assumed that within the next few decades, more than 50% of India's population would be living in urban area, but the quality of life in these future cities will depend on the environments they contain. In the case of Nagpur during the planning and development process sufficient consideration was not given to existing natural conditions such as topography, geology, water regime, climate, vegetation etc. Rivers were canalized and then converted into sewers, often as a result of thoughtless planning. There is an urgent need for rejuvenation of the decaying Nag River and to dispose the entire sewage generated in the city.

Project + Process

The Hamari Nag River was a proposal by Alag Angle to stimulate citizen participation in the preservation of the Nag River, through a series of summer programs such as talks, seminars and workshops with youth and adults. The intention of this project was to spread awareness about the high level of pollution in the water, as well as collectively consider preventative measures and possible solutions to improve the existing damage.

Within Nagpur, there were already different organisations that had proposed different ways of cleaning and maintain the river. Some of these projects had employed serious research, and had come up with a variety of workable solutions for river maintenance. One such project was that proposed by the National Environmental Engineering and Research Institute (NEERI), which had suggested using a new technology of "Phytoid Wastewater Treatment". The specialty of the technology is that the sewage will be treated without any treatment plant and water may be utilized for irrigation, watering of gardens and fountains. With this technology, Nag River's sewage water may be treated and greenery could be developed along the river in stretches. With the help of citizen participation, Alag Angle hoped to further publish the efforts of organizations like NEERI

During the course of the project, Alag Angle organized a series of activities, workshops and interventions. One such initiative was the Riverside Wall painting, which invited the citizens residing along the chosen 2 Km long stretch to join the activity. Alongside the river, Alag Angle also installed artistic information boards which were designed in collaboration with a group of school children. The students had the opportunity



Wall painting project



Silent Performance at overflow point

to learn the basics of graphic communication from a local Nagpur designer, an initiative that assisted them to clearly evoke their sentiments through visual communications. Themes introduced onto these informational poster boards included information on Wastewater Treatment and conservation programs. During the workshops, the children were also introduced to the concept of bio-diversity preservation, and encouraged to design informational posters that introduced the natural resources of the river, such as the specific flora and fauna that inhabited the area. Students also included the recreational value of the River in the information boards, describing the bird watching spots and spots favoured by amateur and professional nature photographers.

A major ongoing activity during the course of the project were several talks and open forum discussions, inviting different researchers, artists, government representatives and local persons who had been invested in improving the Nag River. To kick start the project, the artists invited local architect Pradyumna Sahasrabhojani, who spoke on the subject 'Nagpur towards an Eco City?' As a respected senior architect in Nagpur, his talk lent a certain gravitas to the project.

To convey the message of their project in a way that could be easily accessed, Alag Angle organized a travelling exhibition with the title 'Enlightened Perspectives', which showcased the talent and varied perspectives of students and city youth concerned with preserving the Nag River.

Residue

The four month long project proved to be very beneficial for Nag River awareness, as well as an inspiration for many. It all together illuminated the artists past efforts, and allowed them to work continuously on issues related to the river's preservation. The project also attracted significant attention from the general public of Nagpur, who were glad to have a platform through which they could voice their own concerns about the cities rapidly degrading ecological condition. Alag Angle was able to activate a group of

the city's youth, who took an ownership of the project over time. Other's who had previously been involved with the project were also energized by the long-term potential the grant offered the artists. The media was also alerted to the artists' collective efforts, and the Times of India also launched a campaign for Nag River Awareness. According to the artists, the greatest achievement of the project was its ability to unite a large number of youth, from a variety of places across the city. The project unified them over a common platform, urging them to set aside their differences and putting together their strengths and knowledge for a common goal.



Conversation



Lake Ownership to Responsibility

NR 13

Reconciling Ecologies of the Millennium City

📍 *Gurgaon , Haryana*

Collaborators

Alex White Mazzarella, Namrata Mehta and Soaib Grewal came together almost as a way of joining the dots. They work as a multidisciplinary team with varied experiences in design, research and social art practices. While Namrata and Soaib have often been brought together by their common interest in engaging with the everyday experiences of living in Gurgaon, Alex brings to the collaboration an experience of community based art practices in India and other parts of the world. Together they engaged diverse communities and ecological issues in an attempt to reconcile ecologies in the millennium city.

Site History + Context

Over the last decade, private developers and market forces have been fabricating a city in the farm suburb of Gurgaon. Through the economic liberalisation of Gurgaon's land and ripe real estate demand, fertile agricultural land has given way to commercial and residential complexes through a speculative process of land selling, buying and transformation. In just five years time the Millennium City has risen; shopping malls, golf courses, luxury shops, gated housing complexes and a new population of workers and residents on land that had been home to wheat, mustard seed, barley and sugarcane for hundreds of years. Approximately 40% of Gurgaon's agricultural land has been lost in these past five years, and officials fear a continuation of this unchecked land development process will leave Gurgaon without any agricultural land in 10 years time. Little attention is made to this agricultural loss in the face of Gurgaon's

burgeoning formula for materializing a new and novel magical utopian lifestyle.

The allure to seemingly create a city of wealth overnight and live a life comfort is making the Millennium City an exciting "new" model for India's future city. Similar rural and agricultural lands are being targeted, acquired and speculated on to house our increasing urban population and feed those dying to live and experience a western consumer-based lifestyle.

Project + Process

Reconciling Ecologies in the Millennium City is a collective project aimed at engaging communities to recognize their agricultural ecology and innovate opportunities for its re-inclusion. The project sought to survey how agriculture is morphing to fit Gurgaon's transforming built environment and test notions of how Gurgaon's natural ecology can be regenerated. Central Questions revolve around the relationship between sustainability and speculation as seen through the urban development of Gurgaon.

Conversation Starters

To kickstart the project the artists hosted a dinner to bring together a group of residents from Gurgaon, over a meal inspired by the stories of agriculture in the local region that they had collected. The dinner was an important starting point, as it revealed different community stakeholders, and suggested different starting points for the project. Following the dinner, the artists met with several citizen group representatives and residents in Gurgaon to determine appropriate and relevant points on intervention.

From the beginning, it was clear to the project collaborators that they would need to identify a site that could be used as a



Gurgaon ki awaaz



Lake Ownership to Responsibility

medium to begin dialogue on Gurgaon's changing ecology. Eventually, they came across Rajendar Singh, a resident of Tigra Village, Gurgaon. As they interviewed him and learnt about his agricultural past, an appropriate site for intervention and dialogue presented itself. This was the Baba Ram Mohan Johar, a seasonal man-made lake in the centre of Tigra Village. Overlooking the lake was a community centre that also had the potential of being a valuable site.

In conversation with different local stakeholders that the artists had encountered along their journey, the artists envisioned a day-long event, focussed on water futures, to be held in this community center.

Event and Installation

The Program started at the under construction community center; a space itself contentious for having been developed through the encroachment and infill of a portion of the lake. Alex escorted groups of locals from the village to the program. Participants began by watching a twelve minute video which was introduced by Namrata and showed locals speaking about the lake; stories on its generations of history; stories on how people travel from a far for its sacredness; children speaking on how they like to play there; women speaking on how the lake is now punishing the village for its degradation, and others. Namrata introduced and explained the interviews and took questions. Groups were then taken to the roof for an over view of land art for an envisioning of the lake. The words *zameendari zimmedari*, translated as landownership & responsibility in Hindi, were laid out as a reference to growing need for civic responsibility in Gurgaon and indicated the need to solve challenges of water, land, ecology and public space. The text installation also referred to the fact that this is only one of Gurgaon's many lakes that have been encroached upon to cash in on the urban capitalization of land and resources. Other elements of the land art installation brought significance and contemplation to the lake's human functions and importance; a cow grazing as reference to the lake's role as grazing ground and bathing area; a swastika, representative of

the lake as a holy place for pilgrimage; and a raincloud, indicative of the reservoir's role as a groundwater recharger via monsoon rainwater collection. Soaib demonstrated a groundwater collection installation and facilitated discussion and an exercising of the installation that carried mock rainwater through tubes and out into the lake where a green raincloud had been outlined. While envisioning how to best design a wall that can secure the lake's future and ward off encroachment was our objective, the actual conversation that occurred was of the politics, power structures, and class divisions; the very structures the artists' program attempted to sidestep to instead solidify public evaluations of the lake. Furthermore the development council, run by a few elder Brahmins, did not attend the program but instead planned a meeting of their own at the same time. So in the evening the artists projected the video interviews in a lively village corner as a means of reaching them and the audiences they command.

Residue

In the days following the event and installation, a young resident of Tigra, who was present at and encouraged by the dialogues at the event, set up a temporary wrestling pit, *akhada*, in the grounds of the under-construction community center. The *akhada* served as a community space, bringing together children from varied background to be trained in the age-old custom of *pehlwani*, believed to inculcate the values of discipline and diversity.

Since the project, the artists have produced a publication, rich in graphic design, visual research and documentation outlining the urban transformation of Gurgaon, and the consequent challenges posed by the collision of natural and human ecologies; power structures, politics, land capitalization, water, agriculture and livestock. The publication explores opportunities for local representation and direct civic action brought about by the coming of age of Gurgaon. The publication focuses closely on their work in Tigra, as representative of the transformation from a rural village to an urban "sector" that much of Gurgaon is undergoing. It touches upon the pressures of land acquisition, cash, land



Lake Ownership to Responsibility



Searching for ber in the hot sun

encroachment and mis-representation, through the documentation of the artists' collaborative community engagement, public art and participatory activities in the village; as an example of how suppressed issues can be visualized and activated, and how social space scan be created to negotiate and spur opportunities for engagement and reconciliation. The publication draws connections and parallels between the citizen at the neighborhood level and Gurgaon's macro urban development issues and trends. The publication speaks to the need for a check on India's current non-inclusive and irrational urban development and proposes futures and systemic alternatives.



Bringing the trees into class rooms



dengan drawing

NR 14

Revisiting the *Chipko Andolan*

📍 *Tehri, Garhwal, Uttarakhand, 2013*

Collaborators

Sunandita (Ita) Mehrotra is an artist and writer based in New Delhi. She graduated in Philosophy after which she was awarded an exchange year at SciencePo Paris where she majored in art history. She has recently completed her MA in visual art at the Ambedkar University Delhi. Ita has worked with human rights organizations within and outside the city with a focus on education, livelihood and environment.

She adopts different modes of working including workshops, mural making and oral history collection, when engaging with community specific concerns and has a keen interest in following women's accounts of particular histories or political realities.

Site History + Context

The Chipko Andolan began in the early 1970s in the Garhwal Himalayas of Uttarakhand as a novel way of protesting against the felling of trees. Through the non violent resistance to companies, the forest land was reclaimed by ordinary villagers. On March 26th, 1974 women from Reni Village, Chamoli district, got word of the felling taking place in an adjoining forest. Twenty seven women collected, went to the forest and hugged the trees for hours, till the company workers were driven away. After this landmark event, the movement spread like wild fire, through the states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and even some parts of Karnataka. In 1977, in another area in Chamoli district, women tied sacred threads around trees earmarked for felling. The threads were like Rakhis, to signify that the trees were their own blood. What is unique about Chipko Andolan is not only the mode of resistance but also that it is born

primarily out of a protest by those who live off the forest, for whom the felling of trees means the loss of a way of living all together.

Today there are several environmental organizations and the state holds forest conservation as a priority. There are laws and stay orders continuously being passed to maintain the ecological balance. Uttarakhand however has seen an increasing amount of forest depletion, some for creating public assets like road ways, others for large housing projects. This means a loss not only of forests and livelihoods but also the local biodiversity which is originally extremely rich. The very notion of what a public asset is, comes in to question here, especially with the number of dams at high altitudes currently in construction within the hill valleys. This also brings to light the skewed nature of public – private partnerships initiated by the state government for particular public projects.

Today, the decades of protest against harmful development in Uttarakhand, has given birth to seed conservation programs such as the 'Beej Bachao Andolan' which has preserved over a hundred varieties just of Rajma amongst countless others. And the women who began the movement are still there, as strength and inspiration, full of stories, folk songs and slogans which carried them forward.

Project + Process

This project was carried out with the intention of reexamining the first people's ecological movement in India, through reopening histories as well as intervening within current processes of change. It has therefore been a multilayered process consisting of direct engagement within educational institutions and social work



a day of planting



Bringing the trees into class rooms

organizations along with digging into personal archives of the Chipko/ Beej Bachao Andolan activists. This began with at a creative educational center- Swajan Siksha Samiti/Tehri Garhwal, which offered the artist space to live and interact with the community with a focus on art and the understanding of the environment that they have today.

Through nature walks into the valley with both students and teachers, the artist and her collaborators began to map out the local plants. There were sessions of drawing and writing about the various plant types over the course of about three weeks. They had intensive discussions on what it means to sustain the environment. Older members of the community as well as activists were called in to share their experiences. The sessions at the education center were filled with the energy of pahari dance and music which build the bond between students and teachers there. They were able to record songs telling of the river in the region- Ugladnadi and of the changing time Nava zamanaayaa re, amongst others.

Organic Farming in the village

The second phase of the project was a more intensive agricultural period. Mehrotra was therefore able to participate within and record through photos and writing, the whole sustainable agriculture process which includes making of manure, storing and barter of seeds and planting as per the monsoon cycle.

After some time, Mehrotra moved here practice to the Uttarkashi region, to work with the Krishnamurti Foundation set up there, with a focus on education and research on sustainable environmental concerns

It was here that Mehrotra first met with Chitra- an artist who has worked at a village in Kumaon/Uttarakhand for over seven years. They begun planning a ten day festival at Toli, which consisted of writing and enacting a play on the Chipko movement, to be taken to neighbouring villages, as well as the work with waste material.

The play on Chipko was put together by senior school girls and saw the composition

of a song *ped na kato/ped kate la paap lage la/ped na kato re/* (don't cut the trees, if you cut them you will be cursed, don't cut these trees). Around the Play they organized a mela (local fair) at Toli which also had hand made products from waste and an exhibition of writing and drawing around ecological understandings by the older students.

BBA archive

Post this production, Mehrotra began working with Sahab Singh Ji, one of the stalwart members of the BBA (Beej Bachao Andolan). Sahabji took the artist to the heart of the movement through long walks into the forests which have been saved from felling through strong collective action. They also dug into several trunks to pull out old songs, pamphlets, letters and brochures used through different periods for campaign by the BBA.

Sudesh's story

Mehrotra and her collaborators spent most of their time with one of the oldest women activists of the Chipko Andolan and this proved to be extremely worthwhile. Sudesha Devi is in her eighties now but very lucid and has countless recollections of the starting of the movement, how it took form and spread as well as several clear cut strategies to meet developmental/environmental challenges today.

She still works on her farm practicing the sustainable twelve mixed cropping technique- barahanaja in completely organic ways. Sudeshaji takes the cows grazing daily and sessions of recording her histories and knowledge were through accompanying her on these walks.

Recording Sudeshaji experiential knowledge of the Chipko and of the changes she can see around her is to be able to get to the very roots of an organic movement. As Sudesha herself points out, history is extremely skewed in its representation of issues such as conservation or land reclamation- it is thousands of ordinary village folk who sustain the movement and yet these very people are totally neglected in the accounts within literature or other sources.



Organic Game

Residue

For the artist, recording personal histories of some of the earliest members of the movement was been the most revealing segment of the journey. Working within a remote rural environment is a slow process as there is a general layer of skepticism which needs to be replaced by trust through integration at many points. This could mean through living with the families, as she did, to learning the language, to working on the farm. The rewards from this integrative process are that the community comes to accept and completely open out there rich culture and histories. Mehrotra captured the stories, songs, images and visuals recorded through her journey into a publication entitled "Forest Song".



cow comes calling



Implementation

NR 15

Ecologies of the Excess

📍 *Amaravathi Village, Karnataka, 2013*

Collaborators

Naveen Mahantesh

Naveen Mahantesh (born in 1985) is the principal architect of CRESARC based in Bangalore. His projects and propositions have been a part of Sarai-Reader-Exhibition'09(2013) and Insert (2014), curated by Raqs media collective; Mediating Modernities (2013) at Srishti School of Design; design for change at TEDx-RVVidyanketan (2013), Bangalore; and FOA-FLUX - art | life | technology Symposium at Swissnex (2015). As part of O80:30, he received a grant from India Foundation for the Arts Project560-Found space(2014). He has been a City as Studio fellow (2013) at Sarai-CSDS and the curator-in-residence at ISCP, New York City (2015).

Ankit Bhargava

Ankit Bhargava is an Architect and Urbanist currently working at Centre for Public Problem Solving, a Do-Tank involved in Public Policy and Planning based in Bengaluru. He has an architecture degree from Bangalore and a Master's degree in Urbanism from TU Delft, Netherlands. The bulk of his work revolves around strategy development, spatial planning and systems thinking. Some of the organizations he has worked with include Royal Haskoning, Superuse Studios, UDRI, KRVIA and MGA among others. He is also an Inlaks Scholar, 2011.

Srajana Kaikini

Srajana Kaikini is a poet and curator. She is presently pursuing a PhD in Aesthetics at Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities. She is an architecture graduate with a Masters in Arts & Aesthetics from JNU and a Curatorial diploma from de Appel

Arts Centre, Amsterdam. She has been the recipient of the FICA Research Fellowship 2013.

Other collaborators include **Suresh Kumar G and Reap Benefit, Bangalore.**

Local collaborators include **Praveen, Manjunath and Suresh.**

Site History + Context

The site for this project was Amaravathi village, about 426Kms from Bangalore, Karnataka. Rearing cattle has been an integral practice in the rural Indian household since history. If not for profitable large scale cattle farming, rearing an individual cattle within a household has been part of the local routine. The milk from the cow is used for household purposes and the cow dung is used for plastering walls, floors and making dried cakes that is used as cooking fuel. Small mounds of cow dung are also used by the local people as idols for worship during Dasara. In September 2012, we came across an event that denoted a shift in local ecology that impacted this practice. There was an apparent deficit of cow-dung in the village, to fulfill the rituals on the day of Ayudha Puja. There was a line of people waiting outside on one of the household with cattle, waiting for the cow to drop its dung. Cow-dung was no longer a local material, but a borrowed resource. This narrative raised many questions about the shifting ecologies at the grass root level and there was a need to acknowledge this shift.

Project + Process

Census, Map, Museum Census is a tool to enumerate and categorically place empirical information on the ledger. Benedict



cow comes calling



Stamp

Anderson in his much discussed essay titled 'Census, Map, Museum' [Imagined Communities, Verso, 1983] saw the Census as one of the three forces of infiltration from the colonizers. About the census he says, "These 'identities', imagined by the (confusedly) classifying mind of the colonial state, still awaited a reification which imperial administrative penetration would soon make possible.[...] The fiction of the census is that everyone is in it, and that everyone has one- only one- extremely clear place. No fractions." In other words, Anderson, rightly from his context of writing, saw this logic of quantification as an institutionalizing force.

In-situ mapping

Statistical data gave us the vocabulary to understand the relationship between the total number of households in the village and number of cattle within them. We designed a notational system for the village that can denote which houses had cattle, which houses did not have cattle, which houses used milk from neighboring households that reared cattle and which of the houses used packaged milk, the advent of plastic.

We engaged a local team of three 19year old boys to conduct this survey. We made three seals to denote the above mentioned criteria with shoe soles that were bought locally. The seals were carved out by an artist-collaborator on this project, Suresh Kumar. Along with generating the numbers/ratio of the number of households and cattle, we stamped each of the houses to depict the condition. While the book collected the numbers, the houses adorned a stamp. Each stamp was distinct in form and color and denoted a certain position from the census book. In this process, the team of three boys became statisticians, cartographers and artists at the same time.

The process found complete penetration with 515 houses. There was collection of data, and representation of it, In-situ. The social fabric of the village became the layout of the museum which provided the narrative of the households and the cattle, with the stamps as the points of interest. If census, map and museum are considered as separate institutionalizing forces of a social

structure, "In-situ mapping" collapsed the distinction and highlighted a social condition as data, cartography and experience.

Residue

"A spiral is a point in search of an end?"

The cow stamping exercise now forces us to re-consider ways of taking stock of a social condition. The next step is to perhaps test this strategy by inverting this 'urbanisation' story by a 'ruralisation' story. What happens when empirical data is mutated, multiplied and allowed to disappear? What happens when folklore takes over facts, and mythologies become means of stock taking?

The cow trail reveals another story of a circle of sustenance being broken by the external 'progressive' factors penetrating the ecology of Amaravathi. In other words, an Agro-based ecology, is strained at certain exit nodes, and pushed into an endless spiraling path which only accelerates under certain urbanizing forces, without any forces to contain the spiral into loop back in. A question to ponder upon.





floatiing puppet theater



Puppets of the mesenger sail project

NR 16

The Messenger Sail

📍 *Chilika Lake, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, 2014*

Collaborators

Jyoti Ranjan Jena is a visual artist based in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. He received his BFA from B.K. College of art and craft, and later completed his MFA from Kala Bhavan, Visva Bharati, and Santiniketan. His work investigates the relationship of manmade objects and the persistence of modernization on the natural landscape. He works with sculpture, site-specific intervention, mixed-media installation and video. The Messenger Sail continues Jena's interest in the natural ecology of the Chilika Lagoon, and is his first experience with creating a long-term collaborative performance event.

Site History + Context

Chilika lagoon, situated on the east coast of India, is the second largest brackish water lagoon in the world. It is the largest wintering ground for migratory birds on the Indian sub-continent. Around 270 B.C, in the time of King Kharavela and was a major harbour for maritime commerce. A 10th century text, the Brahmanda Purana, mentions Chilika Lake as an important centre of trade and commerce, and a shelter for ships sailing to Java, Malay, Singhal, China and other countries.

Chilika lagoon provides highly productive eco-system to the livelihood of more than 15,000 fishermen and provides valuable biodiversity hotspot to a wide range of species, including endangered species listed in International Union for Conservation of Nature. However, the lagoon environment has been under serious threat due to high anthropogenic pressure, especially after 1980's. To restore the Lake eco-system and promote capacity building of local people

the Odisha government established Chilika development authority (CDA) in 1991. CDA opened a new mouth of Chilika to the Bay of Bengal for the economical growth of fishermen and for wetland conservation, under one of its major programmes. To protect migratory birds they advertised in various places in and around Chilika.

Project + Process

The Messenger Sail is an interactive project aimed at raising awareness for the ongoing conservation efforts in and around Chilika Lake. The artist attempted to involve the local communities around the lake, a process which revealed to him a unique indigenous art form called Ravan Chhaya (Shadow puppetry dance). Taking advantage of the amusing and visually pleasing characteristic of the Ravan Chhaya, Jena revitalized the tradition of folk-theatre as a tool to re-imagine Chilika.

Jena began his project by conducting thorough research from local libraries on the history of the lake, and of the Ravan Chhaya tradition. He came across several 19th century texts by prominent poets such as Kabibar Radhanath Ray and Godavarish Mishra, who had composed poems describing the natural beauty and socio-cultural significance of Chilika Lake. His research also led him to visit several villages in and around Chilika, meeting the local fisherman communities; meeting with the scientific teams of the CDA (Chilika Development Authority); and eventually meeting with the village community of the Ravan Chhaya puppeteers.

In Ravan Chhaya the puppeteer basically plays the story of Ramayana along with music and song. Jena wanted to use this indigenous knowledge to express ecological problems of Chilika. Instead of mythological



Messenger sail image



Messenger sail image

character, he created intended to create some characters from Chilika's History. Different stories and myths would be used to make figures representing the present condition of Chilika. In the traditional Ravan Chhaya, musicians will sing and play music with Khanjani and Cymbals in front of the screen, but Jena conceptualized a more contemporary soundtrack to be composed and developed with the puppeteers. To create the illusion of a theatre, the puppeteer's usually hang a white screen and manipulate puppets from behind the curtain. Jena chose to abstract the visual character by using a big sail as a screen for this open air floating theatre. This sail would have a functional use of propelling the boat, as well as the aesthetic consideration of creating a theatre set. The sail also symbolized the glory of the maritime age of Chilika Lake.

After forming a relationship with the puppeteers, and conducting extensive research on the history of folk theatre in the region, Jena set about working on a script in collaboration with the puppeteers. The idea was to create a floating theatre, using the traditional forms of storytelling to create a narrative about the contemporary situation of Chilika Lake. Based on the script, Jena and the puppeteers created puppets using simple papers. The inspiration for the puppets form and character came from the poetry of Radhanath Ray, Gopabandhu Das and Godavarish Mishra. He chose different stories and myths from their poems and made different puppet characters. From Radhanath Ray's "Chilika" poem, the artists had illustrated different stories; the story of Raktabahhu, Kanchi Vijay and the story of Manic Gauduni. Jena also made puppet characters from the story of Kalijai written by Godavarish Mishra. Jena even composed the music for the performance using lyrics from the poems, which he hoped would help the viewers create connections. The lyrics were interspersed with dialogue that he had developed in conversation with the puppeteers. The final performance took place in October 2014.

Residue

When the Floating Theatre became a reality, it created curiosity among the local people of Chilika. They were engaged by the unique and yet familiar concept of the Ravan Chhaya, and were eager to learn more about ecological risk that the water body was facing. Through the artists ongoing interactions with the local communities, he became aware about the wealth of knowledge and compassion that the community had when questioned about the Lake's preservation. He hoped that this project would be a trigger to further catalyse interest in the lake, awakening the public to its rich bio-diversity, and to its historical narrative.

As a personal experience, Jena expressed the tremendous growth and value gained from the experience, especially the introduction to collaborative socially-engaged practice. The project was a starting point for the young artist, triggering thought for potential future explorations. Working with the community of puppeteers was also a tremendous learning for Jena, who was pleasantly surprised to see how the skilled craftsmen adapted their performance to the needs of a contemporary narrative.





A forest village



Postcard

NR 17

Land and Forest Rights

in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

📍 *H.D. Kotte District Karnataka & Gudalur, Tamil Nadu, 2014*

Collaborators

Manasi Karthik is an independent researcher based in Gudalur, Tamil Nadu where she conducts ethnographic research on three distinct, yet interconnected processes: the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (2006), informal gold mining, and the politics and governance of alcohol addiction. Through these sites, she examines the construction of the adivasi (and non-advasi) identity, especially as it intersects with issues of forest policy and governance.

Site History + Context

Forests are some of the most contested spaces in the world, often simultaneously perceived as a resource, a hotspot of biodiversity, and a space of livelihoods. Through the exploration of two distinct yet connected field sites —H.D. Kotte, Karnataka and Gudalur, Tamil Nadu — this project examined how individuals, communities, and institutions negotiate and reconcile these competing priorities.

Adivasi communities in H.D. Kotte, Karnataka have been at the centre of such natural resource conflict for over three decades. Starting in the early 1970s, a number of adivasi villages were relocated as a result of the formation of the Nagarhole National Park and the construction of the Banasura Sagar Dam on the Kabini River. These communities have been struggling for their right to forest land and livelihood since the inception of these 'development' projects.

In the recent past, forest policy in India underwent a drastic shift. The introduction

of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in 2006 has decidedly altered the nature of land and forest rights in India. The Act attempts to redress a 'historic injustice' by recognising the rights of forest-dwelling communities. In the Gudalur district of Tamil Nadu, the FRA enters into what is already a charged political landscape. Here, the law rather than being an immutable category becomes a political instrument that is used by multiple political actors to navigate allegiances between civil society and the State, an already existing politics of indigeneity and attempts at political resistance.

Project + Process

This project sought to examine how policies for environmental conservation serve to shape and reshape environmental subjectivities which are key to good participatory environmental governance. For example, how do notions of adivasi as "natural conservationists" influence the community's perceptions and representations of themselves? How do narratives of the adivasi as being "one with nature" alter local dynamics between adivasi and non-advasi communities? In other words, how is identity implicated in claims to legitimacy and access to relationships and resources?

Karthik primarily worked with two non-governmental organisations which have both had extensive experience in working on land rights for Adivasi communities in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The NGO in Gudalur formed a part of a coalition of NGOs in the Nilgiri District which set-up an unusual system for implementing the FRA. This coalition consisted of both tribal welfare NGOs as well as international conservation organisations. They have worked with the



Plantations and forests



In conversation with a kaavu navar

district administration in the Nilgiri to route claims filed under the FRA through Gram Sabhas consisting exclusively of adivasi. The NGO in H.D. Kotte assisted adivasi in N. Begur Gram Panchayat in a struggle for land rights following their displacement from their traditional homelands. This involved a long and drawn out legal battle with the National Human Rights Commission.

In order to understand how the FRA has been implemented in Gudalur, Karthik identified the key stakeholders in the field, covering a cross-section of civil-society, state and community actors. Her primary methodologies included participant observation and semi-structured interviews with the key individuals and organisations involved in the implementation of the FRA in Gudalur. Additionally, she worked closely with the regional centers of the NGO in Gudalur to conduct a pilot survey to understand how many and what kinds (individual or communal, what type of land, etc) of claims have been filed. The information collected during the interviews with the key implementers was contextualized in an understanding of the historical and political processes that have informed and affected the FRA.

In H.D Kotte, Karthik used oral history methodologies to collect and curate oral histories of the adivasi leaders and participants in this struggle for land rights. The events of a struggle for land rights were documented through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation with the key individuals involved in the movement. Additionally, she worked with the NGO to understand their role in the struggle, attempting to assess to what extent rehabilitation has been successful and identify further gaps that need to be filled.

Results and Findings

This project began as an attempt to document struggles for land and forest rights through which it produced

1. A report on the implementation of the FRA in Gudalur, Tamil Nadu
2. A report on the history of land

classification in Gudalur, Tamil Nadu

3. An oral history archive on the struggle for rehabilitation in H.D Kotte

However, Karthik realized that the contested forested landscapes of Gudalur, Tamil Nadu -- in which multiple groups and political identities stake claims to rights -- provided scope for an in-depth ethnographic analysis of the politics of indigeneity. So she produced

1. An academic paper co-authored with Dr. Ajit Menon currently undergoing peer review at the Economic and Political Weekly titled "Blurred Boundaries: Identity and Rights in the Forested Landscapes of Gudalur, Tamil Nadu"
2. A presentation of this paper at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment

In which she offers a critical analysis of the politics of the implementation of the FRA in Gudalur, Tamil Nadu. To do this, she draws upon three case studies, each offering an example of the different ways that the FRA has been used in Gudalur. In this analysis of the FRA, the law is taken not as an immutable category, but rather as a political instrument that various groups use to assert their identities and political imaginaries as a way to stake claims in the highly contested forested landscapes of Gudalur. In doing this, she shows that these imaginaries invoke unique histories and reference multiple genealogies of belonging. By highlighting the multiple uses and interpretations of the FRA in Gudalur, she seeks to open up space for a discussion around some larger concerns implicated within issues of forests, rights and conservation. Through posing questions such as 'What is a forest?' and 'Who is indigenous?' she highlights the blurred boundaries between various categories -- tribal and non-tribal, forest and non-forest, legality and illegality -- focusing attention instead on how these categories come to be constituted through practices on the ground. It is in these liminal spaces, where boundaries are blurred, that she applies a Foucauldian analysis to argue that local actors in Gudalur take on environmental



The political economy of... Alcohol

subjectivities framed by the FRA; these actors then further interpret and translate these subjectivities making the framing of policy and the construction of governmentality a dynamic and mutually-reinforcing process.



Images from Bungalow-ki-Kandi Hygroscope



Images from Bungalow-ki-Kandi Hygroscope

NR 18

Bungalow Ki

Kandi Hygroscope

📍 *Bungalow-ki-Kandi, Mussoorie, Uttarakhand*

Collaborators

Sanyukta Sharma has lived in Delhi and Mussoorie, graduating with English Honours from Lady Sri Ram College in 2006. Following this she completed a one year course in Television Direction from Film and Television Institute of India, going on to take up a six year course in Film Direction from Film and Television Institute of India. In this time she has made numerous short films as part of her study. Sanyukta Sharma completed her graduation in 2014. She has practiced photography on her own since 1998 and video work since 2011. Her interest in science and wildlife has been continuing since a young age, later finding its way into her films content and approach to film making.

Collaborators

Anirban Dutta, Chirantan Mukherjee, Navdeep Sharma, Harsh, Desna Sharma, Rituparna, Sunayana Singh, Vandita Jain, Susmit Nath

Site History and Context

The valley of village Bungalow ki Kandi is located at a height of 5000 ft in Uttarakhand, near Mussoorie. Within the small area of 6 square kilometer there are numerous varied vegetation zones. This is a unique quality of this place. There is a stream formed by spring water originating deep in an oak forest. It runs down to quickly escalate in volume due to the numerous fresh water springs along the valley and forms the tourist destination Kemptee falls a few kilometers down hill. Along it is farms belonging to the village. On hills just above the valley, on one side there is a pine forest, behind which is the Mussoorie town, on the other is Benog Himalayan Mountain Quail

sanctuary. In the valley, there is a village in one corner, holiday homes on one. There are farmlands, fruit orchards, and two dirt roads, one for the forest and one for the village. The artist's family set up their work there twenty odd years back, designing a spot of barren hillside into holiday homes and orchards.

The village has evolved in tune with the changes in the world. The change from land as a resource (something that needs to be cultivated and harvested) to land as a commodity has gradually taken its full effect here in last few years. This is the key change and its effects on the society spread into many facets of life here.

Project + Process

The Bungalow Ki Kandi Hygroscope Project, starting out in the form of research with the help of local experts such as farmers of the community and institutions such as the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun, took the form of a series of artistic interventions by a group of artists within the forest. A unique aspect of the approach was that each artist had a direct, deep and personal involvement with the natural material, and the works did not demand to be catered to any particular viewership. Like nature, they were open to any passing keen observer. This allowed each individual to work freely and experiment. An abandoned pump house at the site became of centre for many artistic interventions. Anirban Dutta worked with the relief on the walls of the old pump-house, and the various animal forms that trees and forests formed in their barks and trunks, framing these forms by erecting wooden frames for members of the community to interpret. He also framed the various burns within pine barks. Chirantan Mukherjee, a performance artist, undertook a series of actions, such as engaging with flying patterns of local butterflies in a



Images from Bungalow-ki-Kandi Hygroscope



Images from Bungalow-ki-Kandi Hygroscope

performative piece. In another such piece, he worked on a story of the Himalayan water circle, binding himself in a transparent tube to draw out water from a stream, which the viewers could splash on their hands. Navdeep Sharma, another artist collaborator, worked on creating micro landscapes representative of the local ecosystems. Harsh developed a "garbage shop" by foraging the various garbage dumps that had accumulated within the streams of water in the surrounding areas.

Residue

The project was successful in initiating a great number of new works and art practices as well as bringing them to the people of this area. For those locals who saw, it was art like has not been seen before in this region. The artists observed that within the short span of time, there was already progress in some of these new endeavours that were tried here for the first time, and turned out quite exciting results. Such as the techniques for photograph weathering, pine bark sketching, slide making, and miniature gardens. They got a grip on the methods, and started on the journey to understand and work with the mediums better. Already the works were becoming more complex than the initial experiments.



Gram eco-sani-irri - kalyani uday



Gram eco-sani-irri - sadya mizan

NR 19

Eco-Sani-Irri

📍 *Paradsinga, Madhya Pradesh, 2014*

Collaborators

Shweta Bhattad

Shweta Bhattad was born in Nagpur, Maharashtra and completed her MFA in sculpture from M.S. University in Baroda. She explores a variety of mediums through her practice, pushing the limits of sculpture and performance. Her oeuvre of work has not been limited by material or format, as Bhattad's interest lies within the contextual and conceptual. Bhattad views her art practice as an arbiter of truth; a medium through which to express social concern, and which can become familiar to a mass audience. Hence she has been conducting most of her performances in public spaces thereby expanding beyond the limited audience of art galleries. Bhattad has also worked across disciplines with totally different approaches. This includes her work around significant issues of women's education and safety - especially in her work with victims of sexual abuse and student suicides. Shweta Bhattad initiated the Eco-Sani-Irri project along with the Gram Art Project team in Paradsinga.

Site History + Context

Paradsinga is a village on Maharashtra-Madhya Pradesh border. Being situated at the border, the village has a very interesting cultural geography; the variations in its contours are formed due to social diversity. This diversity can be observed in communities that live in the village, their social and cultural lives. Gram Art Project is working with these rural communities, with the aim of offering sustainable solutions for day-to-day human life. Gram is based in Paradsinga Village of Madhya Pradesh,

which has a population of four thousand people and approximately one thousand homes. Out of this population, only 30% of families have toilets: the remaining 70% families defecate outside in public. Although the Gram Panchayat is attempting to curb this shortage by constructing communal toilets, the severe water shortage faced by the village will give rise to future issues related to sanitation. Shweta Bhattad and the Gram Art Project aimed to create a solution which is ecologically sound and which will prevent future contamination of river water.

Project + Process

The Gram Art Project team wanted to spread the message about the value of water, an asset which is becoming scarce the world over.

In response to the issue of limited infrastructure for sanitation and associated health risks and disease, Gram proposed to work on concept of Ecological Sanitation Irrigation, a method of waste recycling that reuses toilet waste as fertilizer. To support their efforts of promoting good sanitary practice in the village, and to raise awareness around the issue of limited resources and infrastructure in village areas, Gram organized an International Artist Residency. They invited ten artists to stay in the village and collaborated with the local village communities, to create projects or art works related to these issues of sustainability and sanitation.

They created an open call for applications, and received interest from artists across the globe. Eventually a group of ten artists from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Serbia were invited to be residents in Paradsinga for a period of ten days.

Under the Gram Residency in June 2014, the



Meeting sanitation



The wall magazine srishti shreyam

team of artists introduced a new philosophy that could lead to an improved living condition for the village community. While toilets are the products of this philosophy, art is the means by which the group attempted to disseminate their ideas to proliferate further. This project explores the inter relations and interdependency of ecology, sanitation and irrigation. Hence this project becomes an inter disciplinary phenomena engaging with biology, hygiene, sociology, psychology, agriculture, art, literature, history, music, dance and several other disciplines.

During the 10 day residency, artists endeavoured to collaborate with local villagers and create awareness among them through performances, theatre, storytelling, poster making and different media which will communicate better with villagers and effectively work on the concern. During the residency, the Gram Art project team also made Eco-Sani-Irri toilet model to talk to people about its working so that artists, school children and villagers could witness and take advantage of the opportunity to become educated about the toilets functioning and use. The invited resident artists would also be able to spread awareness about the toilets and their use through the artistic interventions and projects.

Over the course of the residency Gram invited to resident artists to participate in discussions and sessions regarding the issues and concerns with the Eco Sani Irri toilets. Although most of the artists had proposed specific projects when they applied for the residency some of their ideas and concepts were conceived, developed further and even entirely changed during the discussions. The core which the artist came up with went through series of changes and transformations. This was possible mainly because the artists were living at Gram. The change in landscape and cultural surroundings had its own effect in the minds of the artists.

Residue

At the end of the project, the Gram team began to view 'Eco- Sani- Irri' as an art residency accelerating a revolutionary

movement in Paradsinga village. This community art project is striving for activism, and simultaneously attempting to trigger resistance against mishandling and misunderstanding ecology, sanitation and irrigation in the village. In the context of the residency, Shweta invited Amitabh Pawade for an interactive session. He has been working on ground level for similar concerns keeping the farmer community as his central focus. He is a civil executive engineer and has worked in north east, western and central parts of India and has designed 13 airports in the country. Being a Civil Engineer, he served the society in many different ways including his service that he gave during the Bhuj earthquake. Over time, Pawade became increasingly concerned about his civic duties, and gave up his job in Nagpur to move to Nakhur village in Maharashtra (on the outskirts of Nagpur), to work for farmer's rights. In a session that went on for about three hours he discussed his experiences as a farmer. He brought to light some of the very interesting details of his experience. His talk was informative and inspiring for the Gram Project team. Bringing such people within the residency space to make room for interactive sessions is what determines the success of the residency. This process also served the ultimate aim of the residency, which is not to create mere art works and transform the face of the village; rather the idea is that each artist should carry back with them seeds of thoughts to sow elsewhere. In residencies which bring together artists of similar genuine concerns the art and the concept, the site and the artists all become channel for such ideas and initiations which can be taken further after the duration of the residency is over.

Through the Gram Art residency, Bhattad and her team hoped to survey, study, search and initiate dialogue on their philosophy. Whenever any social change or a new way of life is introduced to a society it takes its own time to germinate in that soil. Organic proliferation and constant nurturing is the only answer to such projects. Success of such community projects are not immediate changes that can be introduced through social awareness or developing mere infrastructure etc. and seen instantly. Rather these projects when taken by the artists



Kabir Sandhya

attempt to develop new culture design and its support system from within the local population which will be able to accept and carry forward these new ideas.

Programme of Speakers/

	Day 1 15 th July	Day 2 16 th July	Day 3 17 th July
10:00 – 10:15	Tea & Coffee Orientation and welcome from Khoj Team	TEA AND COFFEE BREAK	
10:15 – 10:45	Respondent Introduction: Navjot Altaf Khoj respondent: Sitara Chowfla	Respondent Introduction: Ravi Agarwal Khoj respondent: Pooja Sood	Respondent Introduction: Atul Bhalla Khoj respondent: Promona Sengupta
Session I 10:45 – 11:30	NR 3: Restless Chungthang and Dzongu, North Sikkim Frameworks Research and Media Collective (Amit Mahanti & Ruchika Negi)	NR 7: Badri Jal Abhiyan Badrinath, Uttarakhand Asim Waqif & Vaibhav Dimri	NR 1 : From ground up : From sky down : Points of connection Wadhvana Wetlands, Gujarat Varsha Nair
Session II 11:30 – 12:15	NR 14: Revisiting the Chipko Andolan Gahrwal, Uttarakhand Sunandita Mehrotra	NR 12: Hamari Nag River Nagpur, Maharashtra Alag Angle (Tanul Vikamshi, Milli Pandey and Lalit Vikamshi)	NR 16: The Messenger Sail Chilika Lake, Odisha Jyoti Ranjan Jena
Session III 12:15 – 1:00	NR 17: Land and Forest Rights in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve H.D. Kotte District Karnataka & Gudalur, Tamil Nadu Manasi Karthik	NR 19: Eco-Sani-Irri Paradsinga, Madhya Pradesh Shweta Bhattad & Aditi Bhattad	NR 6: Lake Tales Jakkur Lake, Bangalore, Karnataka Surekha
1:00 – 2:00	LUNCH BREAK		
Session IV 2:00 – 2:45	NR 10: Making the invisible visible Najibabad, Uttar Pradesh Priya Ravish Mehra	NR 18: Bungalow Ki Kandi Hygroscope Bungalow –ki-Kandi, Uttarakhand Sanyukta Sharma	NR 11: Where the River Meets its People Domahani, Jharkhand Uma Ray
Session V 2:45 – 3:30	NR 8: Dongratli Gani (Songs from the hills) Khopoli and Panvel, Maharashtra Shilpa Joglekar	NR 2: Gharelu Nuskhe aur Muft ki Salah Chamba, Uttarakhand Aastha Chauhan	NR 15: Ecologies of the Excess Bangalore, Karnataka Naveen Mahantesh, Ankit Bhargava & Srajana Kaikini
3:30 – 4:00	TEA & COFFEE BREAK		
Session VI 4:00 – 4:45	Open Forum: Group Discussion	NR 9: Abstract Reality Aulinjaa Village, Madhya Pradesh Akshay Raj Singh Rathore & Flora Boillot	NR 13: Reconciling Ecologies in the Millennium City Gurgaon, Haryana Alex White-Mazzarella, Namrata Mehta & Soaib Grewal
Session VII 4:45 – 5:30		Case Study in Khirkee: Networks and Neighborhood REVUE (Sreejata Roy & Mrityunjay Chatterjee)	Open Forum : Closing comments and discussion
6 PM ONWARDS	Negotiating Routes Party + Launch of "Zameendari Zimmedari: From Land Ownership to Responsibility"		

Notes/

[illegible]

Khoj Team

Pooja Sood, Director

Programme Team

Promona Sengupta

Sitara Chowfla

Media + Production Team

Suresh Pandey

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