

Dwelling Plurality; Living by the coast

Concept note

1. Workshop:

The project is a pluralistic juncture that brings together a collection of responses from artists and writers to the contemporary socio-political issues related to the challenges of living in the coast in an era of globalization, internet and global warming. During the project, artists and writers from Bergen and Kochi- two geographically remote cities that both have been influenced by different notions and practices of invasion and historic trading, will investigate the repercussions of current living on the coast, using historic and modern references both share in common.

The project consists of two artists and two writers each from these two legendary maritime gateways will be a platform to blend concepts and letters that would complement and communicate each other and address the issues of cultural and social challenges and taboos. Ultimate it will be a journey together for participants from a mystic and celestial past to the wild present through the intricacies of time space and velocity.

Even though Kochi and Bergen is remotely connected with geography, both share stunning similarities with its past and present. Both have been colonized and acted as important trading hubs and maritime gateways that not only facilitated moving of goods but also cultures. The project will connect these vibrant cities culturally and artistically, thus open a new bridge for communication that would fill the geo-political and territorial gap. This is an extra ordinary juncture interlacing the act of deliberations with a twist that creates unity in diversity.

Historically both Kochi and Bergen heralded multiple ages of similar cohesiveness that might be not directly related but produced a collective result while cruising toward cosmopolitanism. It is evident that aesthetically, politically and philosophically, there are certain junctures blurring the geographical boundaries with the tendency of projecting an instinct of tribalism amidst their cosmopolitan characteristics. Even though socio-democratic values have been practiced in wider narrative platforms, a psychological segregation related to localism can be felt in both these territories. The participants will investigate these conflicting folkloristic characteristics in a cosmopolitan culture with unique artistic tools that can adopt and include both historic and modern factors and references.

The shores of both Kochi and Bergen witnessed the early human expeditions and the great ages of discovery. The navigators cruised in to the shores of this small but vibrant towns

looking for different ‘treasures’ and that eventually led to exchange, conquest, global trading and invasion. Thus historically, these cities have marked the early signs of globalization that brought different symbolic trophies of struggle animated with a complex curiosity. The evolution and lucidity boasted by these historic factors would be worth looking in to with a critical distinction and conviction. This way the project can deal the historic and political themes with wishful and positive imagery on a constructive structure.

The heterogeneity of both this cities has been unexplored collectively considering the historic and modern day monotony of experiences. This project will enable a critical but essential exploration to all this junctures through art and life.

The project will take place in the spice smelling corridors of Fort Kochi in February 2016 and will be initiated by INNO (Indo Norwegian Cultural Society) in collaboration with Stiftelsen 3,14 Bergen and Royal Norwegian Embassy, New Delhi. The project aims at not only exchange of ideas and immersive engagements among the participants, but also includes the local communities by organizing multiple events that enables structured and casual interactions. Prominent artists and writers will pay visit to the workshop to support the participants. The works produced by the participants during their interaction and afterwards will be exhibited as a collateral project in the 2016-17 edition of Kochi-Muziris biennale that ensure the continuation and future collaboration.

Apart from that, a journal which will contain contributions from the participating authors and artists will be published and made available during the biennale as well as in Norway. The journal will be published both in Norway and India. This will be both in English and Norwegian.

Participants to the workshop:

- Runo Isaksen (author, Norway) (confirmed)
- Hilde Kvalvaag (author, Norway) (confirmed)
- Suvi Nieminen (contemporary artist, Norway) (confirmed)
- Erik Friis Reitan (contemporary artist, Norway) (confirmed)
- PS Josh (contemporary artist, India) (tentative)
- Deepthi.P.Vasu (contemporary artist, India) (tentative)
- Santhosh Echikkanam (author, India) (tentative)
- M. Mukundan (author, India) (tentative)

Guest speakers (tentative): see program below.

2. Institutions behind:

About Stiftelsen 3,14

3,14 works almost exclusively with international exhibitions and partnerships, with an emphasis on contemporary art beyond the very western discourse for the last 25 years. They are committed to knowledge production, presentation and interpretation of the work of innovative artists in all media, promoting creativity and artistic exploration. With their program they aim to reflect upon the complex nature of international contemporary art, different contemporalities and current global socially issues, served to a diverse audience. 3,14's exhibitions, events, lectures, seminars presentations and educational activities, strive to investigate the dynamic and provocative nature of contemporary art. 3,14 presents and questions the present for the future. The focus includes featuring artist with established and reknown voices, recognizing the work of emerging artists, placing different media into new and meaningful contexts and defining alternative movements and endeavours.

About INNO

Indo Norwegian Cultural Society (INNO) exclusively works with artists and writers from Norway and India, with an aim to bring ideas and cultures together. Established in 2013 by the award-winning journalists Riyasbabu and Per Christian Magnus, INNO is committed to bridge innovation, conceptualization, knowledge and cultures between these great nations. INNO works closely with artists and writers from both countries by enabling a common platform and individual attention. INNO has already created a new space for exploration and committed to continue catering diverse types of artists and writers.

INNO's events are carefully chosen to ensure the maximum explorations and encourages established and rookie artists and writers to find a new cultural space. They constantly look for new and alternative voices and ideas that ensure their flexibility in socio-political notions.

3. INNO and 3,14 collaborations:

INNO and 3,14 have already established a strong bond with their collaborations with a multitude of understanding. The first project was launched as collateral to last edition of Kochi-Muziris Biennale by showcasing the Norwegian artist group 'In Epic' along with renowned Indian artist Hema Upadhyay. The project drew attention not only from Norway and India but also from the whole globe as it evoked positive critics.

Our new collaboration will be a project in Bergen with renowned Indian activist and writer Vandana Shiva visiting Bergen along with world-renowned artist Alfredo Jaar in September (2015). The event that will feature in 3,14, will feature a conversation between the artist and writer.

In January 2016, we organize a solo of Bo Magnus in Mumbai. This exhibition will be another milestone in the art exchange ideology both INNO and 3,14 shares.

In February 2016 we will organize ' Dwelling Plurality' in Kochi, and the continuation will be staged during the Kochi Biennale 2016-2017.

3,14 will showcase Indian artist Hema Upadhyay in 2016. The solo exhibition ensures the continuity of exchange.

In the fall of 2016, INNO and 3,14 will give residency program to an upcoming Indian artist in Bergen, as part of 3,14's signature residency program 'Circulating Air'.

In 2017 we also plan to organize a workshop in Bergen with participants from India and Norway.

4. Applicants, responsible:

Per Christian Magnus, Director INNO, mobile phon +47 41 42 33 30

Riyas Babu, Director INNO, mobile phone +47 400 18 058

Malin Barth, Director Stiftelsen 3,14, mobile phone +47 480 42 408

5. Tentative program for Work-shop:

February 5 Friday:

Meeting in Kochi – Settling in and personal introductions.

February 6 and 7:

Facilitation and introduction of works and personnel exchange of deliberations between participants.

February 8 Monday:

Opening of the official workshop at Pepper House Kochi. Opening by Mayor of Kochi in the presence of representatives of the Royal Norwegian Embassy, participants and public.

Guest speakers:

Sudarshan Shetty – Curator Kochi-Muziris Biennale: ‘Obstacles and challenges in inter-cultural conceptualization and art production’.

Arudhati Roy – Booker prize winning writer and activist: ‘Post Modernism in Indian literature and life’.

Dinner.

February 9:

Morning section – Visit by Biennale team, and deliberations between participants.

Speech- Riyas Komu –Director of Kochi Biennale: ‘Art and life in modern India’.

Afternoon - open to public.

Amitav Ghosh– Indian author – ‘World literature and postmodern tendencies’.

February 10:

Discussion between the participants on creating a collaborative work space.

Speech – Paul Zacharia , Famous Kerala writer: ‘History of Malayalam literature and its modern standing’.

Afternoon:

Speech - Shajahan Madampat, Art and literature critic: ‘ Influence of cultural codes in art and literature; an Indian experience.

February 11:

Speech Valsan Koormakulari - Artist and Sculpture: ‘ Modern sculpturing’.

Participant interaction and discussions.

Traditional Keralan classical dance by Kerala Kalamandalam.

February 12:

Speech Bose Krishnamachari, President and founder of Kochi-Muziris Biennale: ‘Contemporary Indian art and trends’

Jeet Thayil – Indian Author: ‘Globalization and literature’.

Kathakali show (Traditional Keralan theatre performance).

February 13:

Participants interaction.

February 14:

Closing ceremony, Participants talking about their experience and future collaborations.