



TOPICS FOR THE MEDIA SEARCH

ARTS & DESIGN

McClung Museum Opens Exhibition Featuring Art from Indigenous Communities in India

JANUARY 14, 2019



Exterior of McClung Museum including Dinosaur Sculpture

Indigenous artistic traditions of India are on display at the McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture as part of its new exhibition, *Many Visions, Many Versions: Art from Indigenous Communities in India*. The exhibition opens February 1 and will remain on view through May 19.

Many Visions, Many Versions presents the work of contemporary artists from four major indigenous artistic traditions in India. The exhibition features approximately 80 paintings and a film created by 24 significant Indian artists including Jangarh Singh Shyam, Jivya Soma Mashe, Sita Devi, and Swarna Chitrakar. *Many Visions, Many Versions* explores the breadth and variety of cultural traditions in India, revealing a dynamic aesthetic that is deeply rooted in traditional culture yet vitally responsive to issues of global concern.



An acrylic on canvas by Ram Singh Urveti titled Woodpecker. Photo credit: Sneha Ganguly.

The exhibition brings together art from the Gond and Warli communities of Central India, the Mithila region of Bihar, and the narrative scroll painters of Bengal. The works are drawn from private collections in the United States and Europe. *Many Visions, Many Versions* offers a unique opportunity for viewers to learn about life and culture in India through these remarkable artworks.

Many of these types of paintings were originally executed for the interior walls of homes, but contemporary artists have broadened the artistic tradition's visibility by translating it to paper and canvas. Through four thematic sections—Myth and Cosmology, Nature, Village Life, and Contemporary Explorations—the exhibition demonstrates the shared cultural features and contemporary concerns of these four communities while emphasizing the diversity of their artists' unique expressive forms, techniques, and styles.



An acrylic on canvas by Ram Singh Urveti titled Woodpecker. Photo credit: Sneha Ganguly.

From Hindu and local expressions of religious deities to the rhythms of rural village life, detailed portrayals of animal life, and explorations of modern realities like AIDS and terrorism, the artists demonstrate that no matter how rooted in rural villages they may be, they are also keen observers and original commentators on contemporary urban life and modern realities.

“*Many Visions, Many Versions* is going to be a fantastic exhibition for our community,” said Katy Malone, curator of academic programs. “The artwork is visually rich and eye-catching, and the content is thought-provoking. Within one show, we can discuss storytelling, gender, politics, and changing traditions with our guests. Even though indigenous communities in India may seem far away from our campus to some, the themes are universal.”

The museum is collaborating broadly on exhibition programming, from a lecture series organized with UT’s College of Law to family programs that feature partnerships with university and community organizations.

Exhibition programming will include at least one lecture geared toward the general adult public and the UT community. On April 4 at 5:30 p.m. in the McClung Museum Auditorium, Arundhati Katju, Human Rights Fellow and Doctor of Judicial Science candidate at Columbia Law School, will discuss co-authoring the groundbreaking legislation that helped to overturn Section 377—the colonial-era law that made same-sex relationships illegal in India. Katju’s talk is presented in collaboration with the College of Law.

The McClung Museum has also embarked on a new collaboration with the College of Architecture and Design, developed in partnership with the Indian student association, Manthan; the Multicultural Greek Council; and the Lambda Theta Alpha sorority. Led by architecture faculty member Brian Ambroziak, students will develop McClung's first-ever pop-up museum, a mobile space that will display exhibition items on Johnson-Ward Pedestrian Walkway April 17 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The museum will host free family programming focused on Indian art and culture:

- Monday, April 8, "Expressions of Nature," a free stroller tour, 10 a.m. at the museum. Register online.
- Saturday, April 13, "Journey to India," free Family Day, 1 to 4 p.m. at the museum.

The museum will also host an exhibition preview and reception for museum members. More information about the exhibition and related programming is online.

Many Visions, Many Versions is curated by Aurogeeta Das and David Szanton with assistance from consulting curator Jeffrey Wechsler. The exhibition is organized by BINDU Modern Gallery and toured by International Arts and Artists in Washington, DC. It is presented at the McClung Museum by the Althea and Clayton Brodine Museum Fund, UT's Ready for the World initiative, and the First Tennessee Foundation, with additional support from Knox County, the City of Knoxville, and the Arts and Heritage Fund.

The McClung Museum is located at 1327 Circle Park Drive. Museum admission is free, and the museum's hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sundays. Groups may schedule tours by calling 865-974-2144 or emailing museum@utk.edu.

Free two-hour museum parking passes are available from the parking information booth at the entrance to Circle Park Drive on weekdays by request. Free parking is available on Circle Park Drive on a first-come,