



ANANT FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

Anant Curatorial Forum 2024

Programme Details

15-16 March 2024

The Anant Curatorial Forum has been conceived as a space dedicated to unpack curatorial practice by inviting the experiences and perspectives of practitioners engaged in some of the most dynamic, critical, and meaningful explorations within the arts.

The curatorial function has evolved to take on several forms, and has become increasingly relevant as a framework not just within the arts but across other disciplines and industries, and demands timely reassessment. The preliminary iteration of the Anant Curatorial Forum, to be held on March 15 and 16, 2024, will examine some pressing issues that exist within the contemporary context of the arts in South Asia.

DAY 1: FRIDAY, 15 MARCH 2024

Registration

9:30 AM - 10 AM

Opening Remarks by Mamta Singhania and Meera Menezes

10 AM - 10:15 AM

Panel 1

In Conversation with Institutional Templates

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM

Through our panel discussion "In Conversation with Institutional Templates," we undertake an examination of the multifaceted exhibition practices that shape contemporary curatorial methodologies. By delving into the historical underpinnings of curatorial interventions, we investigate the intricate interplay between curator and institution - a relationship that serves as both a conduit for subversion and collaboration within the broader socio-cultural milieu.

At the heart of our discussion lies the dialectic interplay between subversion and collaboration that defines the role of a curator. Examining various settings, such as museums, galleries, and private foundations, we analyse the methodologies utilised by curators to question dominant beliefs while also forming alliances with institutional players. By engaging in critical examination and pondering over theory, our goal is to shed light on the potential for change within curator-institution dynamics.

Moderator: Premjish Achari

Panellists: Anushka Rajendran, Girish Shahane, Samira Bose

Tea Break

11:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Panel 2

History of the Curatorial Figure in India: Pre-globalisation

12:15 PM - 1:45 PM

This panel will bring to the surface the personal, improvisational, less visible, and independent ways in which the curatorial figure encountered context during the pre-globalization period. While we are aware of the role of the curator in and post the 1990s we felt we should throw light on what transpired before that. This panel will span a period of almost a century. Gayatri Sinha will talk about the 19th century exhibitions that TN Mukharji, a curator at the Indian Museum in Calcutta, was involved in; Nancy Adajania will focus on the proto-curatorial practices of women practitioners, each premised on the principle of self-organisation; and Rashmi Devi Sawhney's presentation will explore the 'figure of the curator' through independent cinema and the film society movement in post-independence India. We hope that foregrounding these personal, diverse and specific histories will help us tell a more nuanced story of Modern art in South Asia, towards a better understanding of contemporary curatorial practice in the present.

Moderator: Geeta Kapur

Panellists: Gayatri Sinha, Nancy Adajania, Rashmi Devi Sawhney

Lunch Break

1:45 PM - 3 PM

Panel 3

Alternative Framework of the Artist Curator

3 PM - 4:30 PM

The hyphenated nomenclature of the Artist-Curator has a considerable history, one that has pushed in the direction of expanding the field of art production and circulation. Since the 19th

century artists have taken on the mantle of curation to produce multiple instances of experimentation with the exhibition form and also question institutional structures, procedures and protocols. And within the South Asian context, with its under developed art institutions, artists have often built and willed spaces into being via their curatorial propositions.

The panellists will focus on their current impetus for curating within the South Asian context. Reflecting on the fluid identities of practitioners as they work with research, organising, curating, writing, art making, they will think strategically about their role within and outside institutions and where the emphasis of their curation lies – what it makes possible and how it operationalises modes of collective working and research enquiries.

Moderator: Vidya Shivadas

Panellists: Amar Kanwar, Anita Dube, Sandev Handy, Shai Heredia

DAY 2: SATURDAY, 16 MARCH 2024

Registration

9:30 AM - 10 AM

Panel 1

On textile

10 AM - 11:30 AM

Textiles are ubiquitous. They cover our bodies and adorn our homes. Yet despite this ubiquity, it is surprising that textile theory continues to be an under explored area of academic inquiry. If textiles and textile production are forms and modes of knowledge production - it seems important to ask what sorts of knowledge they generate.

This panel will attempt to unpack the importance of textiles in the contemporary art context of India. Through their deeply embedded individual practices, the panelists will provide variously, historical, academic and contemporary overviews of textiles today. Ritu Sethi will present a brief historiography of the exhibition history and the curatorial intent of textiles and craft displays and reflect on its outcomes, ramifications, and the future. Mayank Mansingh Kaul will discuss questions - ideas of design, narration and representation of textile makers - which have consistently guided the exhibitions that he has been involved in over the last decade as a curator while Monisha Ahmed will focus more on collections, curation and institution building from a personal perspective.

Moderator: Pooja Sood

Panellists: Mayank Mansingh Kaul, Monisha Ahmed, Ritu Sethi

Tea Break

11:30 AM - 12 PM

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Panel 2

What is an Interdisciplinary Arts Practice?

12 PM - 1:30 PM

The panel, featuring Jahnvi Phalkey, Jeebesh Bagchi, and Rohit Goel, seeks to bring attention to interdisciplinarity by presenting it as a dynamic creative engine. The speakers will highlight its select nuances, while exploring the relationships between curatorial and interdisciplinary practices. As art practices increasingly engage and intersect with other disciplines to produce more specialised and complex knowledge, interdisciplinarity becomes a transformative tool. Articulating the impulse to engineer with interdisciplinarity within artistic and curatorial realms, the panel will focus on cultivating a conversation where creative practice and problem-solving converge. It will also respond to how interdisciplinary curatorial practices can emerge as sites for co-articulation, co-calibration, and collective change. The panel presents itself as an offering of recognition towards the curatorial as a binding force that propels the emergence of new discourses—and possibly new ways of thinking—in conjunction with our contemporary condition.

Moderator: Indranjan Banerjee

Speakers: Jahnvi Phalkey, Jeebesh Bagchi, Rohit Goel

Lunch Break

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Panel 3

Framing Contemporary Photographic Practice

2:30 PM - 4 PM

The session scrutinises dimensions of how the personal is embedded within socio-cultural trajectories of curatorial practice as the speakers cite recent exhibitions or spaces of engagement, drawn from/around the South Asian region and beyond. 'Framing' is then reimagined via modes of translation and/or transcoding artworks/motivations which create new affective sites for exploring post-coloniality, history, memory. The panel proposes how discourse generated via such curatorial practices/processes in the present have an unpredictable yet transformative capacity.

Moderator: Rahaab Allana

Panellists: Lucas Morin, Tanvi Mishra, Veeranganakumari Solanki

Closing Remarks By Meera Menezes