



SAARC Cultural Centre NEWSLETTER

September 2017 | Vol 7, No. 3



SAARC Artists Camp and Exhibition of Paintings

28th to 31st July 2017 in Nepal

The Seventh Annual SAARC Artists Camp and Exhibition of Paintings was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal from 28th to 31st July 2017 at the Gokarna Forest Resort in Kathmandu. Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre, the Deputy Director Programmes Ms. Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara and the Administrative Officer Mr. Keerti Gunathilake participated in the Artists Camp carrying out the responsibilities of SCC. The SAARC Cultural Centre is most grateful to Mr. Bharat Mani Subedi Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Culture,

Tourism and Civil Aviation and Mr. Ram Prasad Sapkota, the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, who worked tirelessly for months to ensure the success of the Artists Camp in Nepal.

This year, Official Nominations of Artists from SAARC Member States of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were received. These Artists created paintings in the themes of "Sacred Sites" and "The Beauty of Nature" surrounded by the tranquil and picturesque surroundings of the Gokarna Protected Forest, once the hunting grounds of the Kings of Nepal.

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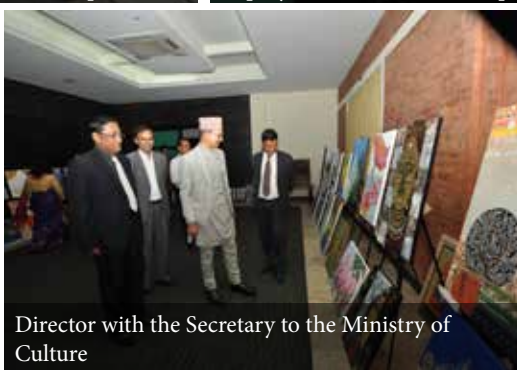
Director SCC welcoming the Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal



Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal opening the exhibition



Director SCC with the newly appointed Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Nepal



Director with the Secretary to the Ministry of Culture



Viewing the Paintings



Director SCC, Mr. Subedi and Mr. Ram Sapkota admiring the paintings



S.C. Suman from Nepal



Sandatharaka Abeyasinghe from Sri Lanka



MD Rezaun Nabi from Bangladesh



Tshering Wangchuk from Bhutan



Namrata Singh from Nepal



Presenting the art material to the artists



Jayantha Pushpakumara from Sri Lanka



Harsh Vardhan Sharma from India

The Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal was the Chief Guest at the Inauguration ceremony, which was chaired by the Secretary to the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation with the Director Education, Security and Culture (ESC) of the SAARC Secretariat and the Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre at the Head Table.

The Closing ceremony was held along with the Exhibition of Paintings created by the artists who spent their time surrounded by the Gokarna Protected Forest creating their masterpieces for the SAARC Artists Camp 2017. The exhibition was formally opened by Honourable Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal with H.E. the Secretary General of the SAARC in attendance. The



Director SCC and Mr. Subedi handing over art material to Tenzin Yangchen from Bhutan



Closing Ceremony



Artists in the garden

Secretary to the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation and officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the SAARC Secretariat and representatives from the Embassies of the Member States in Nepal, Chancellor of the Nepalese Academy of Fine Arts and other dignitaries were some of the important personalities who graced this occasion. The support of the Government of Nepal towards the SAARC Artists Camp reflected their continuing support towards the activities of the SAARC Cultural Centre.

The SAARC Artists Camp provided an opportunity for the Artists to share their techniques and knowledge, learn from each other and establish new networks of friends. They also had an opportunity to mingle with the distinguished guests and share their views with the media.



Farjana Ahmed from Bangladesh



DDP Painting



Ahmed Azmee from Maldives



Distinguished Guests

Editorial

The Third Quarter of 2017 at the SAARC Cultural Centre went ahead at full speed with several activities including the SAARC Exhibition of Paintings held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, the SAARC Artists Camp and Exhibition of Paintings held in Kathmandu, Nepal and the SAARC Research Seminar on Buddhist Cultural Trails held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Secretary General of the SAARC made his second visit to Sri Lanka and was able to visit the new facility being constructed in the Southern part of Sri Lanka. This year marked the 7th consecutive SAARC Artists Camp and Exhibition of Paintings which was held for the first time in Nepal. The SAARC Research Seminar on Buddhist Cultural Trails was the first in the series of Seminars based on the "South Asian Cultural Trails" approved by the SAAARC Summit held in Kathmandu in 2014. Enthusiastic and enhanced participation of the Member States at these events highlighted the "Unity within Diversity" theme of the SAARC Cultural Centre. It also raised the profile of the Centre and its aim to promote interregional understanding through art and cultural activities.

The next quarter is going to be equally busy for us with the SAARC Research Grant, the Governing Board Meeting, SAARC Film Festival, SAARC Non-Violence Day Art Competition, SAARC Handicraft Exhibition and Workshop, SAARC Festival on Dance, SAARC Cultural Extravaganza and culminating with the SAARC Charter Day on 8th December 2017.

- Editors

SAARC Exhibition of Paintings at the University of Visual and Performing Arts

3rd to 9th July 2017 in Sri Lanka



Director SCC welcoming the Vice Chancellor of the University of Visual and Performing Arts



Director SCC welcoming Ms. Umaira Mohamed of Maldives



Welcoming the Representative from the Japanese Embassy in Sri Lanka



Deputy Director Programmes SCC welcoming Director of the Department of Culture Ms. Anusha Gokula Fernando



Ceremonial Procession to the Exhibition



Guests of Honour being led to the Exhibition through the Ceremonial Procession

The SAARC Exhibition of Paintings was held in Colombo from 3rd to 9th July 2017 in Collaboration with the “Saundaryabhimani Festival” conducted by the University of Visual & Performing Arts, Sri Lanka. The exhibition was ceremoniously inaugurated in the presence of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Visual and Performing Arts, representatives from High Commissions and Embassies of the Honoured Member States of Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Maldives in Sri Lanka, Representatives of the SAARC Observer States of Iran and Japan, Director of the Indian Cultural Centre and Officials from the Department of Culture in Sri Lanka and the Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre. The Exhibition included paintings created by the Artists of SAARC Member States of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, creating a unique display of Regional artistry from South Asia. The Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella made the welcome address and the vote of thanks was given by the Deputy Director Programmes Ms. Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara.

The exhibition of paintings is held in Sri Lanka to showcase the creativity, talent and artistry



The Guests of Honour



Ceremonial Opening of the Exhibition

of the Artists of the SAARC Region. The paintings created at each annual SAARC Artists Camps and displayed at this Exhibition, portrays the beauty of the landscape and culture of each Member State. It was particularly fascinating to witness the different styles adopted by different artists of each Member State to depict the same subject. These paintings showcase the solidarity and unity among the artists and further establish and strengthen the links between the artists of the Region in both personal and professional levels.

This year it was the Second Annual SAARC Exhibition of Paintings held in Sri Lanka to share the artistic talent, creativity and style of the Region with the Sri Lankan public. The exhibition was visited by many art students, artists, and luminaries in the field of arts and culture. The paintings brought an understanding of the SAARC Region to the visitors through art.



Director of the SCC addressing the gathering



Handing the brochure to Ms. Maleka Parveen of Bangladesh



Handing the brochure to Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan Dr. Sarfraz Ahmed Khan Sipra



DDR and CSR with Dr. Edwin Ariyadasa and the Director, Dept of Cultural Affairs in Sri Lanka Ms. Anusha Gokula Fernando



Mr. Niteen Subhash Yeola, with Ms. Rajashree Behera and Prof. Ariyaratne Kaluarachchi



Prof. Ariyaratne Kaluarachchi with Mr. Munir Ghiasy of Afghanistan



Address by the VC of the UVPA



Viewing the Paintings



Mr. Mostafa Sohrab of Embassy of Iran with Mr. Munir Ghiasy of Afghanistan Embassy



Viewing the Paintings



Mr. Wasantho Kotuwella Director SCC with Ms. Dhana Kumari Joshi of Nepal



Prof. Nimal De Silva the Keynote Speaker.

Emeritus Professor of Architecture, University of Moratuwa, Former President of ICOMOS Sri Lanka, Member of the ICOMOS Scientific Committee on Wall Paintings, Former Director General of the Central Cultural Fund of Sri Lanka, Former Director Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

Research Seminar on Buddhist Cultural Trails

26th to 27th August 2017 in Sri Lanka

The first Seminar in the series of "South Asian Cultural Trails" approved by the 18th SAARC Summit held in November 2014 in Kathmandu was organized in Sri Lanka. The Seminar was titled "Research Seminar on Buddhist Cultural Trails: Journey through Time and Space, of Merchants, Monks and Pilgrims" was held at the BMICH in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 26th to 27th August 2017. This seminar will be followed with Hindu Cultural Trails in 2018 and Islamic, Christian & Textile, etc. Cultural Trails in the up coming years.

Buddhism is an important common heritage in the SAARC Region. It bound the Region in the past as a living Religion, binds it now as a part of the tangible heritage of the

Region and will bind it in the future through tourists and pilgrims. This seminar was held with Official Nominees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka and the delegates discussed the tangible and intangible heritage of the region in our past, heritage management of our present and development of tourism for the future. Papers were presented by 38 academics, scholars, independent researchers and these topics were discussed throughout the two days of the Seminar.

The Inauguration was held at the BMICH amidst a distinguished gathering including Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic Religious representatives of Sri Lanka. Mr. J. Dadallage Consultant Public

Relations to the Office of the Hon. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka ably represented our Chief Guest Mr. E.M.S.B. Ekanayake Secretary to the Hon. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. Mrs. Rajashree Behera, Director of the Indian Cultural Centre on behalf of the H.E. the High Commissioner of India, Mr. Intisar Ahmed Sulhery on behalf of the H.E. the High Commissioner of Pakistan, Mr. M.A.K. Giriagama, Director General of South Asia and SAARC Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka represented the Member States. Mr. Dwatmaji Hanomanresi, Counsellor for Socio and Cultural Affairs represented H.E. the Ambassador of Indonesia at this august gathering. Academics from University of Colombo, University



Mr. Wasantho Kotuwella Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre giving the welcome address



Mr. J. Dadallage Consultant Public Relations to the Office of Prime Minister of Sri Lanka



Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte Deputy Director Research addressing the gathering



Official Nominee Mr. Ranjith Hewage, Sri Lanka



Venerable Buddhist monks at the Inauguration ceremony.



Prof. Nimal De Silva, Mr. J. Dadallage, Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella and Mr. M.A.K. Giriagama at the inauguration head table



Official Nominee Dr. Shivakant Bajpai, India



Official Nominee Mr. Noor Agha Noori, Afghanistan



Official Nominee Mr. Md. Altaf Hossain, Bangladesh



Official Nominee Ms. Mandakini Shrestha, Nepal

of Sri Jayawardenapura, University of Peradeniya, Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka and other scholars were also present.

The academics, scholars, researchers and participants were warmly welcomed by the Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella. Mr. J. Dadallage spoke on behalf of the Chief Guest Mr. E.M.S.B. Ekanayake bringing good wishes and encouraging future activities

of the SAARC Cultural Centre. The Deputy Director Research Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte introduced the Keynote Speaker Emeritus Prof. Nimal De Silva. The Vote of Thanks was given by Dr. Lopamudra Maitra Bajpai on behalf of the SAARC Cultural Centre.

The keynote address was delivered by Professor Nimal De Silva, Emeritus Professor of Architecture, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka, on "*Kalpawruksha: The Celestial*

Tree in Asian Art and Architecture". This was followed by seven multi disciplinary academic sessions covering a vast range of subjects from Archaeology, Art History, History, Tangible Heritage, Intangible Heritage, Geoarchaeology, Museum Objects, Photo Documentation and new research on Buddhist Cultural Trails. The Book of Abstracts of the Research Seminar is available on our website.



Religious representatives from Hinduism and Islam at the Inauguration ceremony



Official Nominee Ms. Surayya Akhtar Jahan, Bangladesh



Official Nominee Mr. Arjuna Samaraweera, Sri Lanka



Presentation Ceremony



Lighting of the Ceremonial lamp to inaugurate the Seminar



Official Nominee Mr. Prasanna B. Ratnayake, Sri Lanka



Venerable Buddhist monks listening attentively to the keynote speech



Official Nominee Prof. Biman Chandra Barua, Bangladesh



Official Nominee Ms. Tshering Choki, Bhutan



Official Nominee Ms. R. Nishanthi Ranasinghe of the Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka



Invitees at the inauguration



Dambulla World Heritage Site

The Cultural Tour of the Research Seminar on Buddhist Cultural Trails 28th August 2017 to Arankele Meditation Monastery and Dambulla World Heritage Site

The participants of the “Research Seminar on Buddhist Cultural Trails: Journey through Time and Space, of Merchants, Monks and Pilgrims” was given an opportunity to mingle with each other in an informal manner during the Post Seminar Cultural Tour to the Arankele Buddhist Meditation Monastery and the Dambulla Buddhist Cave Temple – a World Heritage site. The Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella, Deputy Director Research Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte and other staff members of the SAARC Cultural Centre joined the Cultural Tour to share knowledge and information regarding Sri Lanka and tangible & intangible Buddhist heritage of the sites

Arankele Monastery is a Meditation Monastery constructed for the use of meditating monks and has its own exceptional architectural design and style only discovered at Meditation Monasteries of Sri Lanka. The feature which makes it unique is the lack of public ritual space such as a Stupa, Bodhi Tree, Image House, etc., common to monasteries of Sri Lanka, has designated this monastery for the use of meditating monks.



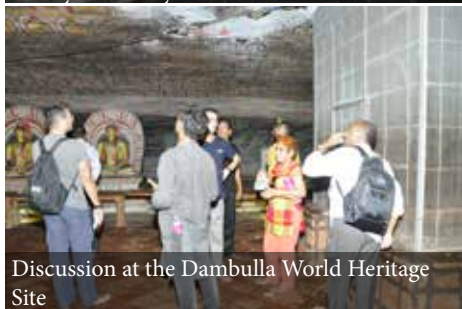
A pond with a perennial water source is a luxury in the dry zone of Sri Lanka



Discussion at the Dambulla World Heritage Site



Close observation of the Buddhist Art



Discussion at the Dambulla World Heritage Site



SCC staff sharing their knowledge



Documenting the paintings for future research

Dambulla World Heritage Site is a Cave Temple where the natural rock shelters were made habitable by creating a drip-ledge to prevent water seepage inside the caves. Dambulla Monastery was constructed as a Buddhist Monastery during 1st century BCE and since then continued as a Monastery for over two millennia. Sri Lanka has a Living Buddhist Tradition and this monastery was constantly undergoing renovation, reconstruction and new construction of the art and architecture of the monastery. The existing paintings at the Dambulla date from the Kandy period.

These two diverse sites of Buddhist tradition in Sri Lanka led to many lively and invigorating

discussions from Buddhist art and architecture and comparisons with the Buddhist art and architecture of the Member States. The dialogues continued from Buddhist Culture to South Asian Culture, management of tangible and intangible heritage and other topics whilst travelling and at the sites. At each site, similarities in art, architecture, archaeology, management and various other issues were deliberated at length. The shared cultural heritage of Buddhism and the differences in art and architecture was also demonstrated during the discussions, widening the possibilities of research and cooperation among the participants.



Director SCC with some of the participants



Discussion of the art and archaeology of the Arankele Meditation Monastery



Discussion of the art and archaeology of the Arankele Meditation Monastery



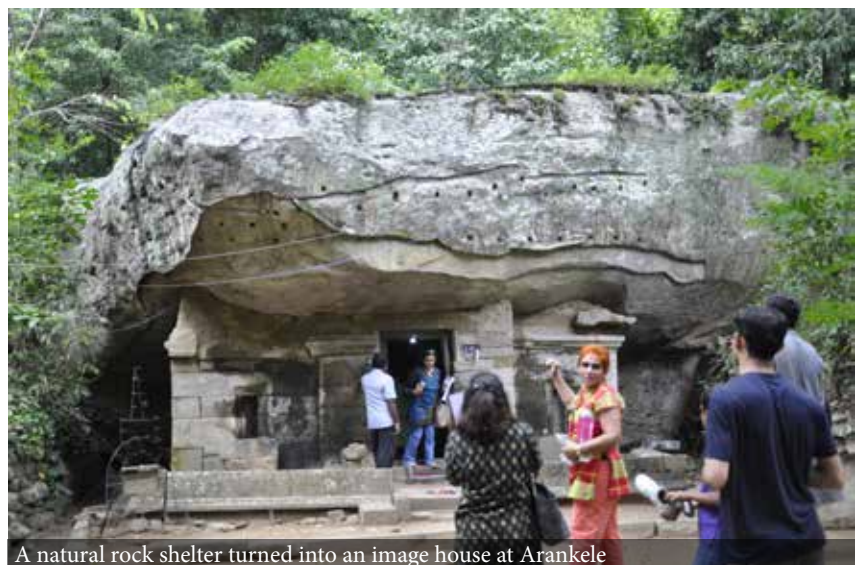
Taking notes for future references



Discussion about the Jantaghara



Academic discussions



A natural rock shelter turned into an image house at Arankele



Discussion of the art and archaeology of the Arankele Meditation Monastery



Discussions are always enjoyable



Walking along the Meditation pathway

H.E. the Secretary General of the SAARC visits the Construction Site of the Proposed SAARC Cultural Centre



The Construction of the proposed SAARC Cultural Centre in Matara

H.E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial the Secretary General of SAARC visited Sri Lanka to participate in the Eighth Meeting of the SAARC Ministers of Home / Interior held in Colombo. Despite his busy schedule, His Excellency was able to visit the construction site of the proposed SAARC Cultural Centre in Nawimana, Matara. His Excellency was accompanied by Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella - Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Mr. M.H.M.N. Bandara - Director Education, Security and Culture of the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu and Mr. Ali Haider Altaf - Director Energy, Transport, Science and Technology of the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu.

This visit allowed His Excellency and the officers from the SAARC Secretariat to understand the progress of construction. The construction of the Centre is carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Wayamba Development and Cultural Affairs of Sri Lanka. The architectural design of the Centre was by the University of Moratuwa.



Construction Manager welcoming the Secretary General



Observing the model of the site



Watching the presentation of the construction



Lively discussion regarding the site



Inspection of the site



Inspection of the site



Inspection of the site



A moment of humour during the inspection of the site

Upcoming Events

Governing Board Meeting in Sri Lanka

The Governing Board Meeting will be held at the Mt. Lavinia Hotel in Sri Lanka from 3rd to 4th October 2017.

The SAARC Cultural Extravaganza in Music will showcase the musical talents of the SAARC Region. This will be a stage for the musicians of the SAARC Region to perform together on a common stage and speak to each other through their music.

SAARC Cultural Extravaganza in Pakistan

SAARC Handicraft Exhibition and Workshop in Bangladesh

The SAARC Handicraft Exhibition and Workshop is planned to promote handicrafts of the Member States through the SAARC Region. This annual event will provide an opportunity for the crafts-persons to learn from each other and forge common markets.

The annual Dance Festival will bring together dancers from the Region to a common arena to showcase their talents and to introduce the traditional dances of the Member States to the Region.

SAARC Festival of Dance in Bangladesh

SAARC Non-Violence Day Art Competition in Sri Lanka

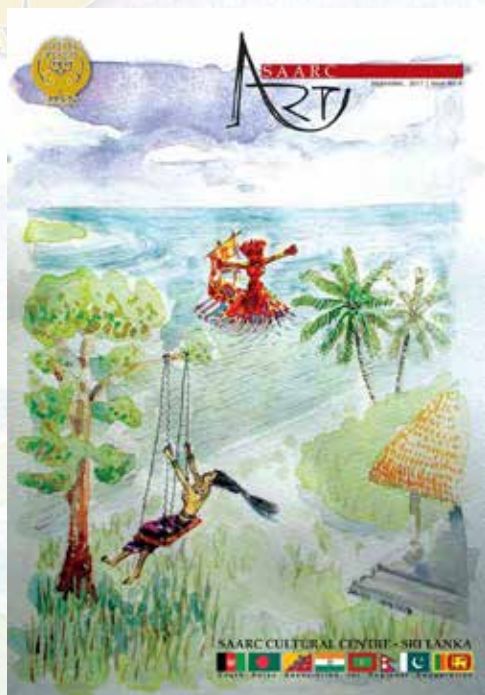
The annual SAARC Non-Violence Day Art Competition will be held among school students of the host country Sri Lanka.

The Charter Day will be celebrated on 8th December. This day will be a celebration of the achievements of the SAARC, building bridges through the Region.

SAARC Charter Day in Sri Lanka



New Publications



SAARC Art issue no.4

The SAARC Art Magazine (Issue 4, September 2017) was launched with a multitude of comprehensive articles and contributions from Artistes and Practitioners from the Region. The Magazine explores many fascinating interpretations of the importance and essence of sharing the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the SAARC Region through the art of Folklore and Storytelling.

The Art Magazine is available for your perusal at our Website: www.saarcculture.org

Culture Quotes



“

What is Art? It is the response of Man's creative soul to the call of the real

”

Rabindranath Tagore

Executive Editor

Wasanthe Kotuwella, Director

Editorial Team

Bindu Urugodawatte, Deputy Director – Research

Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara, Deputy Director – Programmes

Apsara Karunaratne, Research Assistant

Layout and Design

Ishan Amaraweera, Computer Operations Officer

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SAARC Cultural Centre, Sri Lanka



SAARC Cultural Centre

No. 224, Baudhdhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka

Tel : +94 11 2584451

Fax : +94 11 2584452

Email : scc@saarcculture.org

Web : <http://www.saarcculture.org>

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