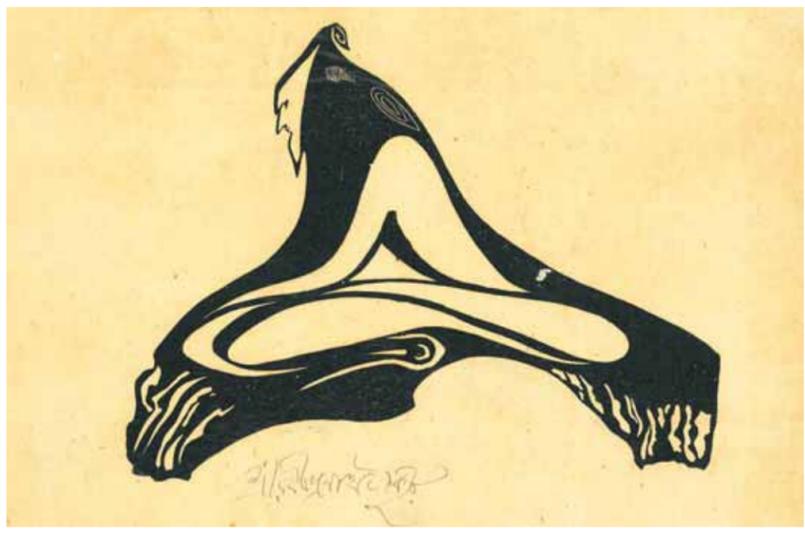


**REPUBLIC DAY SPECIAL**

**RUSTIC RHYTHMS**

RABINDRANATH TAGORE felt that painting was closer to nature, as compared to any other art form, and could be universally understood, says **UMA NAIR**



of both primitive and modern art he had seen. The world Tagore revealed in his best works was one of self-reflexive evolution, where the images themselves were in the process of taking shape, as was his art. His early paintings were rendered mainly in monochrome, followed by two-toned and three-toned drawings. The pen-point brush was often used laterally, fingers and bits of rag spread the inks and the brush was the last to be adopted.

It is heads and figures executed by Tagore in a variety of styles, that have elicited the most interest. Restrained yet restless, suggestive, bizarre and haunting, these portraits are considered to be among his most memorable works. 'The pensive ovoid face of a woman with large unwavering, soulful eyes was perhaps his most obsessive theme. Exhibited first in 1930, endless variations of the same mood-image continued to emerge throughout. The earlier ones were delicately

modelled and opalescent, while the latter examples were excessively dramatic with intensely lit forehead, exaggerated nose-ridge, painted in strong colours, bodied forth from a primal gloom.' (Robinson, *The Art of Rabindranath Tagore*, Calcutta, 1989, p. 56.) These influences on Tagore evolved over his lifetime and emerged as expressions of innovation and modernity through his paintings which were unlike anything being produced by Indian



artists at the time. In the present works, the woodcut *Namaz* and the *Untitled*, Tagore suppressed physical detail, creating basic curvilinear forms. The body is represented as a solid field of colour with strokes. Scholars say he had a natural inclination toward the tenets of what we now understand as primitivism in modern art; the search for symbols and meaning in visual forms borrowed from non-Western, pre-historic and rural traditions and people. So, we glimpse rural regeneration in the rustic rhythms. Painting allowed Tagore to break away from the limitations of language. He felt that painting, unlike any other art form, was closer to nature and could be universally understood and shared.

Rabindranath Tagore, was not just the Nobel laureate poet, author, thinker, composer, but he was also a self-taught artist. This Republic Day it is good to ponder on his brilliance as an aesthete of Indian heritage and experience. According to Christie's, New York, his volume of poems, *Gitanjali*, established his international reputation when it was published in London in 1912 in his own English translation, and the following year Tagore became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. As a result, he became a literary celebrity and frequently toured Europe and America. His flowing robes and long white hair and beard conformed to the common western conception of an Indian sage and his lectures attracted huge audiences. Jacob Epstein, who sculpted a striking bust of him in 1926, reported that, 'he carried no money and was conducted about like a holy man'. Tagore turned to painting later in his life. By the time his first exhibition of paintings and drawings at the Galerie Pigalle, Paris in 1930, Tagore, at the age of 69, had been recognised as one of the greatest writers who had ever lived. He had an early inclination toward representational art but had given up hope of being a professional painter around 1900. Over the years, Tagore maintained private journals where he continued to doodle and sketch. Then almost suddenly, in 1924, while in Argentina as Victoria Ocampo's guest, his doodles assumed more elaborate and expressive intent. Ocampo recognised Tagore's talent and found spiritualism in his images of prehistoric monsters, birds and faces as they were much more than naturalistic interpretations. Compared to his early doodles, these were not entirely spontaneous but inspired by his interest in anthropology and the examples

**A half-full glass**

While the demand for cultural and inventive content has escalated throughout the lockdown period, economic indicators assume that the cultural sector will be one of the most affected and also the slowest to recover, say **JUNED and SUFIYAN KHATRI**



The COVID-19 pandemic has placed the cultural and innovative industries at the heart of the inventive economy at crossroads. The ruin, widespread closures of borders, venues and physical distancing measures are impacting whole segments of the innovative economy. Many people working in the art industry have lost their jobs. Live performance and venue-based industries have been impacted majorly, impacting livelihoods, artist potency, market access and artistic freedom, together with broader effects for the value chain of suppliers and service providers. The crafts sector is a major employment provider for many countries that have experienced a massive downfall. The crisis has expedited pre-existing trends, in particular digitalisation, and it has exposed the pre-existing inequalities and precarities of the innovative economy in most of the countries around the world, also in the countries where public support schemes for the creative sector are in place. Since the start of the pandemic, the arts and culture sector has been witnessing a paradoxical situation. While the demand for cultural and inventive content has escalated throughout the lockdown period — and digital access has now become more critical than ever before — economic indicators assume that the cultural sector will be one of the most affected and also the slowest to recover. Beyond short-term initiatives such as surveys or data collection aiming to provide artists and intermediaries with financial and logistical support, both academics and practitioners must engage in thinking about the future of art expenditure, especially from a consumer's point of view.



whether the community stands for sustained advocacy with the government and private sector for recognition and support remains to be seen. Governments are becoming increasingly interested in controlling internet creative expression. However, they must concentrate on narrowing the existing wide gap between the rich and the impoverished in the art world. While certain art forms will transition to the digital sphere, it is impossible to present street/festival performances online. To guarantee that subsidies and other programmes reach the intended recipients, governments should maintain a public registry of artists. It's vital to recognise gig workers in this industry, as well as enhance legislation that protects cultural assets. Not all forms of art are financially self-sustaining. The loss of employment and earnings in the creative industry will have a severe impact on innovation, citizen well-being, and community vibrancy and diversity. The respect and value for an artist's work must be built from an appreciation for art's significance in presenting society with a sense of normalcy during these lonely times. Otherwise, we shall be collectively accountable for the extinction of our cultural heritage. Local artisans, organisations and institutions around the world have met the challenges posed by the pandemic with agility. For many, the pandemic accelerated the transition to the digital medium; the act of self-preservation often led to innovation. The Internet provided unprecedented chances for artists and institutions to communicate with one another in a variety of ways, resulting in new partnerships and channels for the arts. We've merely scratched the surface of what a digital platform can provide in terms of entertainment, education, and participation. Geographical boundaries may have vanished thanks to digital media, but it is not without its drawbacks: global rivalry, shorter attention spans, and digital weariness. The pandemic has not only strengthened ties inside the art field, but has also improved worldwide coordination. Virtual collaboration and support of one another, not only domestically but worldwide, is the way to go to maintain and grow stronger roots. Virtual cooperation will go a long way toward helping individuals stay connected in a world when physical travel is limited. (The authors are co-founders of Kutchi Bazaar, an e-commerce platform for craft products made by the local artisans of Kutch.)

Architecture is more than just throwing together raw materials such as concrete, glass, and wood. The concept of architecture has changed over the years, and today, architecture is a way for the designer to play around with various elements while honing their art and practice. Architecture is a complex discipline that is an amalgamation of design, art, math and science to arrive at a balanced compendium of form and function. The monuments of India are some of the world's most stunning works of architecture. From the Red Fort to Hampi, everything that our forefathers and ancestors built has been a source of great pride. But due to pollution, natural weathering, and poor civic sense, the monuments have been facing a preservation crisis. However, with the help of architects, and the way they are devising new plans to preserve the monuments, there is an excellent chance that these pieces of our collective history will be standing tall for future generations. Architects have been employing stratification techniques, logistic recognition, and using reconstruction methods to preserve the monuments in all their glory.

**Manish Dikshit:** The founding partner of Aum Architects believes that architecture is a way to look at human history as a whole. It reflects the change in needs and thinking patterns of a community, which becomes even more critical when one is looking to contextualise their existence. The power of good architecture must not be underestimated as it helps in connecting people while protecting the environment. Since the awareness and need for sustainable architecture have been expressed by experts, archi-

**Building blocks**

Four architects define how architecture has transformed over the years in our country. By **TEAM VIVA**

tects have been working tirelessly to help fit extremely utilitarian buildings while expressing the need to have carbon-neutral structures. We, as architects, are constantly looking to upgrade systems and functions, so it is fulfilling for us to deliver highly concise designs.

**Sumit Dhawan:** The founder and principal architect at Cityspace '82 Architects is

munity-based activities that serve to increase its value.

**Anil Badan:** The founder & architect at Studio B Architects, states that architecture is all about being accessible. From simple structural incorporations like ramps and banisters that would help the elderly or the disabled to buildings designed with the help of logic and common sense, we firmly believe in having architecture made for the public and its people. So, in a way, architecture is all about improving the lives of people. Architecture also deals with the simplest forms of human equations, wherein it has the capacity to change lives, enrich human experiences and create a context for human existence to move forward. With the advent of new materials or finding new methods of using old, reliable materials, the art of architecture has changed by leaps and bounds.

**Anurag Pashine:** The principal architect from Salankar Pashine & Associates, recommends that design has the potential to change the way we work. Explaining his view with an example — an office with a scorching and sweltering area with poor ventilation and lack of windows will impact the productivity of employees as they will not be able to focus on their work. With the help of new technology and new materials being discovered every day, this office conundrum can easily be solved with proper glass facades that allow ventilation and an HVAC system that will eventually help air circulation. Taking one element out of the equation and working on it so that it is better can lead to changing human lives for the better. While architects aim to create user-friendly buildings, aesthetics also play an essential role in attracting people to the facets, so



it is more like a delicate game of Jenga that needs to balance various elements. At the same time, it is also essential to recognise the fact that architecture and human lives are constantly in touch with each other. While recognising that architecture is used to shape and help propel human lives, human interactions also aid in shaping architecture. Reflecting the changing needs and wants of the communities, architecture ultimately helps in the proliferation of urbanisation of various rural areas as well.

**THE MYSTICAL KRISHNA: DIVINITY THROUGH DIVERSE ART FORMS**

An exhibition of art & sculptures dedicated to Lord Krishna has among other things vibrant paintings including a vintage one of the God lifting Govardhan Parvat on his finger to protect the villagers from heavy rains and thunderstorms is shown beautifully using lovely vibrant colours. The exhibition also has Pichhwai art which is a traditional Indian art having its origins in Rajasthan. Pichhwai art features intricate paintings portraying Lord Krishna (Shrinathji) on cotton fabric using natural colours. There is a massive vintage Pichwai painting illustrating the Nathdwara Lord Krishna along with Gopis, Yamunaji, Gosaiji and the Devs. A collection of Tanjore paintings has also been added to the

exhibition. From a spectacular gold finish handmade Tanjore painting of young Lord Krishna in the act of eating butter to a one of Lord Krishna along with Rukmani and Bama there are spectacular works. The exhibition also has some beautiful, handmade copper & brass sculptures dedicated to the mystical god. Krishnagarh paintings that are a fusion of Mughal and regional style paintings have also been added. There are a few depicting the unconditional love of Radha and Krishna. There is also a handmade painting where Jamunaji is seen welcoming Lord Krishna.

**Where:** <https://www.indianshelf.in/exhibition/>  
**When:** Till February 5



**DIALOGUES ON CHILD LABOUR**

A webcast on the role of the private sector and the media in eradicating child labour will have panellists Tanja Brok, communications coordinator, Work: No Child's Business, the Hague, The Netherlands; Dr Shankar Borua, creative entrepreneur and communications professional and Smita Agarwal, head, education programme at Tata Steel's Corporate Social Responsibility who has worked in the field of education for over two decades. The introductions will be done by Aditi Datta, senior manager, Research and Communications, ICCSPL and the session moderated by Rakhi Sehgal, labour researcher and trade union activist who is currently coordinating an ILO project on industrial relations in the Indian garment industry. It is the third and final discussion in a series of three dialogues addressing the root causes of child labour organised in collaboration with Work: No Child's Business (WNCB) to mark the International Year for Elimination of Child Labour (IYECL - 2021).  
**Where:** [https://zoom.us/join/register/WN\\_ZXDTG90Kr7UjbiilDyv8GA](https://zoom.us/join/register/WN_ZXDTG90Kr7UjbiilDyv8GA)  
**When:** January 25 at 4.00 pm



**THE GREAT PERTINENCE OF GANDHI TO INDIA IN THE 75TH YEAR OF ITS INDEPENDENCE**

The discussion will see the inaugural address delivered by Justice M N Venkatachaliah, chairman, Sarvodaya International Trust and the valedictory address by N N Vohra, President, IIC. The speakers include M Hamid Ansari, former Vice President of India; professor Rajmohan Gandhi, research professor, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and Dr Gita Dharampal, professor emeritus, Heidelberg University, Germany. The speakers at the second session include Lord Bhikhu Parekh, chairman, Gandhi Foundation, UK; Shyam Saran, life trustee, IIC; and Amb. Alan Nazareth, author Gandhi's Outstanding Leadership and Gandhi: Soul Force Warrior. The sessions will be moderated by Arun Maira, former chairman, Boston Consulting Group  
**Where:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_HRW01qwbQfZBwd4xmmSw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HRW01qwbQfZBwd4xmmSw)  
**When:** January 31 at 11:00 am

