

# Kolkata Centre for Creativity

in partnership with Sappho for Equality

Hosts

## Learn Togetherness

(Being Queer, Being Home)

An exhibition based on the idea of “home”, explored through queer lens

**Kolkata 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2022:** Kolkata Centre for Creativity, a multidisciplinary art space in partnership with Sappho for Equality, organized the second edition of “Learn Togetherness”, an exhibition which will celebrate the LGBTQIA++ Pride Month in June 2022, through visual art, performing art, and literary creations, paintings, photographs, sculptures, installations, writings, and performance pieces by 44 artists selected through an open call. The exhibition is curated by **Reena Dewan, Director, Kolkata Centre for Creativity** which started from 15th June and will continue till 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2022, on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor at KCC.

For a long time, non-conforming genders and sexualities have faced opposition from contemporary hegemonic powers and social stigma. However, as a result of continued activism, creative interventions and intellectual engagements by the LGBTQIA++ communities, “queer”—the nineteenth-century slur— has now emerged as the umbrella term for the community. Hence, the exhibition aims to shed light on various visual and performing art creations based on the idea of “home” explored through the ‘queer’ lens for the exhibition themed “Being Queer, Being Home”. Forty-four artworks which include Paintings, photographs, sculptures, installations, writings, and unique performances piece that explore “home” in relation to being queer, have been selected through the open call and are being showcased at KCC. From poems and letters exploring the concept of “Being Queer, Being Home” to artworks made with found objects and even body hair, the art creations stretch and bend the ideas of normativity leading one on a self-reflexive and contemplative journey. There will also be a special production called ‘Ghar’ which will recite the story of two forlorn lovers who try to create their own niche against the ways of the world.

On the inauguration day, Reena Dewan (Director, Kolkata Centre for Creativity) welcomed everybody and reiterated how KCC was never complacent about its efforts in making its space inclusive for all, and this exhibition was part of that endless journey. Indrani Banerjee (Queer Rights Activist, Queer Artist and Member of Sappho for Equality) highlighted the necessity for queering spaces, and the importance of revisiting heteronormative ideas with a queer lens. She also reminded how it wasn't businessmen and market statistics that remembered from civilisations of the past— it was their art, their creativity. Debanjan Chakrabarti (British Council, Director East and Northeast India) felt proud to be a part of an organisation like British Council that celebrated and rallied for plurality and the margins, as he elaborated on their endeavours to explore and examine queer politics and struggles. He alluded to the artist Edward Hopper and TS Eliot's poem ‘The Waste Land’ to sum up the feelings that the exhibits conveyed to him: of being home yet not being at home, and being queer and being home, respectively.

Finally, John Andrew Bagul (Founder Principal of South City International School, Kolkata) shared some of the steps that the thirteen-year-old school has undertaken to make the institution welcoming to

difference and diversity. Their formally established school club for LGBTQI+ support is a testament to their acute understanding of the sensitive nature of dealing with 'impressionable minds'. All Mr Bagul emphasized on is how to stop the cycle of violations on individual identities of choice, and make the lives of future generations as comfortable as possible.

'At KCC, we believe in creating a safe space for all where one can be anyone and still feel at home. We do not only talk about diversity and inclusivity; we walk the talk. The space remains open to and provides a platform for individuals from all walks of life throughout the year. Here's hoping that we all become a little more loving, a little more inclusive and learn togetherness from the people around us as we celebrate the colours of love this Pride month with the second edition of 'Learn Togetherness' Said **Ms. Richa Agarwal, Chairperson, Kolkata Centre for Creativity.**

### **About Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC)**

A unit of Anamika Kala Sangam Trust (AKST), Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC) is a multi-disciplinary interactive art and creativity Centre located in Kolkata, West Bengal. It is the first in Eastern India to make Art accessible to visually impaired and differently-abled under their 'Art for All' initiative. Spearheaded by Richa Agarwal as its Chairperson, the 70,000 sq. ft. centre champions the art and cultural landscape of contemporary India since November 2018. It comprises an Amphitheater, Exhibition & Learning Spaces, Dance studio, Conservation Lab, Books & Materials Library, Creative Culinary space, Craft & Design outlet and a Skill Development Maker's section. Integrating several expressions of art and design to highlight their common creative core – KCC encourages visitors to explore, interact and design ideas on various art forms. KCC works in the areas of Capacity Building, Well-Being, Conservation & Restoration, Craft & Design, Culinary, Visual and Performing Art. It acts as a catalyst for Artistic enhancement through Displays, Presentations, Fellowships, Laboratories, Residences, Conservation, Research and Discourses.

The programs at KCC are designed on the principles of Cultural Diversity, Gender Equality, Conservation of the Environment and Inclusion of people with different abilities.

The Centre offers free entry to the public and is open between 11 am to 6 pm from Tuesday to Sunday. For more information about exhibitions and the conferences, please visit [www.kolkatacentreforcreativity.org](http://www.kolkatacentreforcreativity.org)