



## Kolkata Centre for Creativity announces the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (The World Is One Family)

**15<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Kolkata:** Kolkata Centre for Creativity, a multidisciplinary art space in Kolkata is back with the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of its annual conference “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (The World Is One Family). Launched in 2019 Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam explores relationships to the environment through the minds of leading creators and changemakers. This year the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the conference will be held on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at KCC on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor from 9:30 am to 8:00 pm.

In a moment of increasing awareness about the uncertainty, yet urgency, of accelerated resource depletion, the pandemic, and its economic, political and social consequences, it is important that people come together with a successful development agenda goal that will help to bring a solution to this crisis by creating a sense of unity between groups or classes. The fourth edition of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (VK IV) will have renowned and leading practitioners from the fields of arts, science, education and civil society who will speak on how to focus on these sustainable development plans which will help bring people closer to the goals and achieve them. In addition to this, the sessions will be followed by discussions on meeting the sustainable development goals, at the global, regional, national, and local levels with an emphasis on creating strong partnerships and cooperation across socio-economic groups.

The registrations for the conference are open to all who are above 20 years of age.

For more details, visit <https://www.kolkatacentreforcreativity.org/program/vasudhaiva-kutumbakam-iv>.

Collaborators for the conference are earthday.org, National Council of Science Museums, Alliance Francaise Du Bengale, Mayurbhanj Foundation.

### **Speakers: In no particular order**

**Ravi Agarwal:** Ravi Agarwal is an interdisciplinary artist, environmental campaigner, writer, and curator. His work bridges the divide between art and activism, to politicize the entangled questions of nature and its futures. Using photography, video, text, and installation he poses questions about ecology and society, culture, urbanity, etc. He has been shown widely, including at dOCUMENTA XI, the Biennials of Havana (2019) Yinchuan (2018), Kochi (2016), Sharjah (2013), etc. He has curated large public art projects such as the Yamuna-Elbe, twin city project (2011), and Embrace our Rivers, an Indo-European project (2018), and was the photography curator for the Serendipity Arts Festival 2018 and 2019. He recently curated *New Natures, A terrible beauty is born* at the Goethe Institute and CSMVS Museum, Mumbai. He has edited books (*The Crisis of Climate Change*, Routledge, 2021; *Embrace Our Rivers – Kerber*, 2017), journals (*Marg- Art and Ecology* issue - April 2020, *IIC Journal* Spring 2020), and

publishes regularly on art and sustainability (*Alien Waters* in *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change*, 2021). His works are in several private and public collections. Ravi is also the founder-director of the environmental NGO Toxics Link and recipient of the UN Award for Chemical Safety and the Ashoka Fellowship and is a Communications Engineer and MBA by training.

**K. S. Radhakrishnan:** K. S. Radhakrishnan is recognized as one of the most significant figures of contemporary Indian art. He is a sculptor and bronze has remained his prominent medium for a long time. Radhakrishnan was born in Kottayam district of Kerala in 1956. Radhakrishnan went to Shantiniketan in 1973-74 to pursue formal training in art from the prestigious Kala Bhavan of Vishwabharati University. There he was mentored and trained by two important figures of Indian modernism – Ramkinkar Baij and Sarbari Roy Choudhury. He completed his MFA in the year of 1981 and very soon was awarded with a research grant by Lalit Kala Akademi, Delhi to work in Garhi Village. Since then has had more than fifteen solo shows including at National Gallery of Modern Art (Bengaluru), *Centre des Bords de Marne, LePerreux-Brysur-Marne* (France), *Lalit Kala Akademi* (New Delhi) and *Birla Academy of Art and Culture* (Kolkata) amongst others. Among the numerous group shows at which his works have been exhibited are the *National Exhibition* at New Delhi (1980); *Triennale India* (1990); *Salon International de la Sculpture Contemporaine* at Nouveav Forum des Halles, Paris (1995); *Hippodrome d'elongchamp*, Paris (1996); *Espace Michel Simon-Noisy le grand*, France (1996); *Beijing Biennale* (2012). From 1980's onwards Radhakrishnan has installed open air sculptures across the country and abroad including at the *TMI foundation*, Cotignac, France.

The two major themes/motifs of his works are the male and female figures Maiya and Musui which represent the anima-animus, the primary anthropomorphic archetypes. These works are his meditations on migration, history, nostalgia and memory which have a direct engagement with the public sphere. He renders a sensuous quality to his works by deploying extraordinary body movements of his figures. He has curated the exhibition *Ramkinkar Baij - A Retrospective* at National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai. He has written a book titled *Ramkinkar's Yaksha Yakshi* which was released during the aforementioned retrospective. Radhakrishnan is a distinctive and appealing presence on the modern Indian sculpture scene. He lives in Delhi with his wife and son.

**Gurudas:** Gurudas is a teacher by profession and ecologist by passion. His Ph.D. in sustainability within industrial ecosystems was followed by the Post-doctoral Endeavour Fellowship of the Government of Australia. He is the Sir Ratan Tata Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru. Gurudas has published four books, several research papers, monographs, and articles. His Marathi Book "Anartha Shashtra" has been awarded the Maharashtra State Literature "C.D.Deshmukh award for economic literature". He is currently working on three river restoration projects in Maharashtra and is part of an expert group studying the landslides and floods in the Konkan region. He has worked on several United Nations projects. Gurudas is on the board of Ecological Society, Pune, and heads the Symbiosis Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability, at the Symbiosis International University, Pune.

**Dr. Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty:** Dr. Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, IAS (retired in the rank of Secretary, Govt. of India), M.A. (Kolkata), M.P.A. (Harvard), Ph.D., Fine Arts (Harvard), is President, People's

Council of Education, Allahabad and Distinguished Professor, Centre for Knowledge Societies, Centurion University of Technology and Management, Paralakhemundi, Odisha.

Dr. Chakravarty has been Chairman, Lalit Kala Akademi; Director General, National Museum; Member Secretary, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi; Chairman, National Screening and Evaluation Committee, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI); Director, National Museum of Mankind (IGRMS), Bhopal; and Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA). He has headed the Delhi Institute of Heritage Research and Management (DIHRM) as Vice Chairman. He has also chaired the Bhasha Trust, Baroda. His publications include exhibition catalogues, edited journals on Art, books and articles on Family, Tribal Identity, Indigeneity, Education, Rock Art, Folk and Tribal Art, Khajuraho, Gwalior Fort, Orccha, Bodhgaya, Ujjayini, Vidisha, New Museology, Archaeology, Indology and Sanskritic traditions.

Dr. Chakravarty has reinvented cognitive categories; nurtured relations among cultures, disciplines and arts; strategised culture specific governance and diplomacy; restored vanishing links of cultural, linguistic, biological diversity; regenerated community habitats as living museums; and rebuilt crumbling bridges between culture and development. He is known for fusing theory and practice in promoting cultural survival, environmental self-determination and sustainable knowledge systems of marginalized communities.

**Divya Bhatia:** Divya Bhatia is a versatile arts professional with experience across a variety of disciplines. He is an independent festival programmer and producer, performing arts consultant and actor. He is Artistic Director and Producer of Jodhpur RIFF, India's premiere folk/ jazz/ roots music festival; Artistic Consultant at ComplexCity, a festival in Mumbai produced by YUVA; visiting faculty for Applied Theatre at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London UK and India partner for their International Collaborative Outreach program; faculty at the South Asia Festivals Academy. He regularly presents and produces/ co-produces international music and theatre projects out of India, having toured artists in India, UK, South Africa, Europe, China and Australia. Divya has served on the Jury of WOMEX in 2019 and is on the global jury for the Aga Khan Music Awards 2022. Based in Mumbai, his other interests include contemporary dance, film, trekking, travelling and politics.

**Parmesh Shahani** (pronouns: he/him): Parmesh Shahani is an author, culture curator, and LGBTQIA inclusion advocate. Most recently he founded and ran the Godrej India Culture Lab in Mumbai ([www.indiaculturelab.org](http://www.indiaculturelab.org)) between 2011-21. He has been a TED Senior Fellow, a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader and a Yale World Fellow, and is presently a board member of KHOJ and Breakthrough India. Parmesh's recent book *Queeristan: LGBTQ Inclusion in Corporate India* was released in September 2020 (Westland Publications) and won the CK Prahalad award for Best Business Book of 2021, and his first book *Gay Bombay: Globalization, Love and (Be)Longing in Contemporary India* (Sage Publications) was released in 2008 and re-published in June 2020 as an updated edition.

**Aric Chen:** Aric Chen is General and Artistic Director of Het Nieuwe Instituut, the Dutch national institute and museum for architecture, design and digital culture in Rotterdam. American-born, Chen previously served as Professor and founding Director of the Curatorial Lab at the College of Design & Innovation at Tongji University in Shanghai; Curatorial Director of the Design Miami fairs in Miami Beach and Basel; Creative Director of Beijing Design Week; and Lead Curator for Design and

Architecture at M+, Hong Kong, where he oversaw the formation of that new museum's design and architecture collection and program.

In addition, Chen has curated dozens of museum exhibitions and other projects internationally, served on numerous boards and juries, and acted as advisor to the UABB Shenzhen Biennale of Architecture\Urbanism, London Design Biennial, Cooper-Hewitt Design Triennial (New York), and Gwangju Design Biennale. He is the author of *Brazil Modern* (Monacelli, 2016), and has been a frequent contributor to *The New York Times*, *Wallpaper\**, *Architectural Record*, and other publications.

**Aparna Rao:** Since 2004, Aparna Rao is part of Pors & Rao, a Bangalore based art duo working with objects and installations that often incorporate lifelike physical movement and responsive behaviours. Many of the works are conceived as a kind of 'being' with basic behaviour patterns such as shyness, fatigue and dependence, highlighting involuntary aspects of human behaviour and relationships. Their work has been included at Setouchi Triennale, Japan; Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India; Museum Tinguely, Basel, Switzerland; Nam June Paik Art Center, South Korea and The Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern of Modern Art, Norway.

The frustrations they faced over a period of 15 years while working with robotic technologies, created the basis of project PATHOS: a set of tools developed to realize a high degree of nuance in robotic animation and responsive behaviors, radically accessible through a browser interface. The project specifically explores how life-like animatronics can suggest complex inner states in inanimate objects. The toolkit itself consists of a set of mechatronic modules and software interfaces that are reliable and easy to use, especially for non engineers. PATHOS began informally within the academic environment in Switzerland in 2015, took the shape of an Artist in Residence project at the Wyss Zurich institute and is now an experimental project at ETHZ, as the Robotics Aesthetics & Usability Center (RAUC). The aim of the RAUC is to connect robotics to visual arts.

**Ajay Mittal:** Ajay Mittal is currently the Director, Climate Change Programs, South and South East Asia. Ajay leads EDN's Climate Change programs. These include several that focus on clean and green energies such as 'Each One Save One', that calls upon citizens to save a minimum of one Watt of Energy leading to a combined number that runs into millions. 'Healthy Energy' reaches out to rural women to help them adopt non-fossil fuels. 'Make A Bright Choice' works to get citizens to make a change to energy-saving light bulbs. 'Low Carbon Lifestyles' helps youth reduce their carbon footprints. 'Farmers For Earth' encourages environment-friendly agricultural practices such as adopting solar for Irrigation. 'Solar for Schools' helps academic institutions switch to renewable energy use. Ajay also works towards ensuring better air quality in India. In 2017 he initiated the movement Kolkata Clean Air which has grown into Active Citizens Together for Sustainability that works towards a citizen-state partnership model to build sustainable cities. His efforts have been widely recognized by the media. Presently he is working on a campaign to bring back cycling as a means of transport in Indian cities. For all of these, Ajay reaches out to his vast networks of organizations and individuals as meaningful partners to support each of the initiatives. Ajay also has responsibility for the 'Star Villages' campaign. This recognizes villages in India that successfully implement noteworthy environmental practices in their areas.

Ajay is a born activist. He is passionate about scaling up social solutions using technology, innovation and simplicity. Ajay is with the Climate Action Steering Committee of the Global Shapers Community, an initiative of the World Economic Forum. Ajay has been recognized as an EE 30 Under 30 leaders 2019 cohort by the North American Association for Environmental Education. Ajay also works on helping reduce water wastage. The Government of India named him a 'Water Hero' for his efforts in water conservation.

**Ajay Dalmia:** Ajay, Co-Founder of DLRC, brings a wealth of diverse experience across different business disciplines. Prior to co-founding DLRC, he managed Green School (Bali, Indonesia) and had cross-functional experience in the corporate sector. Ajay holds a MBA (Marketing and Finance) from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA, and MSc (Mechanical Engineering) from the University of Akron, OH, USA. While he has done his graduation in Mechanical Engineering, he loves History and facilitates the subject to students in G11 and G12. At the same time, he is passionate about Maths and drives the pedagogy at DLRC. Ajay is a passionate trekker, runner, cyclist and camping enthusiast.

**Adrian Notz:** Adrian Notz (\*1977 in Zurich) is curator at the ETH AI Center and at the Tichy Ocean Foundation, mentor for the creative strategy and vision at the European Center for Contemporary Art in Cluj (ECCA) and Chevalier de la Tombe de Bakunin. From 2012-2019 he was artistic director of Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. He worked there first as a curatorial assistant and as co-director. From 2010 to 2015 he was head of the Department for Fine Arts at the School of Design in St. Gallen. Notz has organized and curated numerous exhibitions, events, conferences, actions and interventions with international artists, activists and thinkers in Cabaret Voltaire as well as internationally around the globe.

#### **Mrinal Mandal**

Mrinal Mandal is a visual artist from Kolkata whose works rise out of his interactions with nature and his experience of geo-political and cultural forces. He also draws inspiration from traditional, indigenous art forms and has been an advocate for them for the past twenty-five years. His deep love for indigenous artforms motivated him to collaborate with tribal artists (especially those involved with patachitra in Midnapur) at Naya Gram (2001-2005) and led him to write his dissertation on their work. Mrinal strongly believes that the indigenous art forms are the mother of all art forms. His ever-ongoing research on them took him to different remote villages of West Bengal, where he has been travelling over the past few decades.

In addition to the above mentioned there will also be a panel featuring Rajkumaris from princely states across India

#### **CURATORIAL NOTE**

##### **“Solidarity in a Time of Crises”**

In a moment of increasing awareness about the uncertainty, yet urgency, of accelerated resource depletion, the pandemic and its economic consequences – how do we overcome our feelings of helplessness and insufficient progress? We believe that the 2030 17 SDGs (17 Goals) can only be realized with strong partnerships and cooperation across socio-economic groups. A successful development agenda requires inclusive collaboration — at the global, regional, national and local levels — rather than a top down approach. Therefore these partnerships should be built upon ethical principles and shared values, and an agenda placing people and the planet at the center. Partnerships

between private and public bodies and communities bring our goals closer to achievement. To this end (and beginning) VK IV has invited a diverse range of partner organizations and interdisciplinary practitioners from a range of disciplines and backgrounds to explore these concepts and to initiate new modes of engagement and action.

## **ABOUT THE CURATORS**

**Dr. Shwetal A Patel** : is a writer and researcher working at the intersection of contemporary art, exhibition-making practices and development theory. He is a founding member of India's first visual arts biennial, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale and holds a practice-based PhD from Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton.

**REENA DEWAN:** Director- Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC),

Founder – Bridging Culture and Arts Foundation (B-CAF), President - West Bengal Arts Council, WICCI  
Former President - ICOM India, Board member - ICOM INTERCOM

Reena has been spearheading many projects to promote research and development of different disciplines of art that leads to a volumetric and qualitative impact not only in the art field but to the society and young artists & performers. Reena champions and facilitates Inclusion, Diversity and Gender Equality in Museums and Art Spaces.

## **About 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'**

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (translated from Sanskrit to 'The World Is One Family') is an annual exhibition and conference exploring our relationship to the wider environment. Previous editions of VK have invited diverse practitioners, including eminent artists, policy makers, arts professionals, thought leaders, activists, environmentalists, architects, musicians, filmmakers and writers to examine notions of this Upanishadic thought and a vision of holistic development and respect for all forms of life. The international conference explores this thought and its influence on creativity, and society more broadly, through symposia, discussions, exhibitions and workshops.

VK is conceived as an open and accessible platform to investigate and probe the meaning and philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam in the light of growing environmental degradation and resource depletion. What is the role of the arts and artists within this paradigm? As we consider what is universal today, we see that climate change, pollution, environmental degradation, corruption in public office, violence and terrorism are universal; the market, commoditization and homogenization are universal, extinction of identities and species is universal, the current rate of extinction being many times the background rate of extinction. The human being is in control and there has been a reduction of sacred and ecological categories to economic and production categories. Successive Prime Ministers and Presidents of India have used the theme of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam as a platform for making statements for invoking peace and cooperation to combat problems that assail humanity. We must put behind us the platitudinous and hypocritical distortions to which Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam has lent itself over the years. We know that Dīrghakarṇa and Kshudrabuddhi, the jackal and cat in the



stories associated with this dictum, were both duplicitous. The stories in both texts, Panchatantram and Hitopadesha, which feature them and quote the above shloka through them, were written to warn the human being about duplicity in public transactions. In an era of post-truth we may have forgotten the original context of the Maha Upanishad, which infers to communion, pantheism, and interdependence of all communities. If we are quoting Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam as our title and mascot, we should restore its authentic context and remember the pristine conversation, frozen in time, which may acquire new meanings, tones and cadences today.

### **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. The 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)