



LIVING TRADITIONS IN INDIAN ART

Publishing

MUSEUM OF SACRED ART

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KALACHAKRA—WHEEL OF TIME (replica from Surya temple in Konark)
unknown sculptor
 Red Stone, 184 x 230 x 38 cm

from the fast-paced modernisation of Indian society. A number of traditional Indian art styles are presently under threat, not only from lack of funding, but also due to the dwindling numbers of up-and-coming practitioners. Therefore, one of the museum's purposes is to help support traditional Indian artists. By giving these artists more exposure in the West, it intends to encourage them to continue their work, and inspire them to train the next generation of artists.

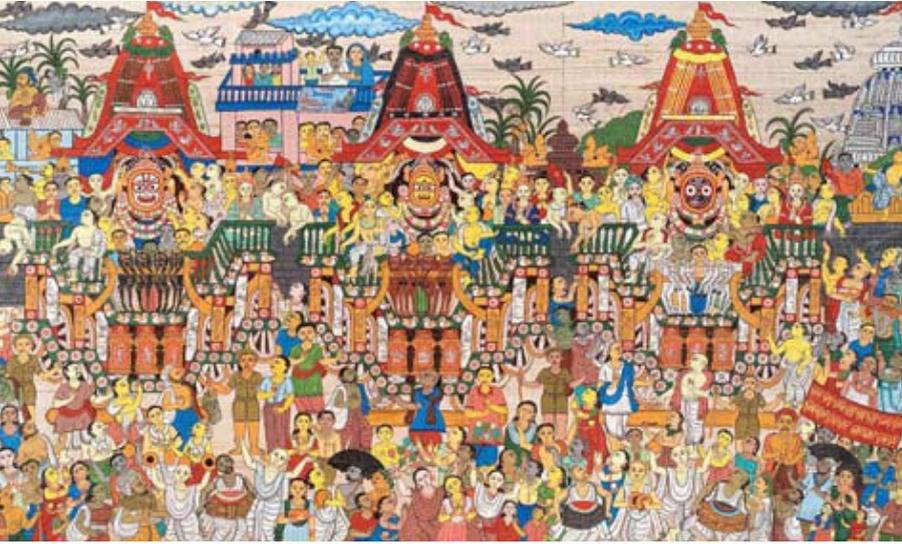
The realisation of the project's first stage has been wonderfully swift. Although I had been envisaging such a museum for several years, my colleagues and I could only start to research in 2007 and collect pieces in earnest. Since then the project has blossomed, with a substantial collection of art, and the creation of a dedicated gallery within the temple premises.

The curation of works exhibited in the museum has necessitated several trips to India. Meeting artists and finding good representative pieces have been both challenging and rewarding. This initiative has confirmed that even today there are great artists completely devoted to their spiritual tradition. Visiting their simple studios and witnessing their humility has served as a great inspiration to us in creating this project, of presenting Indian devotional art to the West.

In the museum's collection there are many well-known, respected artists such as B.G. Sharma and Indra Sharma, Bharti Dayal, G.L.N Simha, Ramesh Sharma, Mukesh Sharma and Reva Shanker Sharma. There are also many emerging talented artists like Vrindaban Dasa and Tillesh Sharma, and those who remain unknown, just like the traditional artists through the centuries.

The main focus of the museum is on living art forms rather than historical pieces, even though it presents quite a broad selection of devotional traditions from India. There are some old miniatures from Rajasthan, but most of the pieces are from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The collection focuses on works by Indian artists and includes devotional paintings by ISKCON artists. A few works from Nepal, Tibet, Thailand and Indonesia are also a part of it. The curators felt that these would be a valuable addition to the collection, as they are representative of the spiritual and cultural connection that these places have had with India in the past. From Nepal and Tibet there are some exquisite metal icons, ceremonial artifacts and sacred objects that represent Hindu and Buddhist Newari art. Two panels of leather cut-outs depicting Rama and Sita, represent Thailand in the museum. The style reflects the traditional depiction of Rama and Sita in *Ramakien*, Thailand's national epic, derived from the Indian *Ramayana*, which remains popular as performance drama even today.





RATHA YATRA, THE FESTIVAL OF CHARIOTS IN PURI
unknown artist
Pigments on cloth, 70 x 114 cm

INDIA PAINTINGS

ORISSA

The *ratha*, chariots, appeared to be newly made of gold, and were as high as Mount Sumeru. The decorations included bright mirrors and hundreds and hundreds of yak whisks. On top of the chariots were neat and clean canopies and very beautiful flags. The chariots were also decorated with silken cloth and various pictures. Many brass bells, gongs and ankle bells rang.

CHAITANYA-CHARITAMRITA

THE LIFE STORY OF KRISHNA >
unknown artist
Pigments on cloth, 62 x 88 cm