



BARBIL

ART PROJECT-II

A community based experimental art workshop



UTSHA
Foundation For Contemporary Art



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Discussions | Presentations | Site Mapping | Cultural Events | Workshops
Community Building | Film Screenings | Site Specific Art Exchange

Veer Munshi | Shilpa Joglekar | Anuradha Pathak | Samudara Kajal
Saikia Mandakini Galore | Anjan Kumar Sahoo | Kantakishor Moharana
Dipti Biswal | Susant Kumar Panda | Rajat Kumar Dhal | Patta
Painting Artist-Narahari Bhoi | Palm Lief Artist-Dwijabar Das
Dhokra Artist-Sansari Gadatia And Golap Gadatia
Rahul Bhattacharya | Ramakant Samantaray | Jagannath Panda



Curatorial Concerns:

Rahul Bhattacharya

When Utsha Foundation invited me to curate Barbil Art Project (which we later began to call Barbil II), it became an opportunity to further my work towards extending arenas and creating hubs of contemporary art away from the metropolitan centres. I began designing a community art project that would create a collaborative zone between artists from Orissa, contemporary artists from outside Orissa and the communities of Barbil. With the aim of pushing the boundaries of site-specific art, and to explore the differences between public art and community-based art, artists were invited to initiate workshop-based works which would be created in dialogue with the communities at Barbil. It was a conscious curatorial attempt to work outside medium specificity and to combine paintings, drawings, sound, video installations and performance as sites of contemporary expression and experience.

Another very interesting possibility lay in the very structure of the Barbil Art Project itself. From the beginning the project was structured as a capacity-sharing platform. Five artists from Orissa, five artists from outside, three practitioners of the traditional arts and five students as assistants. The possibilities were tremendous. The curator feels a need to focus; it is only an eight-day workshop. The programming was packed, we had plans for site mappings, presentations, slideshows, and our host (The Arya Group) had arranged for a lot of cultural activities and programmes. It became clear to me that to keep the commitment towards community interaction, my job as a curator was to take away the pressure of object creation.

These are a formal summation of my thoughts as I reached Bhubaneswar. I was looking forward to work with Jaganath Panda and Ramakant Samantaray, two friends I have known for a long time. Together we had managed to get together a very interesting bunch of artists, and get them excited to come with us to the remoteness of Barbil. My views of Barbil were still very homogenous, I had viewed documentation and closely studied the first Barbil project.

Charting experiences:

An overnight journey from Bhubaneswar (made more interesting by Jaganath's insistence on using public transport), brought us to Barbil at the crack of dawn. Nestling in the southern curve of Orissa-Jharkhand border, Barbil is arid, and coated in iron oxide dust. The Arya Colony stood like a corporate middle-class fortress. In the midst of a late winter dawn, one could only register so much.

An entire day was spent meeting people and being taken on visits to the local waterfalls and sunset points. Slowly the site was being mapped. Jaganath and Anjan Kumar Sahoo had been to Barbil before. We realised that we were staying in an oasis (Arya Colony) in a vast mining desert. The top soil has been so badly ravaged that



farming is almost impossible, displaced adivasi families stayed in small hamlets or in sterile resettlement colonies. Rust iron coloured factories dotted the horizon and large mining craters marked the edge of forests. That evening on the sunset point, our pointed to the expansive view of hills and forests in front of us and said "In front of you is the largest continuous forest of South Asia, very soon all these hills, all the forests will be gone". That did send a shiver down my spine and in the fading light melancholia descended. Yet the days experience had charged us up, some began planning works. But it was time for our evening work sharing presentations.

We became more and more aware that Barbil II was (just) a part of Arya Group's CSR project. Madkins Galore and Anuradha Pathak were yet to join us, but slowly the group's energies had begun to syngenesis. Veer Munshi and Jagannath began in a very inward mode, spending time and building dialogues with Narahari Bhoi, Dwijbar Das and Sansari Gadatia; specialists in the mediatic materiality of Pata, Palm leaf and Dokhra. Shilpa Joglekar, Samudra Kajal Saikia and Kanta Kishor Moharana were more interested in further exploring and engaging with the Adivasi villages and resettlement colonies. Anjan, Dipti Biswal, and Rajat Kumar Dhal became interested in Arya Colony as a site in itself. That morning we had also visited the Arya Group's huge (15,00,000 mega ton capacity) Iron Ore Pelletisation

Plant. Looking at the local adivasi workers, I was reminded of Ramkinkar Baij's sculpture 'The Mill's Call', except that this mill was not processing the produce of the land, but the land itself. The police and the Naxalite resistance were like long invisible shadows lurking around us. That night was a night of deep thinking and loud conversations. I made a presentation on 'community art projects', sharing some documentation of work done Shaina Anand at Bangalore and Delhi also Derek Lamb's Karate Kids with street children in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and Nairobi.

Madkins and Anuradha joined us next morning; it was also the day we visited the Arya Iron Ore Pelletisation Plant. Many of our environmental and socio economical concerns were laid to rest realising that the pelletisation plant recycled iron dust (a by product of the mining process of other companies). We realised that very soon we had to find a meeting point between our artistic explorations and the need to communicate these to the communities at Barbil. It is at this point that we decided to focus our energies, and make the central lawn and the community hall of Arya Colony the centre of engagement.

This of-course did not imply that the artists who were already engaging with communities outside Arya Colony would have to dis engage. Instead, we developed strategies of bring these community into the gated colony of

Arya. We felt that people of the Aryas colony already had access to the communities outside, in official or touristic capacities, but the reverse was not true. The questions of democracy and access are crucial to community art practices. Shilpa Joglekar, Kanta Kishore, Samudra Kajal, and Anuradha began the process of creating work and developing community interaction strategies.

In the next few days the central lawn and the community center became the hub of activities- The pellet from the Arya plant became important motifs in the works of Veer Munshi and Anuradha. Veer was disturbed by the arid desert like conditions caused by mining and began to wish for rain to soothe the senses of the people and the land. He began work on a large rain installation using drawing, nylon strings and pellets. Shilpa Joglekar began developed her wishing tree (a large bamboo installation), Kanta Kishore developed his open wall museum with objects collected from members of the Arya Colony and the displaced people of the land. Jagannath Panda, Samudra Kajal, Anjan Sahoo, and Anuradha began workshop based engagement with the community at Arya Colony, engaging with skill and memory sharing.

The nights were busy attending the cultural functions, presenting our works to the residents of Arya Colony and the team's internal meetings. We still found time for night

walks, bon fires and night long singing sessions. It was also a learning experience for us to constantly interact with the CSR team and understand various expectations they and the communities had from artists and art projects.

On the final day, when the project came to its end, it was some kind of a magical ending. The kind of interaction that happened between women from the displaced communities and the women officers and wives of the Arya Colony was unique and was really successful in creating community bondings. Jagannath Panda's 'We are Here for a Reason', Veer's 'Pellet Rain' and Kanta Kishore's museum, Anuradha Pathak's wall and Samudra's wall paintings framed the site for the open day. We had a great day filled with interactions and sharing.

As we sound up our Barbil visit, it was strange to anticipate nostalgia for a place one has only just got to know.

Post –Thoughts

As a curator i should have visited Barbil before the project stated and done my own independent site mappings. A part of me feels as if this is just a first visit. This time the experience was get and the work we pulled off was substantial. However communities need a longer sustained engagement and only then can truly collaborative projects can happen.



Dipti Biswal



Jagannath Panda



Kantakishor Maharana



Rajat Kumar Dhal



Ramakant Samantray
Smrutikant Rout



I LOVE FOOD

NAME Shivendra Singh Negi
HOME ADDRESS AT-post - Queen Mother Pauri Garhwal/uttarakhand
(UK)

MY MENU-I love to eat

BREAKFAST - Aloo paratha & grill d/w
SOUP veg Manchow soup & tomato shania dorbay
STARTER chicken Holypof & tandoori chicken
SALAD/PAPAD green dalad, masala papad
MAIN MENU sal Makhani, chicken Curry, plain Rice.
HOT BEVERAGE coffee & Hot milk
COLD BEVERAGE Lassi
DESSERT Gajar ka Halwa

MY SPECIAL LIKE tandoori chicken, langri kabab
paneer pasanda, chicken momos
onion cheese pulao

SIGNATURE

Samudara Kajal Saikia





Shilpa Joglekar



Sudeep



Susant Panda





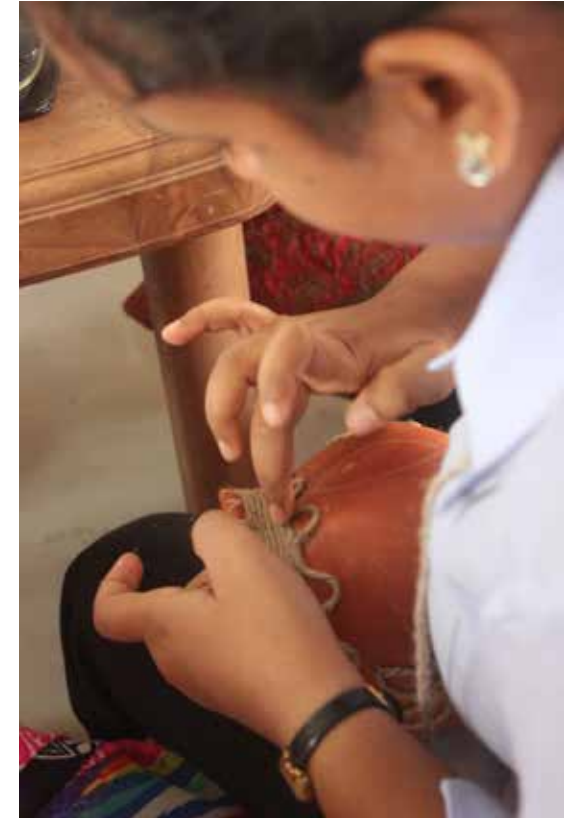
Veer Munshi



Dhokra Art



Pot Workshop





Cultural Programme



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ARYA GROUP:

The Arya group is a leading Iron & Steel Industry in Odisha. It has set up Arya Iron & Steel Co. Pvt. Ltd (AISCO) a pelletization plant of 1.2 MTPA capacity at Barbil in Keonjhar district of Odisha - the First Plant in Odisha to use Grate-Kiln technology. It has also set up 1.8 MTPA beneficiation plant named International Mineral Trading Co. Pvt. Ltd, adjacent to AISCO.

Arya Group has been playing a dominant role in the socio-economic development of peripheral area and recognizes that, its business activities have direct and indirect impact on the society. The company in consonance with Arya Group Foundation (AGF) is working on safe drinking water to all, promote quality education, encourage sporting activities, health, promote traditional art and culture of Odisha and maintain ecological balance. In short, CSR activity means transparent business practices that are based on ethical values, compliance of legal and statutory requirements, local development; care and respect for people, communities, their culture & the environment. In short we strive to be a "Good Citizen" of the country & the "Good Neighbor" within its host community.

UTSHA FOUNDATION

Utsha is a non-for-profit making organization registered in Bhubaneswar, dedicated to the art fraternity in Odisha, Chaired Jagannath Panda, it has a vision to promote and nurture the art and culture of the region.

Utsha supports a growing network of art practitioners, organisations, galleries, students, researchers and other people. It is unique in the sense of connecting local and traditional practices to global and contemporary creative circuits respectively. It is more concerned with local, ethnic and regional practices that come from remote areas. It also functions internationally to realise objectives through dialogue with people around the world. It embodies a continuing engagement with creativity in different communities and locations.

Barbil Art Project is the beginning of an oeuvre that will set new paradigms for generating alternative spaces for creativity, dialogue, action, exchange and performance.

