Welcome

The Kota Heritage Society exists to enable friends of Kota's heritage to share the responsibility for its upkeep and preservation.

Our society is based in Kota, Rajasthan, India.

Please browse our website and get to know us better. You can get information about the projects we are involved in here, catch up on the news and upcoming events, download documents and send queries to the Society Office.

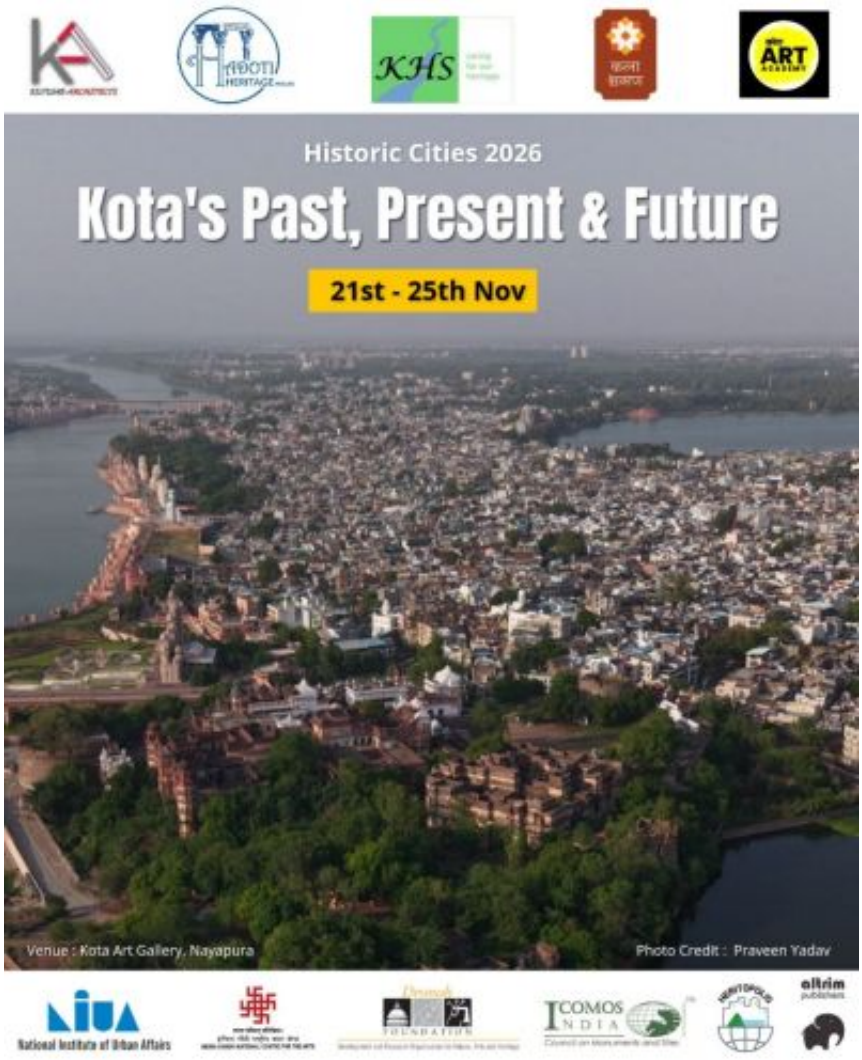
In Focus

Historic Cities 2026 Kota Exhibition - 21-25 Nov 2026

The exhbition is open to the public and entry is free. All are invited.

The exhibition will run from 21st November to 25th November at the Kota Art Gallery, Chatra Villas Gardens, Kota.

Opening hours will be published here nearer the time.



Map of Historic Cities Series 2026

Kota is one of three cities in Rajasthan to be invited by *Dronah Foundation and partners* to be part of the *Historic Cities Series 2026* and KHS is the *City Co-ordinator*.



Annual Report 2025-2026

To see the highlights of 2025-2026 scroll through our colourful action packed annual report and let us know if you would like to support us.

Please click here to download the latest avaiable KHS annual report (23.6 MiB)

Kota Heritage Society Invited to Japan

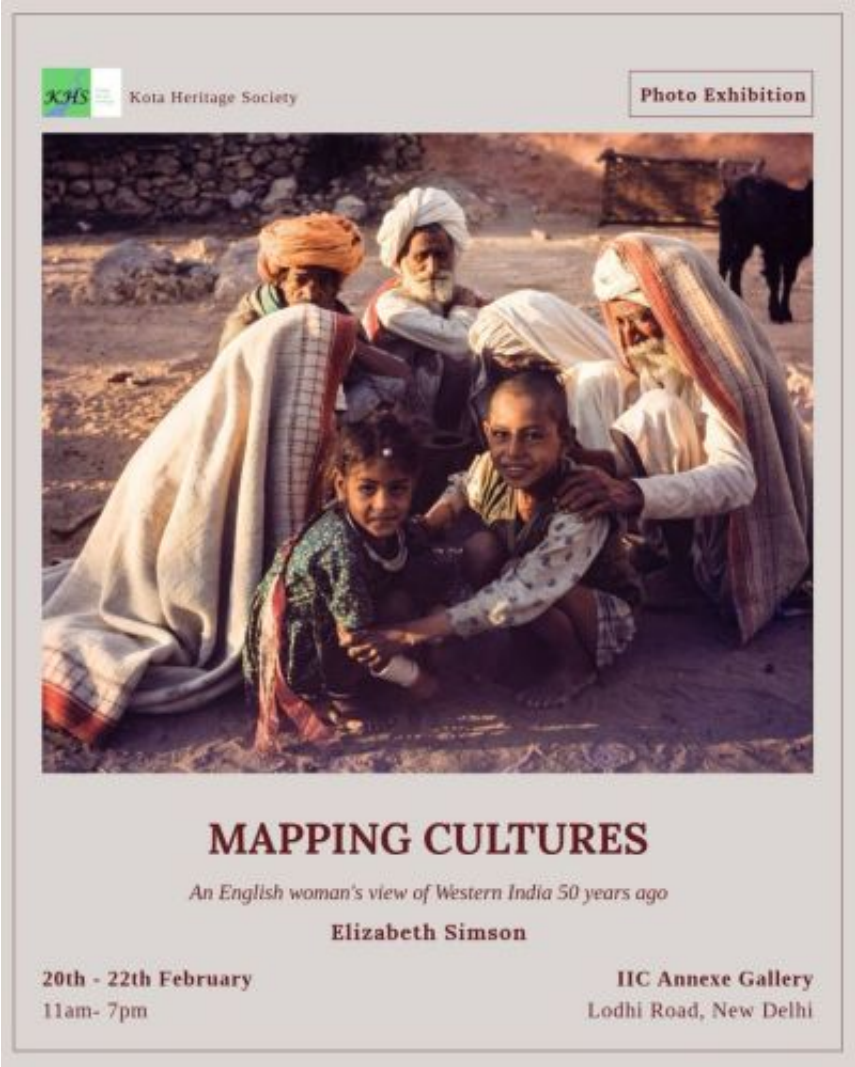
Dr. Madan Meena has been invited to Japan to talk about his research and revival of 400 extinct Rajasthani hand block prints. He will be giving a public talk to textile experts and meeting crafts people.



Recent Happenings

Exhibition: Mapping Cultures by Elizabeth Simson

The final exhibition of the series was held at the India International Centre (IIC) in New Delhi from 19th - 22nd February, 2026.





A catalogue-cum-book of the exhibition was released at the opening by *Malvika Singh* (second from right), and *Rima Hooja* (left) - a family friend of Elizabeth Simson. The book was designed by *Muskan Gill* (right). Seen here with KHS member and Treasurer *Victoria Singh* (second from left).

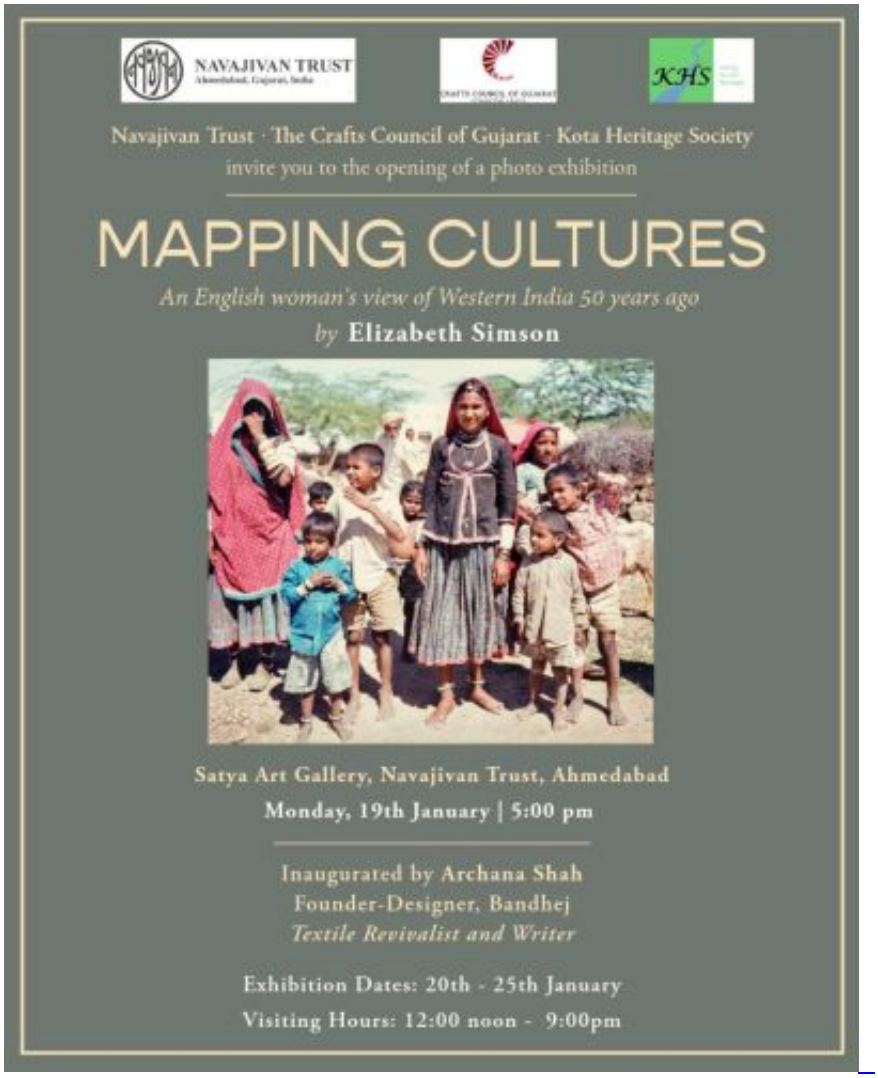
Exhibition: Mapping Cultures by Elizabeth Simson

Satya Art Gallery, Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad

19 January, 2026 to 25 January 2026

Opening 5pm on 19 January, 2026

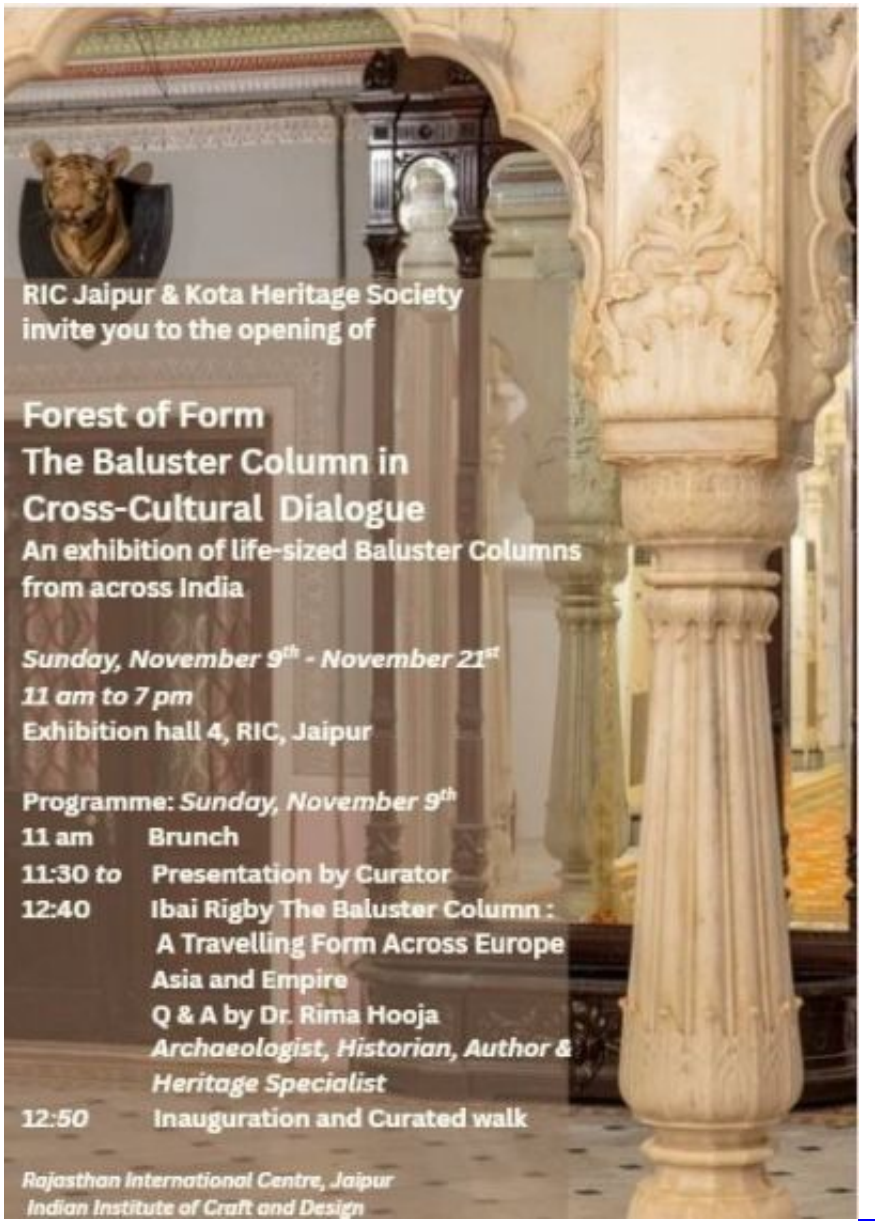
Opening hours 12 noon to 9pm daily thereafter

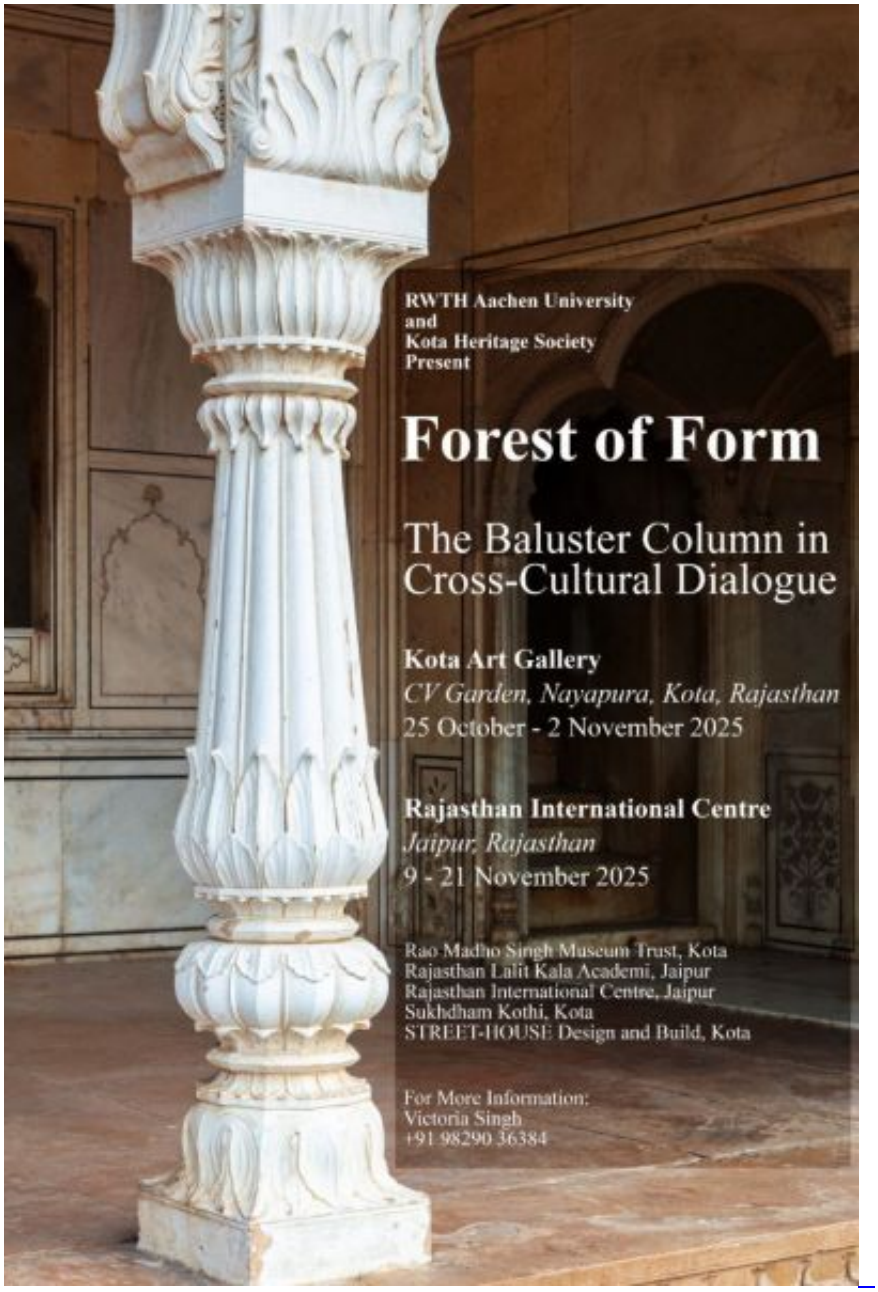


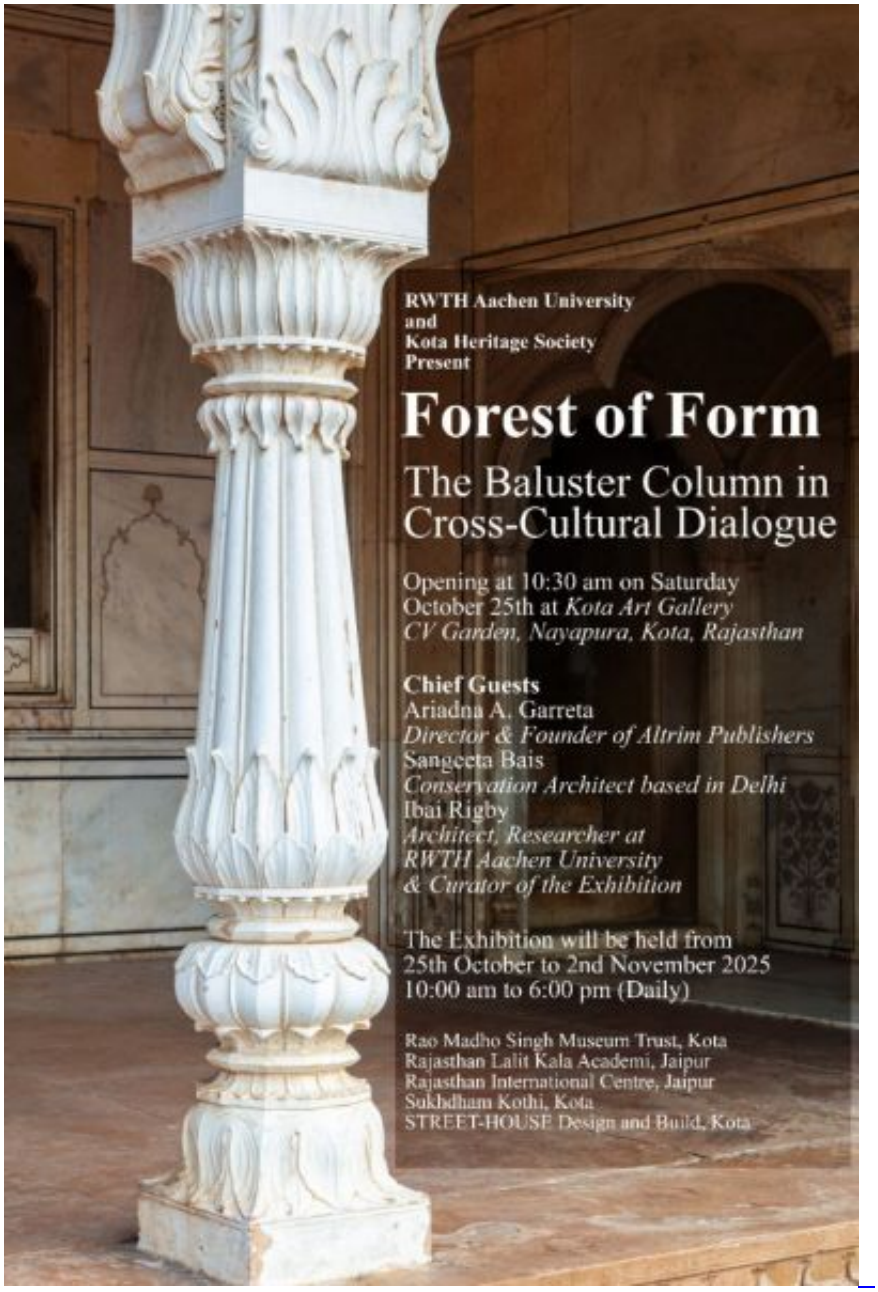
Exhibition Exploring The Baluster Column

The full title of the exhibition is *"Forest of Form. The Baluster Column in Cross-Cultural Dialogue"*.

Please see the posters below for details of venues and show times. The exhibition will be held in Kota and Jaipur.


RIC Jaipur & Kota Heritage Society
invite you to the opening of
Forest of Form
The Baluster Column in
Cross-Cultural Dialogue
An exhibition of life-sized Baluster Columns
from across India
Sunday, November 9th - November 21st
11 am to 7 pm
Exhibition hall 4, RIC, Jaipur
Programme: Sunday, November 9th
11 am Brunch
11:30 to 12:40 Presentation by Curator
Ibai Rigby The Baluster Column :
A Travelling Form Across Europe
Asia and Empire
Q & A by Dr. Rima Hooja
Archaeologist, Historian, Author &
Heritage Specialist
12:50 Inauguration and Curated walk
Rajasthan International Centre, Jaipur
Indian Institute of Craft and Design


RWTH Aachen University
and
Kota Heritage Society
Present
Forest of Form
The Baluster Column in Cross-Cultural Dialogue
Kota Art Gallery
CV Garden, Nayapura, Kota, Rajasthan
25 October - 2 November 2025
Rajasthan International Centre
Jaipur, Rajasthan
9 - 21 November 2025
Rao Madho Singh Museum Trust, Kota
Rajasthan Lalit Kala Academi, Jaipur
Rajasthan International Centre, Jaipur
Sukhdham Kothi, Kota
STREET-HOUSE Design and Build, Kota
For More Information:
Victoria Singh
+91 98290 36384



Death of a KHS Friend and Supporter



Kota Heritage Society has lost a good friend and supporter with the death of the English artist, Elizabeth Simson, who passed away in her sleep in England on 8th June, 2025. She was 94. Elizabeth had lived a very full life as an artist, an art teacher, and as an influencer before the term was invented. She first came to India driving overland from England in 1963, and first came to Kota in 2004 and thereafter returned to stay at Sukhdham every winter until 2017.

Elizabeth loved working with young people and took workshops on screen printing and bookmaking at the Kota Women's Polytechnic College, bringing her enthusiasm, love of life and artistic knowledge into countless lives and influencing their life choices. She had no children of her own but to her Indian students she was their *London walli dadi*. She taught at the annual Schools Art Exhibition at the Kota Art Gallery inspiring numerous groups of young people and adults. Elizabeth was an intrepid traveller and travelled in Rajasthan and neighbouring states from 1970 to 2017 capturing village life, architecture, family groups and crafts with her camera. She was particularly interested in textiles and turbans.

We are happy to have been able to exhibit some of Elizabeth's photographs in Kota, Jaipur, Borunda, Jodhpur and Kutch. Exhibitions at Navajivan Trust Ahmedabad and IIC Delhi are forthcoming. Our selection of fully documented photos show aspects of India that have disappeared and few realised or cared at the time that this was about to happen. Her photographs provide a record for the young and for upcoming generations which is why they are so important. We will be publishing a book of Elizabeth's photographs used in the touring exhibition later in the year.

Elizabeth was part of the Sukhdham family and will be missed by all those who had been inspired by her endless energy, love of life and thirst for knowledge. Those who knew her have been enriched by her

friendship, humour and extraordinary stories. Her love of block prints will live on through Dr. Madan Meena's research, documentation and on-going revival project of traditional textiles and prints.

Remembering Navroze Contractor 21st - 23rd Feb 2025



Navroze was a long time KHS member and friend of the Art Gallery. He brought several exhibitions to Kota and in recognition the amphitheatre is now called Navroze Natyashala.

Little did we realise when discussing the next exhibition back in June 2023 that it would be a retrospective remembering and honouring his life's work.

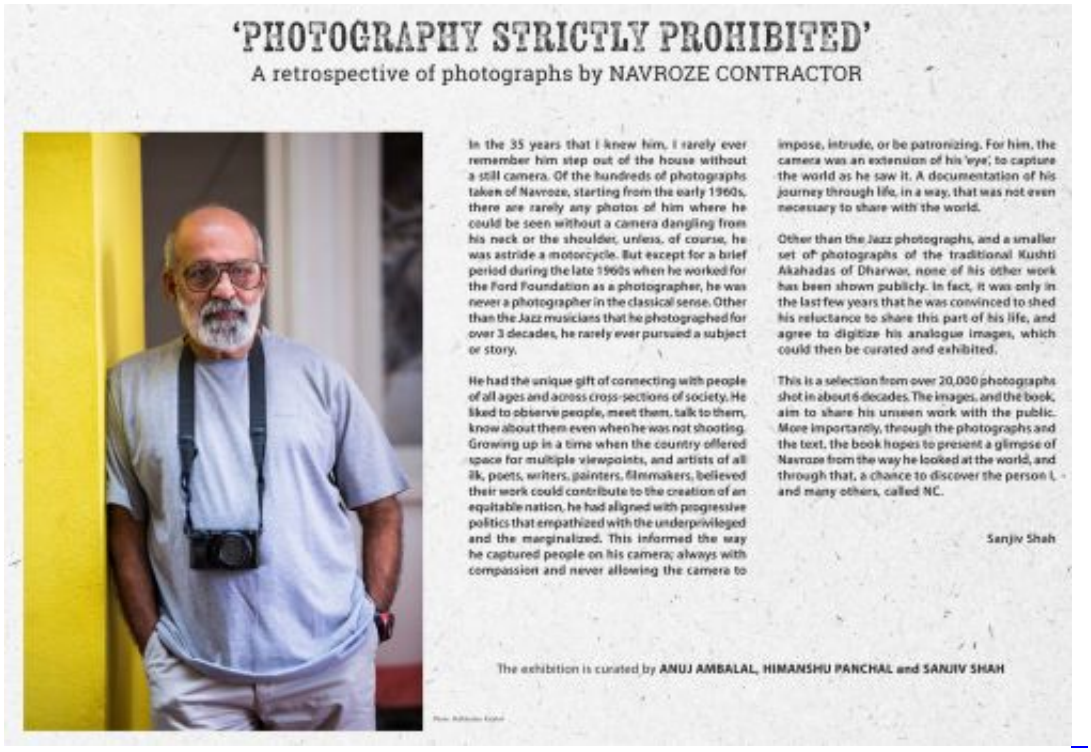
This exhibition opened in Ahmedabad in November 2024 and has since been to Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai. Next stop Delhi.

We are grateful to Navajivan Trust for including us in this very special exhibition itinerary.

Exhibition Programme



Discover the Person Called NC



'PHOTOGRAPHY STRICTLY PROHIBITED'

A retrospective of photographs by NAVROZE CONTRACTOR

In the 35 years that I knew him, I rarely ever remember him step out of the house without a still camera. Of the hundreds of photographs taken of Navroze, starting from the early 1960s, there are rarely any photos of him where he could be seen without a camera dangling from his neck or the shoulder, unless, of course, he was astride a motorcycle. But except for a brief period during the late 1960s when he worked for the Ford Foundation as a photographer, he was never a photographer in the classical sense. Other than the Jazz musicians that he photographed for over 3 decades, he rarely ever pursued a subject or story.

He had the unique gift of connecting with people of all ages and across cross-sections of society. He liked to observe people, meet them, talk to them, know about them even when he was not shooting. Growing up in a time when the country offered space for multiple viewpoints, and artists of all ilk, poets, writers, painters, filmmakers, believed their work could contribute to the creation of an equitable nation, he had aligned with progressive politics that empathized with the underprivileged and the marginalized. This informed the way he captured people on his camera; always with compassion and never allowing the camera to impose, intrude, or be patronizing. For him, the camera was an extension of his 'eye', to capture the world as he saw it. A documentation of his journey through life, in a way, that was not even necessary to share with the world.

Other than the Jazz photographs, and a smaller set of photographs of the traditional Kushti Akahadas of Dharwar, none of his other work has been shown publicly. In fact, it was only in the last few years that he was convinced to shed his reluctance to share this part of his life, and agree to digitize his analogue images, which could then be curated and exhibited.

This is a selection from over 20,000 photographs shot in about 6 decades. The images, and the book, aim to share his unseen work with the public. More importantly, through the photographs and the text, the book hopes to present a glimpse of Navroze from the way he looked at the world, and through that, a chance to discover the person I, and many others, called NC.

Sanjiv Shah

The exhibition is curated by **ANUJ AMBALAL, HIMANSHU PANCHAL and SANJIV SHAH**

Photographs of Exhibition

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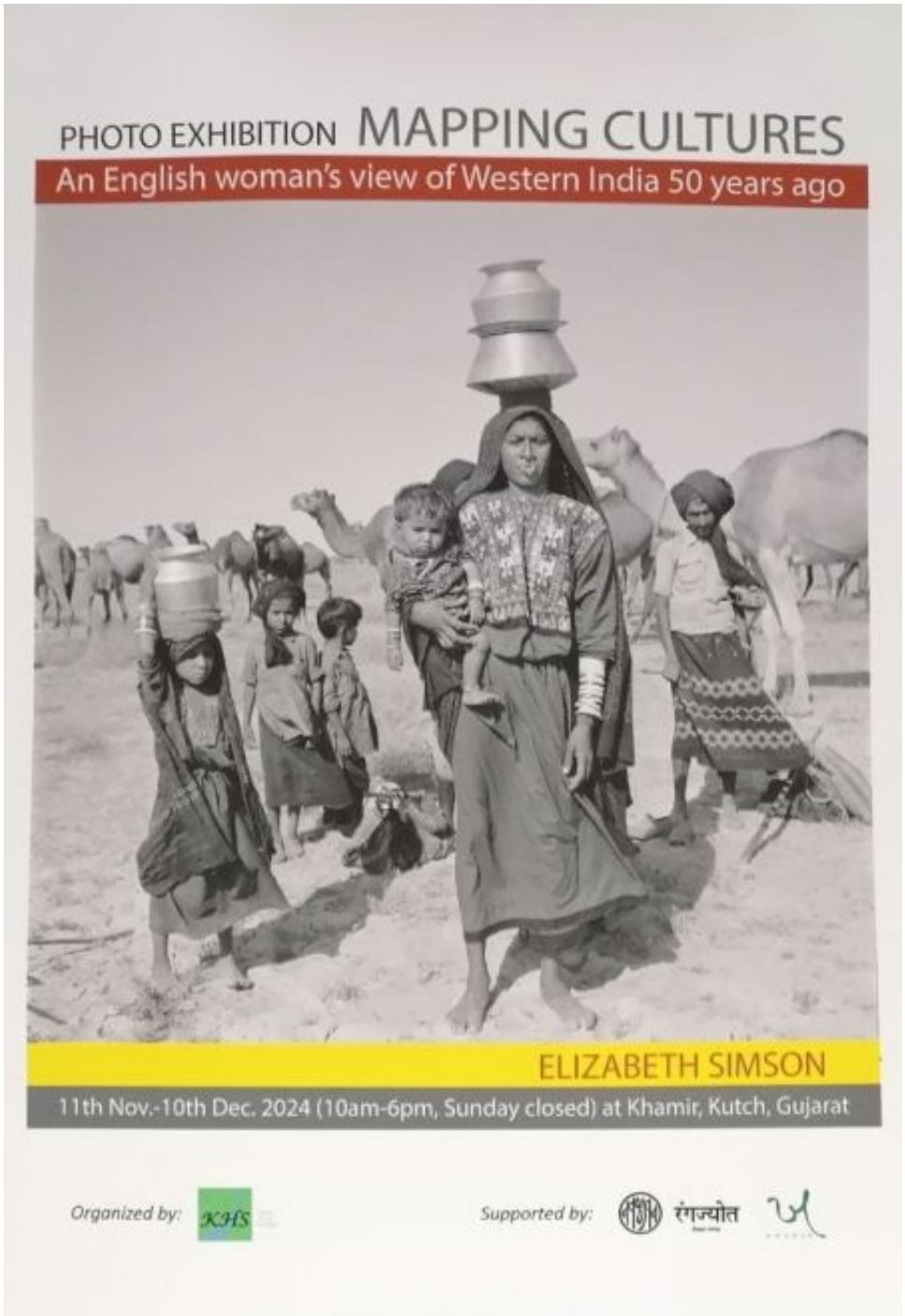


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कलादीर्घा में नवरोज की फोटो प्रदर्शनी आज से
गत वर्षों में लिए गए श्रेष्ठ 100 फोटो होंगे प्रदर्शित

Mapping Cultures Exhibition in Gujarat



From 11th November, 2024 to 10th December, 2024 Elizabeth Simson's photographs were exhibited at Khamir Craft Resource Centre near Bhuj, Kutch, Gujarat.

Elizabeth had visited Kutch in the past and had met the parents of some of the attendees. The exhibition was on for a month and was appreciated by locals and tourists alike.

Preparing for the Exhibition

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Chief Guests (L to R): Yvonne Logan, Sponsor and friend of Elizabeth's; Caroline Stone, author and embroidery expert from Seville, Spain; and Mala Shodhan, Founder of textile company *Curiosity Workshop*, Ahmedabad.

Talk by Dr. Madan Meena to the Assembled Gujarati Artisans and Enthusiasts



Vicky Talking About the Book of Elizabeth's 1963 Overland Journey to India



Relaxing at Khamir



Exhibition of Photographs by Elizabeth Simson at IICD, Jaipur

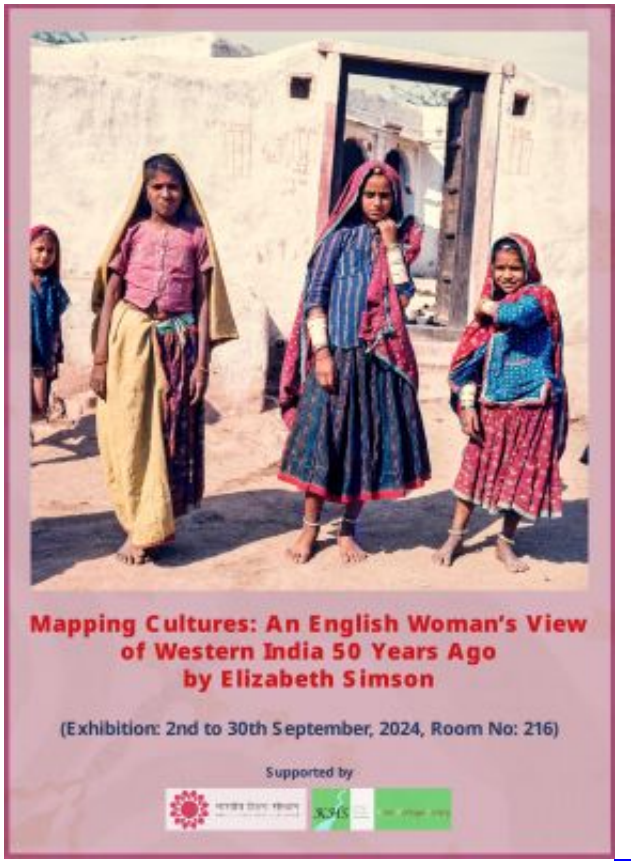


Elizabeth Simson's photographic exhibition opened in Jaipur at the *Indian Institute of Craft and Design* on Sunday, 1st September. 2024, their foundation day.

The ribbon cutting by Chief Guest Anuradha Singh, Director of Nila House, was followed by a lecture by Dr. Madan Meena. Speaking to a packed auditorium, Madan talked about Elizabeth, her overland trips to India and the joy of travelling with her around Rajasthan and Gujarat.

For Elizabeth the purpose of travel was to stop, look and wonder at textiles, crafts, architecture and quirky Indian life in general.

The guests and students were invited to a *dal-batti-churma* lunch in the beautiful gardens of I.I.C.D.


Mapping Cultures: An English Woman's View
of Western India 50 Years Ago
by Elizabeth Simson
(Exhibition: 2nd to 30th September, 2024, Room No: 216)
Supported by

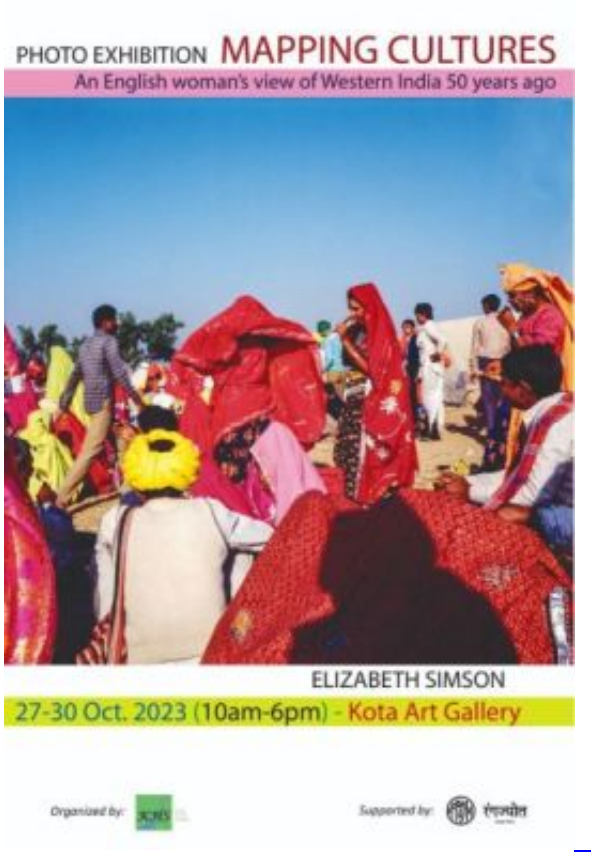


Our President Jaiwardhan with our patron Prof. Joachim Bautze on the left, at the art weekend organised by Rao Madho Singh Museum Trust at Umed Bhawan Palace, Kota on 16th March, 2024.

Exhibition - Elizabeth Simson: Mapping Cultures

An English woman's view of Western India 50 years ago - 27th - 30th October, 2023 at the Kota Art Gallery.

(For details of the exhibition's subsequent showings see 'Elizabeth Simson's Photo Exhibition' page under Heritage Projects in the leftmost column.)



Introduction to the exhibition by the artist, Elizabeth Simson



Having been deprived of travel as a World War II child, I seized the opportunity, when it came in 1963, to travel overland to India.

Before I got to India I had a romantic preconceived idea of the country based on the Rudyard Kipling stories and films such as *Elephant Boy* so my initial reaction was of disappointment seeing the townsmen in western clothes - at that time, bell-bottomed trousers.

At first, I randomly photographed the many subjects that I found new and strange in a search for visual beauty. I began to notice village people at the bus stops and railway stations, coming to Jaipur to shop at the ironmonger and textile shops and they kindled an interest in what people wore and in textile production.

On my second trip I visited Borunda village and Rupayan Sansthan, the Rajasthan Institute of Folklore and Museum, that respected and recorded country life and culture. I mixed with farmers and craftsmen who were mostly illiterate but with their own culture which had evolved in an often hostile desert environment. I found their ways of dressing rich, functional and beautiful and their skills and creativity very stimulating. Turbans, in particular, intrigued me; the inventiveness was endless. Turbans were life enhancing, symbolic and functional - from one length of cloth a poor person, as well as a rich man, could have stylish headgear. The women's clothes too were beautiful and symbolic with pleasing colours and patterns.

Sixty years later a lot has changed and this is reflected in the way people dress and the textiles that are produced. There used to be a strong relationship between local craftsmen and their village patrons. This changed when a new patron, The West, began using the textile craftsmen. The relationship was neither so strong nor local and the designs became 'fashion', devoid of the original symbolism. The west wanted quantity and cheap goods which altered the product. The old patrons' village people turned to factory produced textiles because they were cheaper.

Many influences - screen printing; independence; technology - brought about rapid changes. For example, Pipar used to be a thriving block-printing town for the local area. The patterns they produced signified a group identity and place. Now there are only one or two printers and their past clients are now wearing

cheaper factory cloth.

Sadly some tourist visits are now to settings depicting pseudo village life and displaying inferior crafts. Customers should not be shown a travesty of the past!

A record of traditional local dress and textiles is a reminder of the past and can be an inspiration for the present. There were technical skills and great artists among the weavers, embroiderers and tie-dyers - they should be cherished and remembered.

Clients selecting textiles spend many hours viewing and feeling samples in the shops. People also have a wide knowledge of different regional products from other areas and are aware of their quality and designs. I am impressed by most peoples' knowledge and feel for textiles. Winding turbans, dhotis and saris give a persons fingers a daily feel of a cloths drape, feel and texture.

Personally, I particularly treasure my Indian textiles because I know the craftspeople who have produced them, such as the late Rashid of Jaipur. I was lucky and I am thankful that I was able to experience traditional village life in north west India. Besides the beauty of dress and textiles I also appreciated the mud architecture and designs, the food, the songs, the hospitality, the beautiful thorn hedges and the decorated animals.

My photos are a homage to that rich culture that embellished an often tough life. Unquestionably, Indian textiles are a great art form.

- Elizabeth Simson biodata.pdf (16.5 KiB)
- Introduction to the exhibition by the artist Elizabeth Simson.pdf (27.6 KiB)
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Tod's Time as Political Agent in Kotah (1818 - 1822) - Liz Driver

Dr. Liz Driver, Trustee of the Royal Asiatic Society, gave a lecture - *Tod's Time as Political Agent in Kotah (1818 - 1822)* - on 30th September, 2023.



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Liz Driver had brought a group to Kota in February 2023 following in the footsteps of James Tod. She had come back to begin her recce for a tour of Gujarat in his footsteps and offered to give a talk focusing especially on Kotah. Sukhdham kindly hosted this talk and we had it filmed. Professor Joachim Bautze, who had provided some of the images for the talk, was able to attend. Tod had been the first librarian at the Royal Asiatic Society and the tour celebrated the bi-centenary.

"Thank you to Liz for her fascinating talk."

Prof. J.K. Bautze - Visit October 2023



Joachim Bautze gave a talk to KHS members and invitees at Sukhdham Kothi on 10th October, 2023.

He enthralled his audience with his talk on 'The Holi Celebrations of Maharao Ram Singh of Kotah'. Thank you to Sukhdham for hosting the evening and to Manas Nama for recording it.

Joachim was also able to guide the current professional miniature painters around Kota Garh while he was here. We hope he will come again in the Spring of 2024.



On a sad note, Khalid Hussain, who drove Joachim every day in October, died at the wheel on 24th November while driving H.H. Ijyaraj Singh back from a state election function. In this photo he is standing beside Joachim.

Prof. J.K. Bautze - Expert in Classical Rajasthani Painting of the 17th to

early 20th Century

We are very pleased that Joachim Bautze will be visiting Kota in October, 2023 and has agreed to give a talk for KHS members and invitees at Sukhdham Kothi on a date to be decided.



Joachim first came to India, from Berlin, fifty years ago as a student of Indian art history and Sanskrit when trains were pulled by steam engines and a 3rd class ticket around India cost Rs. 58. He travelled for over three months until his visa expired and then had to spend four months in hospital in Germany to recover but that didn't deter him and he came back to study Indian art.

Specialising in Rajput (i.e. Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir) wall paintings (*bhitti-chitra*), and especially in the *kalams* viz. *shaili* / *upashailiyon* of Bundi, Kota, Indergarh, Uniara and parts of Jaipur, Devgarh, royal Udaipur, Nathadwara and Bikaner, Joachim is one of the few living experts on Kotah paintings. He co-authored the catalogue for the 1997 Exhibition of Kotah paintings in New York, Harvard Art Museum and Zurich called, 'Gods, Kings and Tigers: The Art of Kotah'. Although the catalogue is no longer available in Kota it can be found on line and is both scholarly and easy to read and provides a fascinating source of information and knowledge.

Joachim has been a Professor at the Universities of Berlin, Heidelberg and Tokyo and has curated several exhibitions on classical as well as colonial Indian painting in Europe and USA. He has written numerous

papers and books about aspects of Kotah paintings and we look forward to welcoming him back to Kota to meet the next generation of art enthusiasts and the miniature artists themselves.

Tod's Horse

This year's membership card shows the large statue of Bajraj, Tod's horse. See the heritage project *Bajraj: Tod's Horse* for more information.



Archana Shah Textiles Exhibition & Workshops



'Crafting a Future', an exhibition by Archana Shah of *Bandhej*, Ahmedabad, was appreciated by many in Kota as being "...something different for Kota." Archana was keen to meet fashion and design students and discuss issues with them of '*Slow Fashion vs. Fast Fashion*'. The aim was to encourage responsible choices when textile shopping and to support '*Handmade in India*'.

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Harish from Adivasi Academy Tejgarh, Gujarat came to teach spinning using a box *charkha*.

I.I.C.D. Jaipur organised a plate painting workshop on both 10th and 13th on the theme of 'I*ndian Future Fashion*'.



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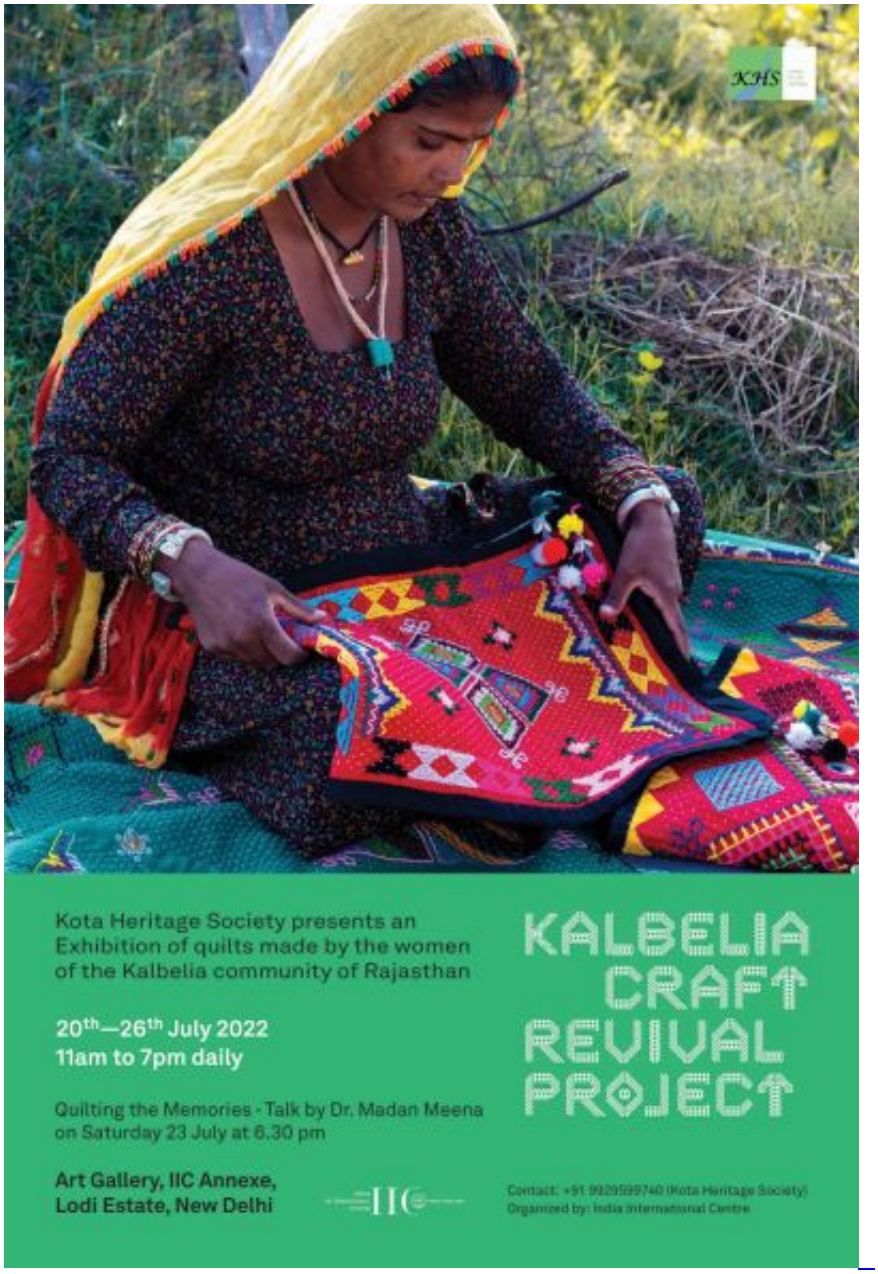
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A private book signing event for members was held at Sukhdham Kothi and here Ojasvi is getting her book signed by Archana watched by KHS members.

Thank you to KHS member ***Navroze Contractor*** from Bangalore for inspiring Archana to develop the exhibition which will next be shown in Ahmedabad.

Kalbelia Crafts Revival Project Exhibition



Quilts of India Exhibition



Our first exhibition and launch of *Kalbelia Craft Revival Project* was at Nila House, Jaipur's 'Quilts of India' exhibition in March. Their exhibition was organised to coincide with the delayed *Jaipur Literature Festival*. This was a good opportunity to interact with national and international buyers.

For more information see *Kalbelia Craft Revival Project*.

Save Sorsan, Save Godawan (Great Indian Bustard) Rally

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A rally was organised by Bharat Singh MLA on 1st November, 2021 to draw attention to the danger from mining leases near the Sorsan Wildlife Sanctuary and proposed breeding ground for the critically endangered State bird *Godawan* or Great Indian Bustard.

(The man in the pink mask in the first photograph is our President, Jaiwardhan who was part of the organising committee.)

An exhibition on Sorsan will be organised in the Kota Art Gallery soon.

New Bus Stand & Grameen Haat Development - Update

This shows the foundation dug for the dividing wall between the new bus stand and the historic *baori* taken on 1st November, 2021. The former wetland has been completely filled in.



New Bus Stand & Grameen Haat Development

Kota has emerged from a second covid-19 lockdown to find that many arterial road junctions have been converted into a building site with underpasses and overpasses channeling traffic in certain directions and right turners left to fend for themselves. Footpaths, provision for push chairs or wheel chairs are generally missing from the development plans.

We were naive to believe the UIT when they said they would not destroy the peace of the Grameen Haat area by creating a bus stand as they started filling in the wet land depression with fly ash in August. This is

the banner that Palash and Ojasvi made and collected signatures in C.V. Garden on Sunday, 5th September, 2021 and which we sent to the President of India.





The bus stand will have shops and traders and be open 24 hours. There will be a wall between it and the *baori*. We are requesting a closed 150-200 seater auditorium for theatre, dance, poetry and film nights, but they say it will spoil the 'heritage' nature of the area which will have a cafe like JKK in Jaipur. We want to be part of the planning process in this important part of Kota's heritage zone.

We will keep you informed.

Webinar - Preserving the Heritage of Kota - 18th April, 2021



World Heritage Day - 18th April, 2021

KHS is working with *Kota City Blog, Hum Log* and *Spic-Macay* under the umbrella of ***'Kota Heritage Walks'*** to push for the conservation of Kota's heritage. *Kota City Blog* has 20,000 followers in Kota on Instagram. This is an exciting use of new technology to build a platform working to record and document Kota's heritage and to be a voice that is taken seriously.

A day's programme including a heritage walk and a live seminar at the Kota Garh evolved into the first ever Webinar linking Kota lovers in India and abroad. A short video clip of the panellists will be available on *YouTube* soon. Follow *Kota City Blog* for updates.

Visual Poetries by Saurabh Desai - 5th - 9th February, 2021

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The Opening

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Saurabh Desai

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Navroze Contractor & Bharat Singh, MLA
Opening the Exhibition

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General View of Gallery

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Saurabh Talking to an After School Club

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Navraze in Conversation with Saurabh at Sukhdham

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Iconic Raja and Gallery Reflections

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KHS Member Mandeep Kaur and Her Daughters

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Our Youngest Artists Shivambika & Pranvi

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Introduction to the Photographer

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Young Visitors' Response to the Exhibition

Despite restrictions we were able to reschedule and hold 'Visual Poetries' from 5th - 9th February but sadly without the 'Schools Art Exhibition'. Thanks to *Western Zone Cultural Centre* we were able to offer canvas painting to all visitors and over 60 people, young and old, painted in response to the photographs on display in the exhibition.

We did not want to attract large groups and were happy with the steady trickle of visitors who came over the five days. Workshops were held on documentary film making, photo editing, and fine art nature photography. Thank you to Saurabh, Navroze and Himanshu.

Lock-down Projects

Handloom Kota Doria Website



Jyoti Gupta of Aviral Business Solutions has now created a shop window for the weavers. Hers is the only online shop for handloom Kota doria saris (visit the website) authenticated with a woven GI mark. KHS backs the project and provides credibility. One of the first successes has been to sell all of Hasina Bano's collection of more than 200 dupattas, seen here with her daughters preparing to courier the order.

Promoting Kota Doria Weavers Online



Under the exceptional economic conditions and lock-down, the Kota Doria weavers have been unable to sell their stock. Many were dependent on ration kits distributed by politicians and private citizens. In a bid to help restore their livelihoods with dignity, we started to help sell their stock online.

Jyoti Gupta of Aviral Business Solutions volunteered to organise this and has built a rapport with the weavers. At the end of July Jyoti managed to get to Kota and to meet the weavers whom she had been helping.



Image from Joyti Gupta's Kota Doria document.

Please click here to download the document (1.7 MiB)

Kota Art Gallery Renovation



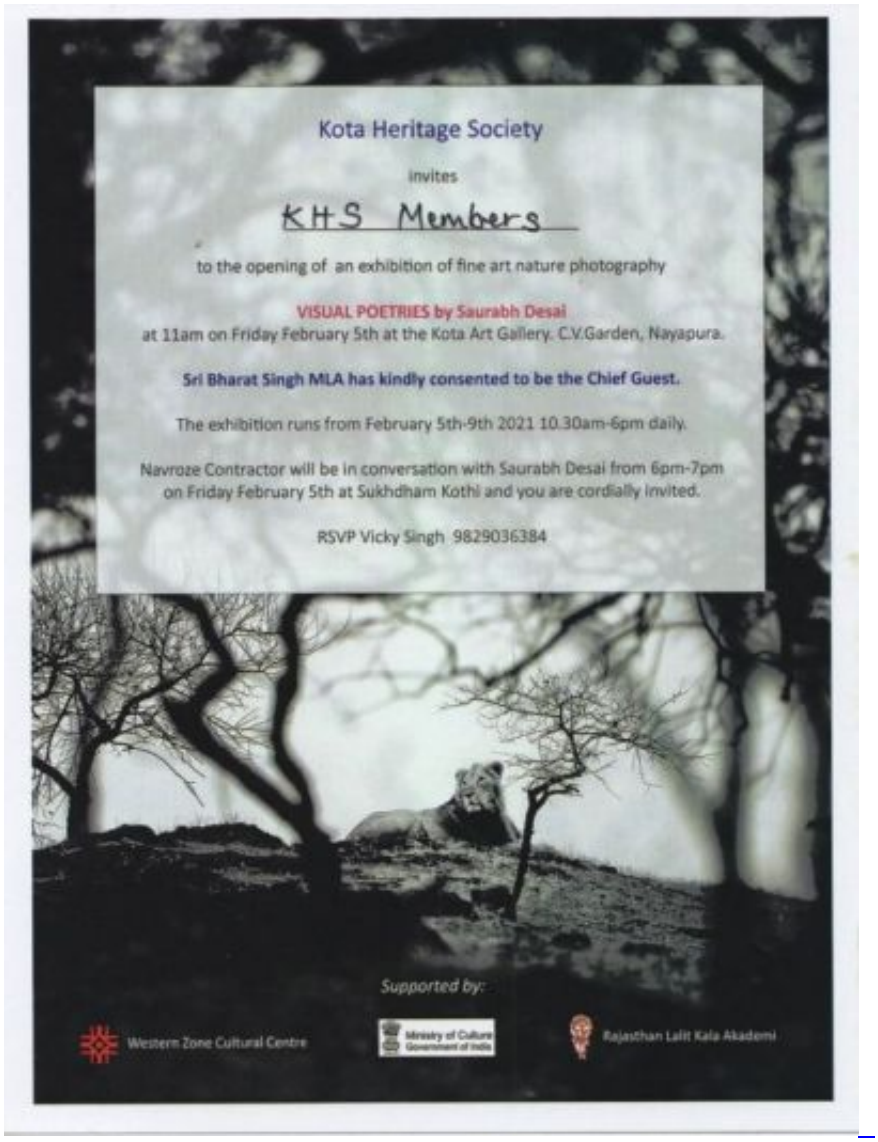
Bharat Singh (MLA), father of KHS executive member Ganga Singh, very kindly offered to fund the restoration of the art gallery which was in a sorry state after a large *imli* tree came down and broke the boundary wall and monsoon rain leaked into the galleries through the roof and walls.

KHS unofficially looks after the gallery in the absence of staff and budget from its owners in Jaipur, the Rajasthan Lalit Kala Akademi.

Delayed by the corona virus lock-down, the restoration work was finally finished at the end of July 2020.

We thank Bharat Singh for his invaluable support.

Fine Art Nature Photography Exhibition by Saurabh Desai



6th Schools Art Exhibition 23rd - 26th January 2020



Vivek Desai's colourful photo exhibition of intimate images of backstage in Indian circuses was a great success. It was held at the Kota Art Gallery from 23rd - 26th January 2020 along with the *Sixth Kota Schools' Art Exhibition*. Imaginative drawings and paintings by children on the "Circus and Me" theme were framed and exhibited. Participating schools sent groups to enjoy craft activities including pottery, *Notan* (a Japanese paper craft) and various activities organised by the Indian Institute of Craft and Design from Jaipur.

Visitors to the exhibition had the opportunity to meet the photographer who is Director of Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad, and the curator, Navroze Contractor. Himanshu Panchal who is in-charge of photography at the Navajivan Trust conducted a 4-hour workshop for aspiring photographers.

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Vivek Desai with Dr. Bansi Bhar School artists

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I.I.C.D. craft activities

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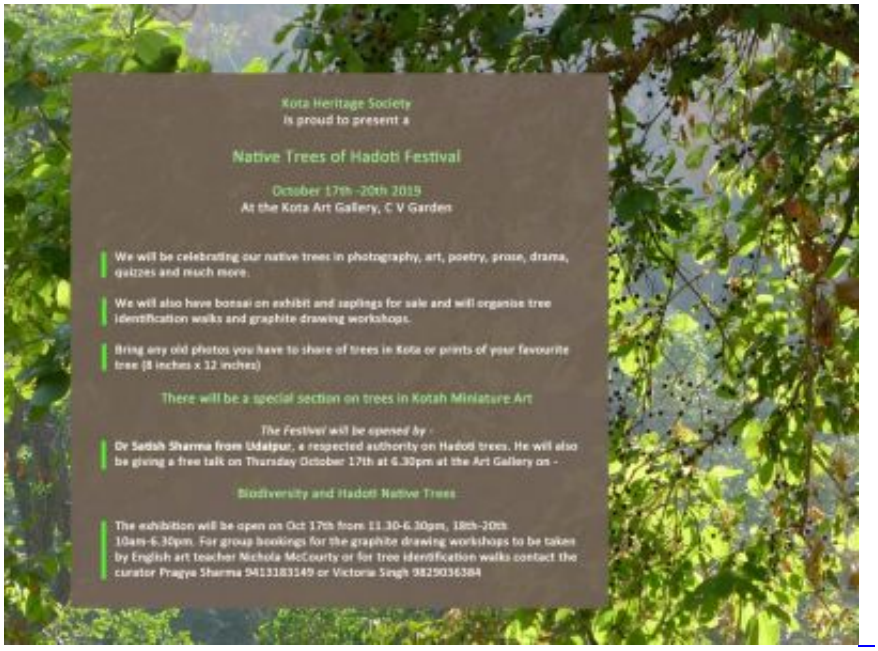


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Native Trees of Hadoti Festival 17th - 20th Oct 2019



The first ever celebration of native trees in Hadoti was held from 17th - 20th October, 2019 at the Kota Art Gallery, C.V. Garden, Nayapura, Kota. It was inspired by *Pradip Krishen's* book *'Jungle Trees of Central India'* and we thank him for the free use of his book.

Our knowledgeable Chief Guest, *Dr. Satish Kumar Sharma*, gave a talk on *'Hadoti Trees and Bio-diversity'* and was a great source of information and wisdom.

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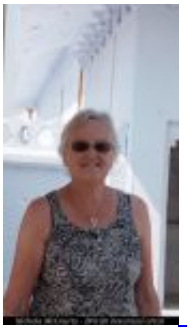
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Views of the Exhibition

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Views of the Exhibition

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5th Schools Art Exhibition - A Great Success



----- Photos from the exhibition

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The exhibition was held from 28th - 31st January, 2019.

Highlights were Avni Varia from Ahmedabad teaching spinning on a box charka, workshops by Sachetan and the Indian Institute of Craft and Design Jaipur, book stall and craft workshops by Ektara of Bhopal, pottery and canvas painting.

Bhuvnesh Bal Vidyalaya performed a new drama based on the life of Gandhi and several schools participated in a public speaking event 'Gandhi and Me'.

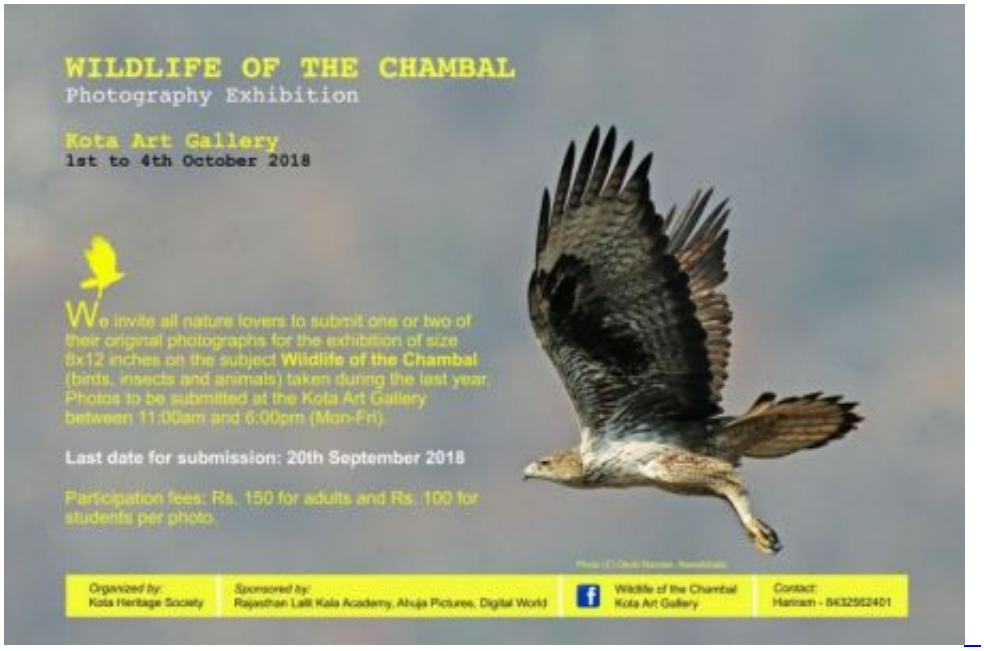
We are grateful to all those who volunteered to help. Eleven schools exhibited five selected paintings each on the Gandhian theme of truth, non-violence, compassion and freedom; these paintings have been framed and returned to the respective schools to display.

We, the people ... Exhibition of Illustrated Pages from the Constitution of India



KHS is proud to be associated with this exhibition which runs at the *Satya Art Gallery*, Ahmedabad from 26th October to 2nd December 2018.

Wildlife of the Chambal 2018 - October 1st-4th at Kota Art Gallery



This year's beautiful image is of a *Bonelli's Eagle* photographed by *Devki Nandan* of Rawatbhata. Any nature lover can submit two photos for the exhibition and can download the form and term and conditions here. Photos need to be submitted by September 20th at the latest.

Click here to download the entry form. (92.7 KiB)

We welcome Prayga Sharma as Assistant Curator. You can email her at Chambal.khs@gmail.com

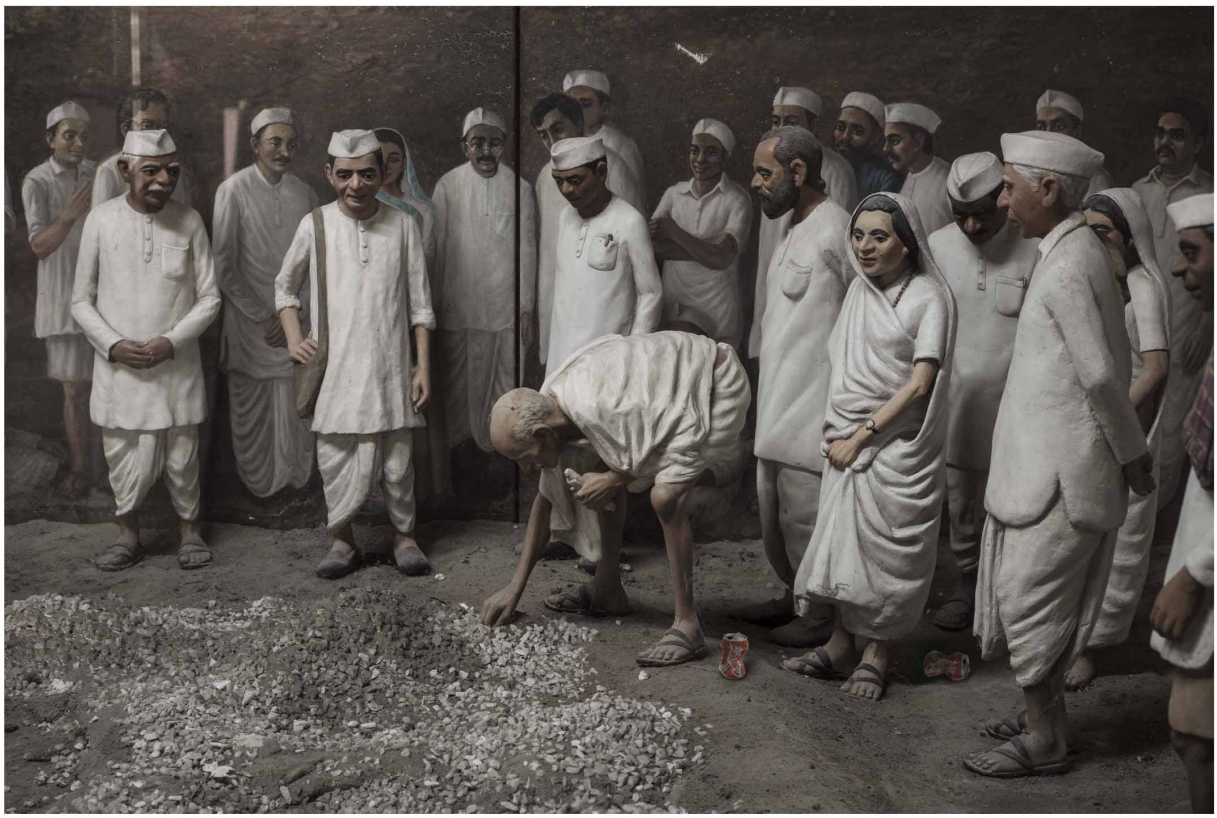
----- Exhibition Update

Once again we were able to show a superb variety of Hadoti's wildlife. The exhibition was opened by Kieran Drake, Minister Councillor Political and Press at the British High Commission in Delhi, assisted by Hadley his three-year old daughter. Groups of children came to paint in response to the photographs.

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Mahatama Gandhi - An Exhibition of Photographs

in search of bapu



An exhibition by internationally acclaimed photographer from Ahmedabad

Anuj Ambalal

at

Kota Art Gallery

from

2nd to 4th October 2018

11 am to 6 pm daily

Organized by:
Kota Heritage Society

Sponsored by:
Rajasthan Lalit Kala Academy, Ahuja Pictures, Digital World

----- Exhibition Update

Anuj Ambalal and Navroze Contractor were with us all week and Anuj was able to talk to more than 800 young people about his enigmatic exhibition. He was also invited to do a school presentation and stayed on for an extra day. The students ranged from trainee teachers to school students to shelter home children and after school groups; all showed an interest and enthusiasm for decoding the photographs.

We had prepared a multiple choice quiz in Hindi and English for the groups which they were invited to take home and discuss with their parents.

The exhibition was opened by local Gandhian Naresh Vijayvergia, assisted by local historians. 2nd October is celebrated as Gandhi Jayanti (Gandhiji's birthday) and the schools are expected to do Gandhi related activities. This is the beginning of the 150th anniversary year and so Gandhi events are being organised held across India throughout the year.

Anuj also gave a presentation at Sukhdham Kothi on Tuesday, 2nd October - Gandhi Jayanti.

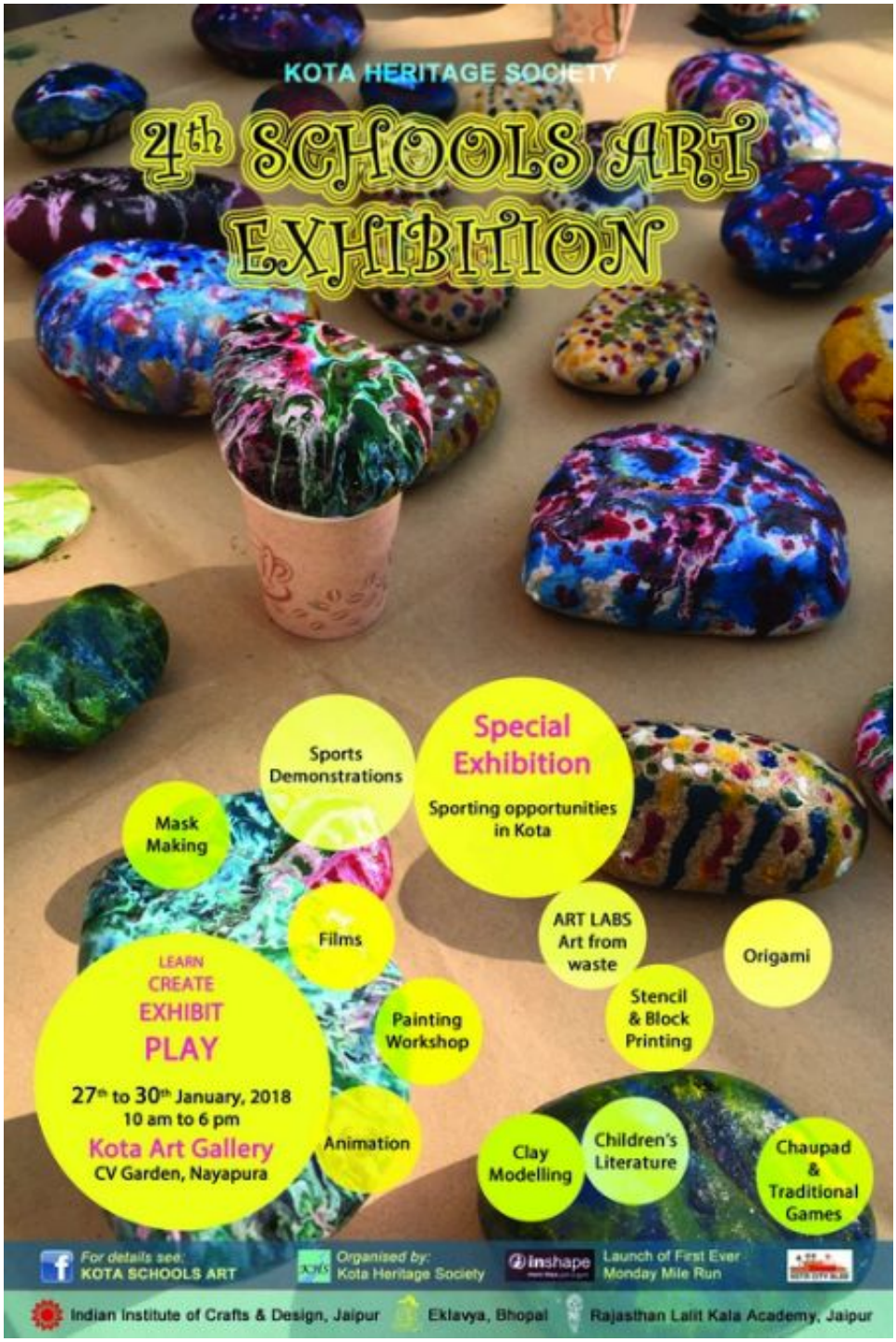
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4th Kota Schools Art Exhibition



Exhibition Gallery

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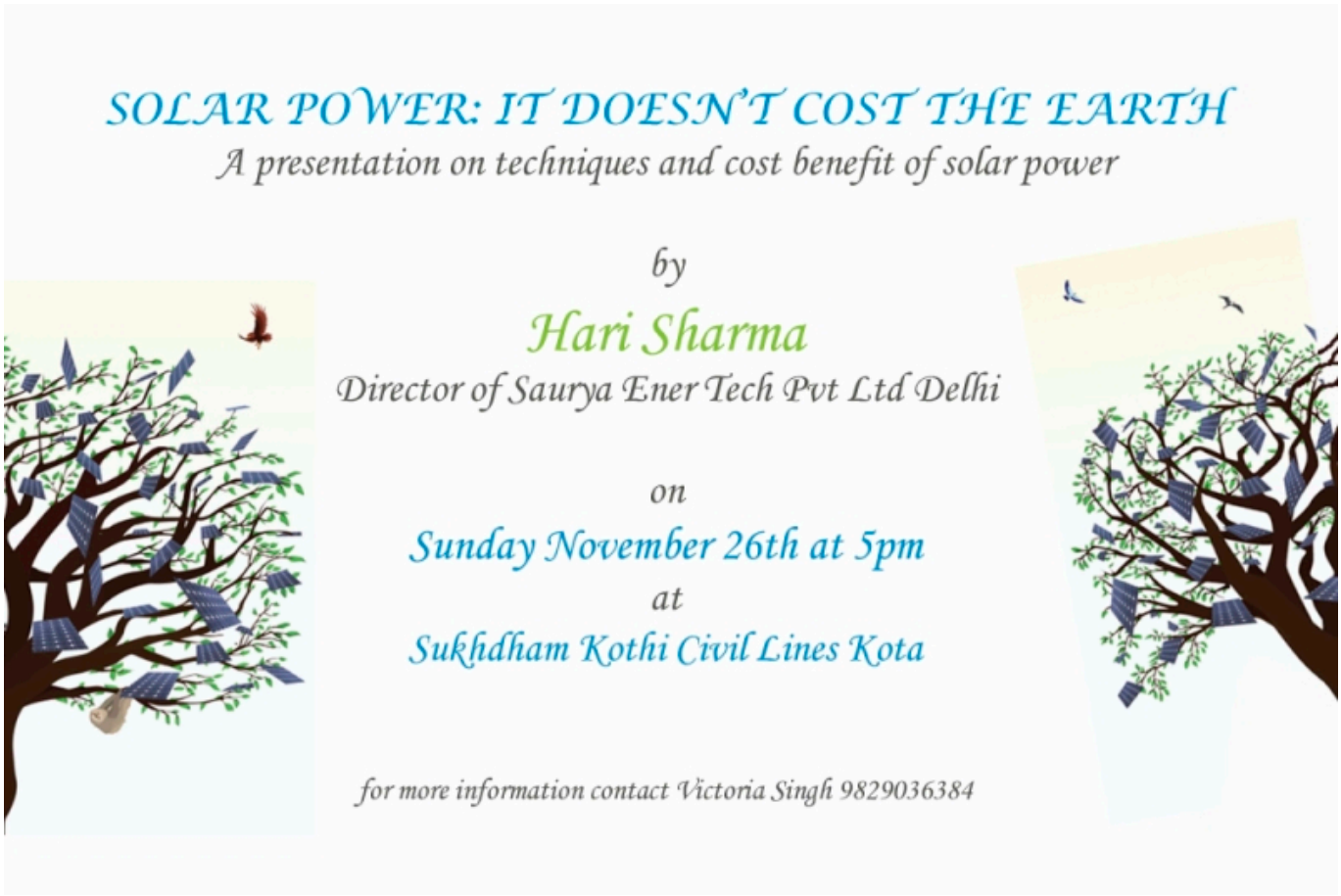




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Solar Power: It Doesn't Cost the Earth

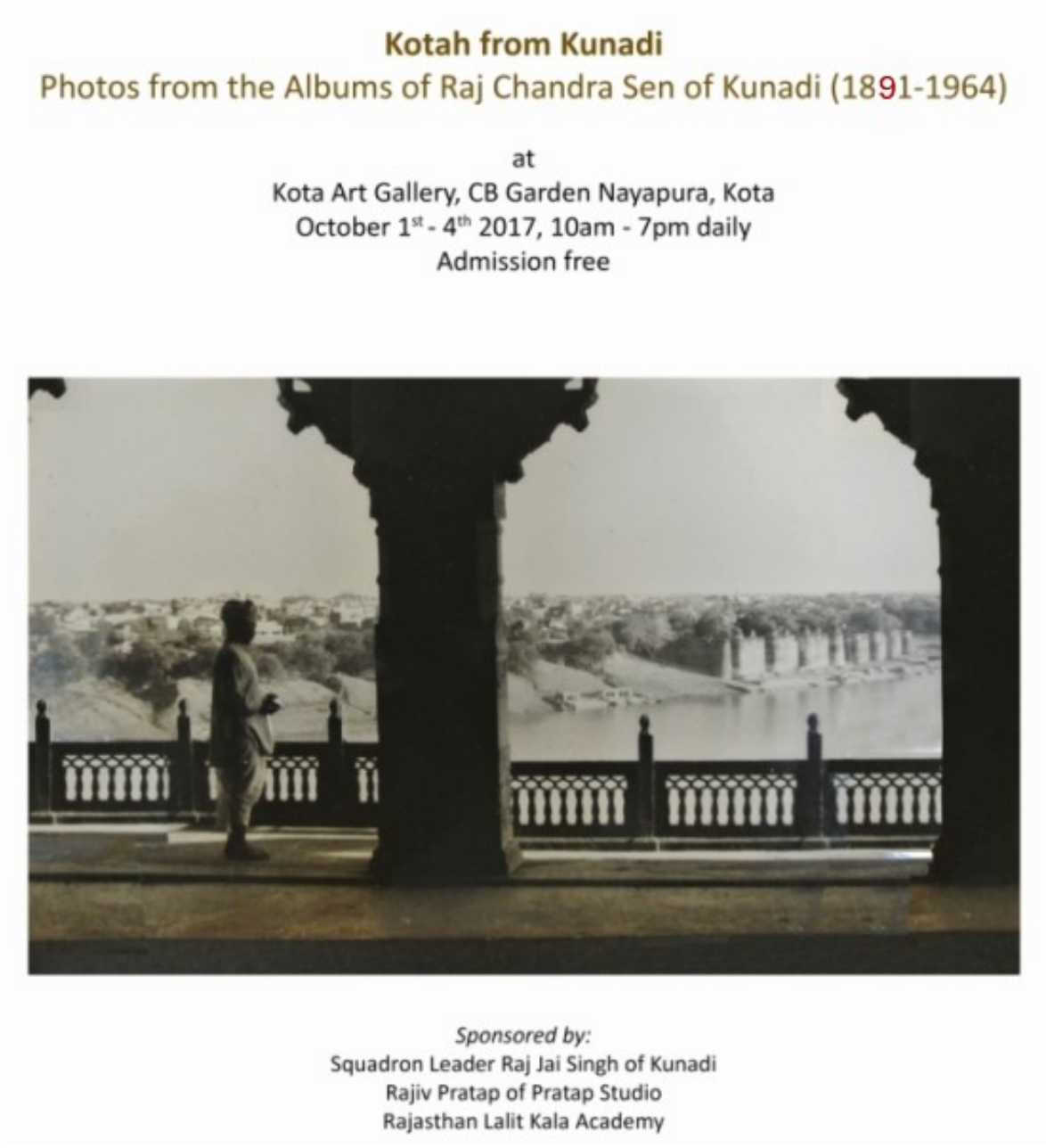


On Sunday, 26th November 2017, Hari Sharma, KHS member and Director of Saurya Ener Tech Pvt. Ltd., Delhi gave a stimulating talk which generated a lot of interesting discussion between Hari and the audience. In the photograph below, Hari, in the centre, is continuing the lively session with his engineering friends over refreshments.

The price of solar has come down dramatically. In particular, net metering is cost effective even for the householder.



Kotah from Kunadi - An Exhibition of Old Photographs



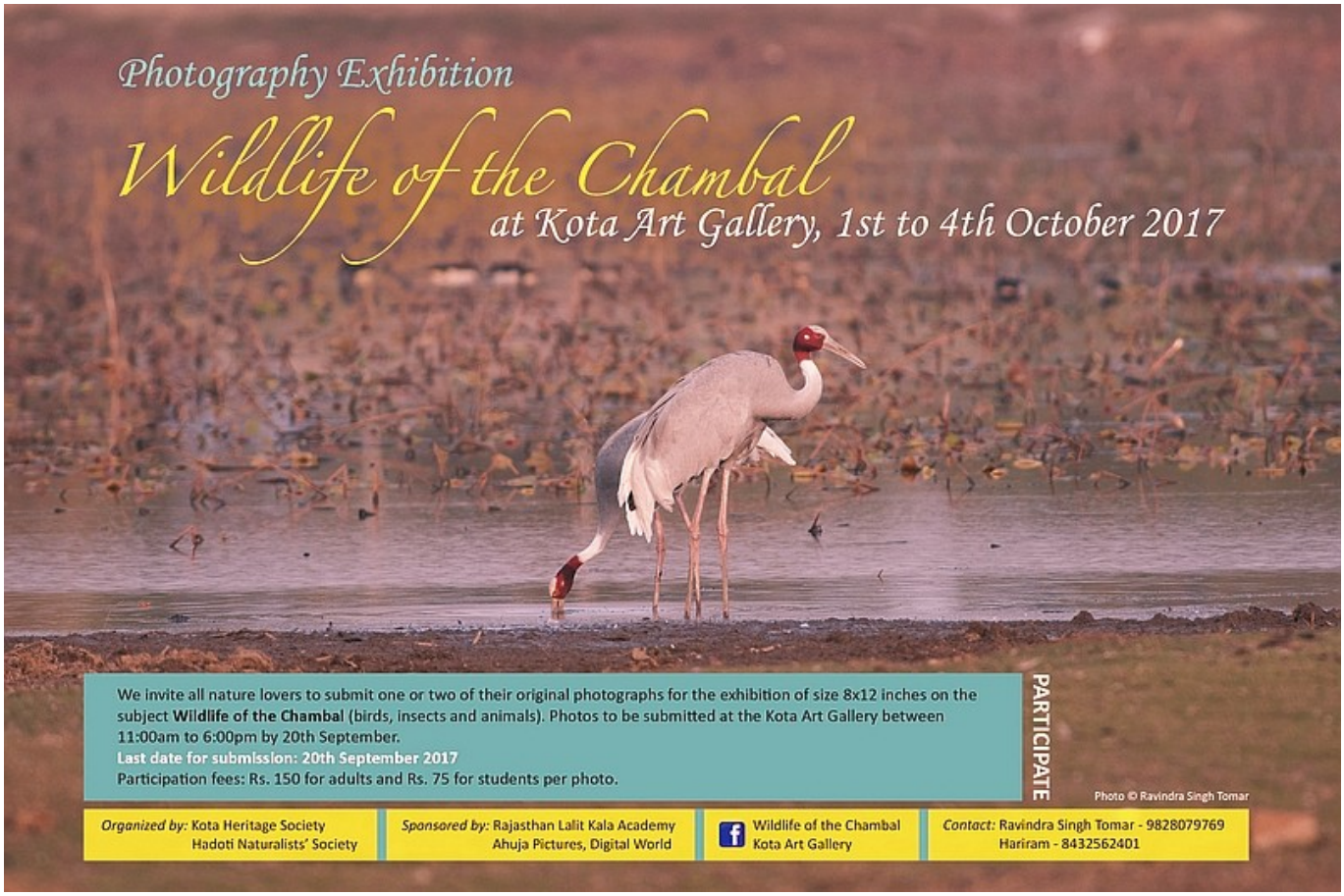
Raj Chandra Sen of Kunadi's photographs of the River Chambal dating back to historic floods in 1916 were widely appreciated. The exhibition is now on loan to the Kunadi Family.

His Highness Maharao Bhim Singh visited the exhibition and remembered being taken to see the RAF seaplane that landed on the River Chambal near the Garh for repairs in 1937 when he was only three.

Hundreds of school children also visited.



Wild Life of the Chambal 2017 - Tribute to Local Wildlife



This exhibition was organised in association with the Hadoti Naturalists' Society. It was inaugurated by the Collector of Kota, Shri Rohit Gupta on his first visit to the Kota Art Gallery.

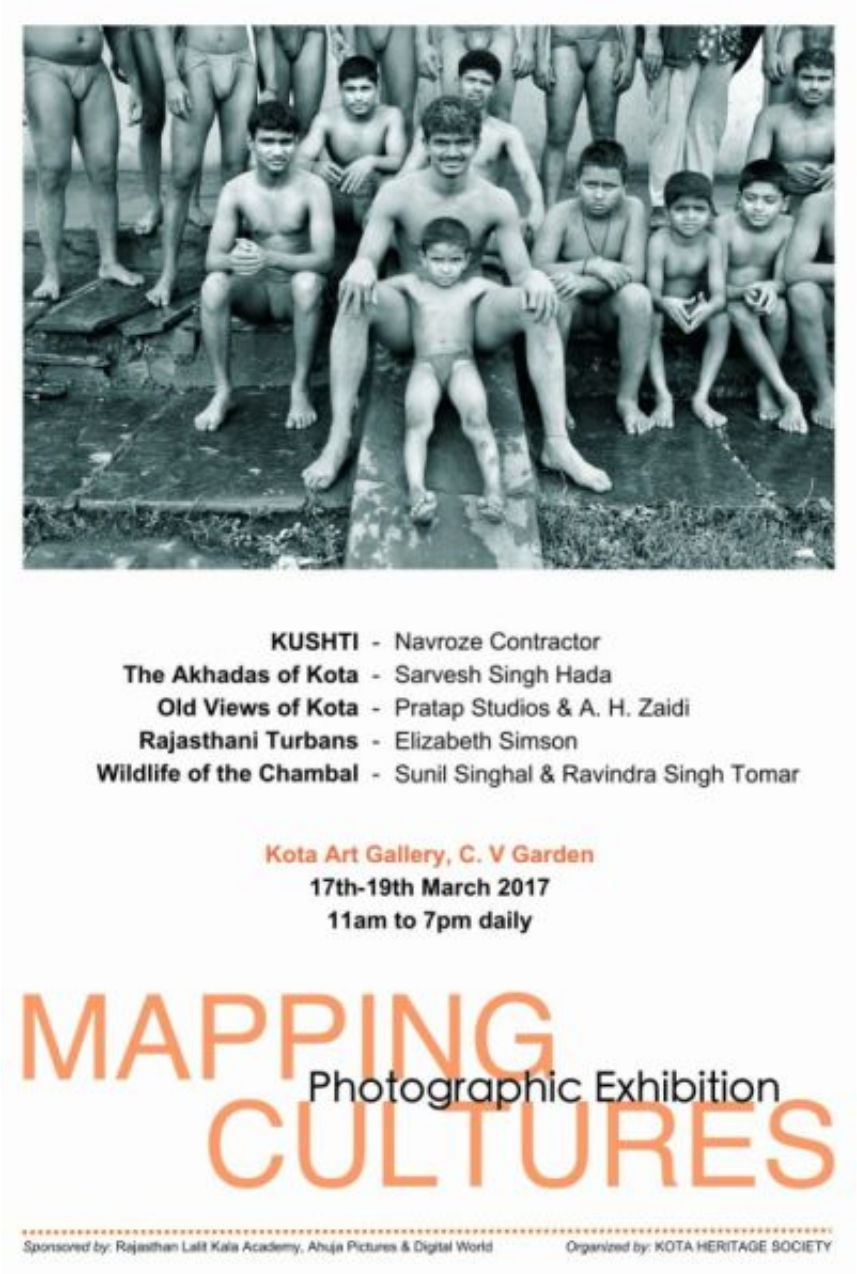
Over 50 local photographers had submitted photographs.

Dr. K.S. Gopi Sundar, Director of the sarus crane programme for the International Crane Foundation took a fascinating seminar at the Umed Club in the afternoon.

Other events included the screening of the film 'Broken Tail' which is about a young male tiger that disappeared from Ranthambore Wildlife Sanctuary in 2003 and turned up in the Dara Sanctuary near Kota where it died tragically 3 months later when hit by a train. This sanctuary is now the Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve and the first tiger is due to be introduced here in December 2017.



Mapping Cultures - Photographic Exhibition 17-19 March 2017



With such a varied collection of themes we were able to attract a lot of new people to the Art Gallery who had never been there before.

International photographer Navroze Contractor exhibited his black and white photographs exploring the traditional sport of *kushti* or wrestling. Sarvesh Hada managed to capture the spirit of the *akhadas* (wrestling clubs) of Kota in his photographs.

We invited all the Kota *ustaads* and honoured them in the traditional way by presenting *saafas* (turbans). This was the first time that their contribution to *kushti* had been recognised by the general public and there was a terrific buzz of excitement at the opening.

Mapping Cultures Photographic Exhibition Gallery

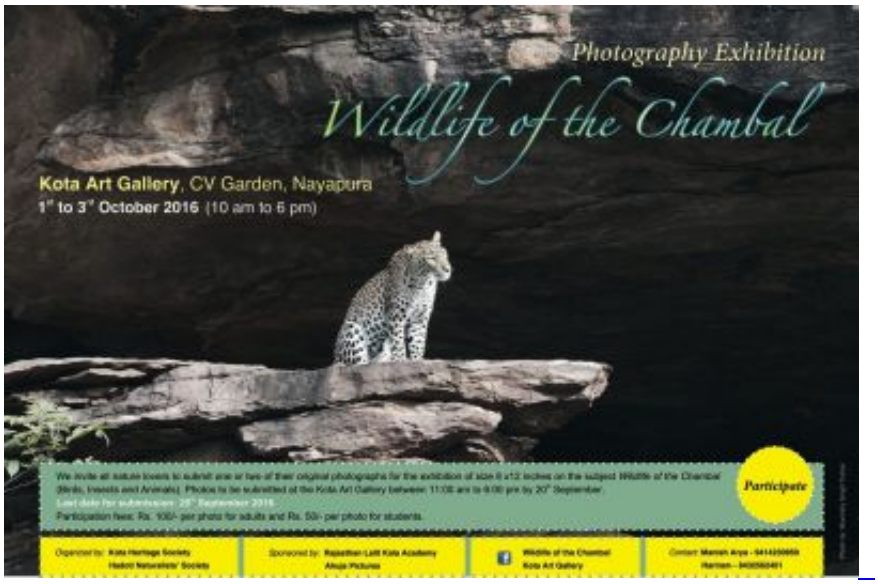
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Click on any thumbnail above to view full size photographs in a new window.

Art Workshop on Saturday, 28th January 2017

This third Schools Art Exhibition was for out-of-school children and special groups. British artist Elizabeth Simson ran a workshop in which ten groups painted canvases - using acrylic paint - to be hung in the Government Hospital as part of our Hospital Art Project.

Wildlife of the Chambal Photographic Exhibition

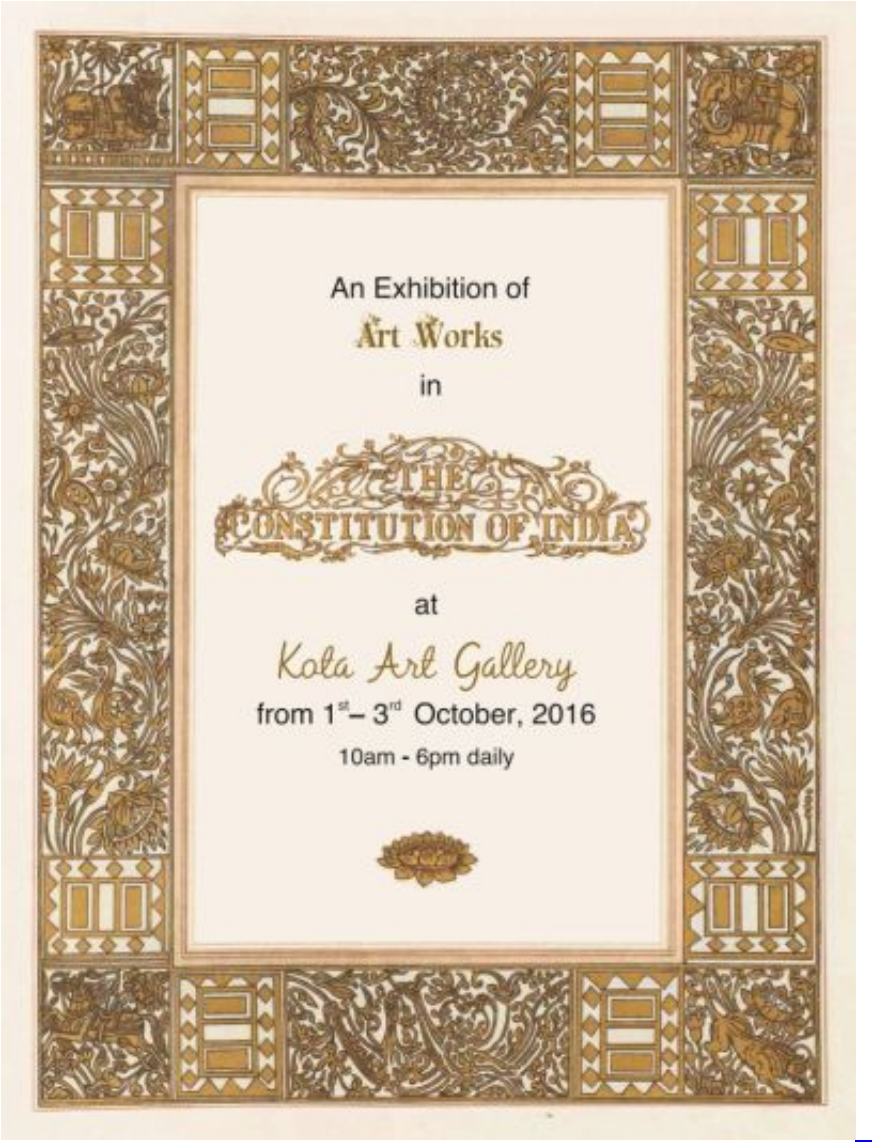


---- Click to enlarge ----

The exhibition ran from 1st - 3rd October, 2016, 10am to 6pm daily.

This year's successful photographic exhibition was run jointly with Hadoti Naturalists Society. At the same time we ran a fascinating exhibition about the art works in the Constitution of India, which is available for hire elsewhere.

An Exhibition of Art Works in the Constitution of India



Venue: Kota Art Gallery, CV Gardens, Nayapura, Kota.

Seventh Generation of Hancocks



Click to enlarge

On 2nd July, 2016, Frank Hancock came to Kota and introduced his eldest daughter, Eliza, to the spiritual haunt of her ancestor the 21 year-old Lt. Charles Hancock who died on 14th April, 1858 of wounds received at the retaking of Kotah from the rebels.

Frank is the sixth generation of Hancocks to live and work in India. Eliza had come with a friend from her home in Ireland to backpack around Rajasthan and we hope her visit marks the beginning of a lifelong association with Kota.

Congratulations!



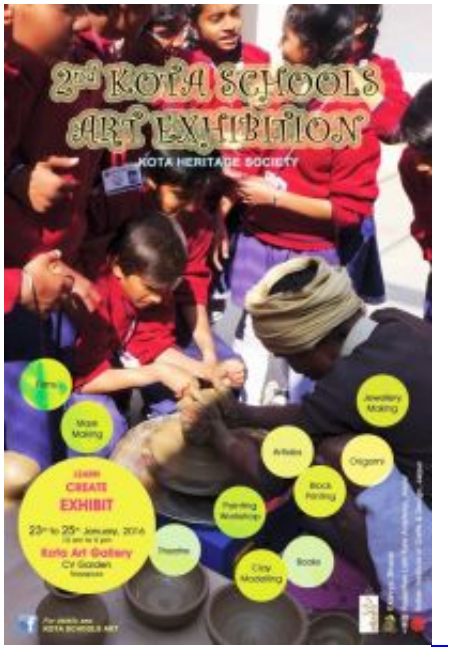
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Our youngest member Palash, Madan and Rekha's son, came to the AGM held on 17th April, 2016. Palash was born on 26th February, 2016.

Palash is the tree *Flame of the Forest*, and he is wearing an outfit in exactly the right colour. The *palash* blooms are at their best in February-March.

Our congratulations to Madan and Rekha on the birth of their first child.

2nd Kota Schools Art Exhibition - A Great Success



Groups of school students from eleven different schools and NGO's and numerous individuals came to the Kota Art Gallery between 23rd January and 25th January. They could choose to have a go at pottery, pebble painting, mask making with plaster of paris bandages, panel painting, block printing, jewellery making with seeds, origami, Russian guardian angel cloth doll making and *Artlabs* run by NGO *Sachetan*. Artlabs opened the eyes of everyone to the possibility of creating something beautiful from plastic waste.

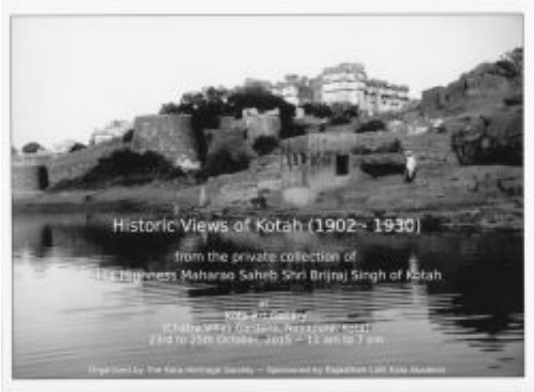
There was a bookstall by *Eklavya* from Bhopal and drama by student groups. This year all activities were free and the KHS members and other workshop leaders gave generously of their time for three days. The students created the art work to be exhibited on the final day.

The Indian Institute of Craft and Design in Jaipur provided staff and students for some of the activities. The use of the gallery was sponsored by Rajasthan Lalit Kala Akademi and Ahuja Pictures kindly lent the display boards.

The panels created during the exhibition have been donated to the local children's hospital (see latest news). For a variety of photographs of the exhibition see the *facebook* pages *Kota Art Gallery* and *Kota Schools Art Exhibition*.

A major purpose of the art exhibition was to reinforce the belief that school aged students should be in schools catering to their all round development. Our Chief Guest at the closing ceremony Rear Admiral (Retd.) Vineet Bakshi, *VSM,* a trustee of Bakshi Schools reiterated the importance of holistic education and a wide choice of careers.

Historic Views of Kotah (1902 - 1930)



---- Click to enlarge ----

This was a very special exhibition of photographs from the private collection of HH Maharao Saheb Shri Brijraj Singh of Kotah.

From the panoramic views of the City Palace, fortifications and the Chambal to the everday street and river scenes, the exhibition will enthral the visitor with a visual journey from 1902 to 1930 during the reign of Maharao Umed Singh II of Kotah (1889 - 1940).

The exhibition ran from 23rd - 25th October, 2015, 11 am to 7 pm daily. Her Highness Maharani Saheba Shirmati Uttara Devi of Kotah kindly inaugurated the exhibition.

Birds and Insects of the Chambal



---- Click to enlarge ----

The exhibition ran from 23rd - 25th October, 2015, 11 am to 7 pm daily.

A record number of photographers submitted original photographs of birds and/or insects for display at the exhibition.

Intangible Heritage



Click to enlarge

1st International Yoga Day was observed throughout the world on Sunday, 21st June 2015 and I was called to Shriram Rayons at 6.15 am to receive a cheque for one lakh rupees for Madan's work on recording, transcribing and publishing Hadoti's rich traditions of oral literature. We are currently working on "*Mataji ki Jas*" in praise of Durga (although different versions of Tejaji are also being recorded). Some of the money will be utilised to buy field recording equipment.

One could claim that the link between yoga and oral literature is that they are both part of India's intangible heritage.

We hope that Shriram will continue to support this aspect of our work. The cheque was presented by Vice-President Mr. V.K. Jaitly.

Thank you Shriram.

(Victoria Singh)



Click to enlarge

The Secretary's Visit



Click to enlarge

The Secretary of Lalit Kala Akademi, which owns the Kota Art Gallery, drove down from Jaipur on 19th June, 2015 expressly to visit the Gallery and to assess its situation. Sovali Mathur, dressed fortuitously in a lotus pink sari, is standing in the amphitheatre in front of the Lotus Pond.

She showed great interest and we are hopeful of some funding and improvements. KHS has taken the lead in looking after the Gallery and promoting it. There is a *Facebook* page devoted to "*Kota Art Gallery*" which aims to spread awareness of activities in the Gallery.

Sponsored Children's Painting Workshop



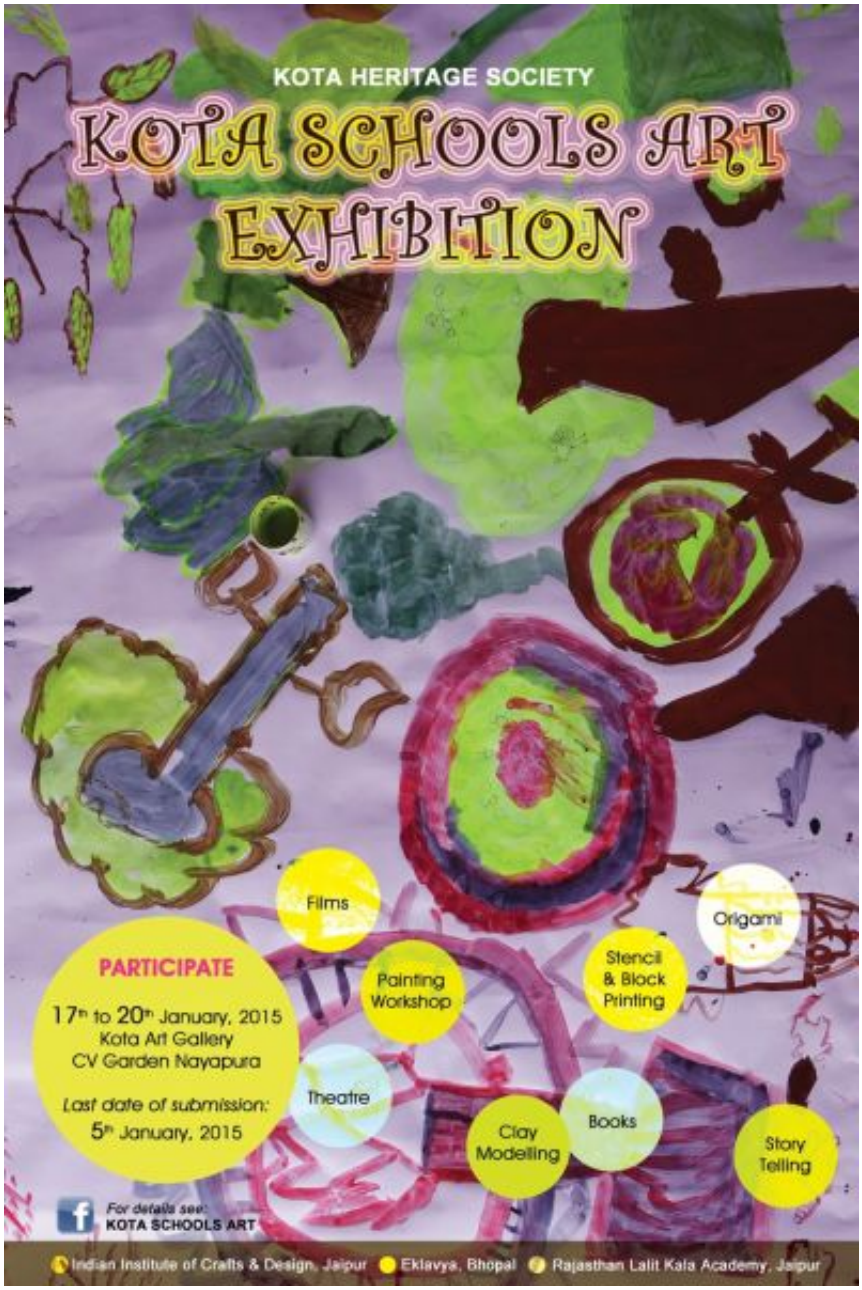
Our last event of the winter was a painting workshop for school students sponsored by Saarthi Credit Co-operative Society Ltd. on 22nd March, 2015 at the Kota Art Gallery. We now have seven colourful canvases to hang in the government hospitals to cheer-up the patients.

These four Class 11 girls travelled for two hours by bus to participate. Their art teacher brought 12 students on a Sunday. Art is the only subject available as a specialisation in their government secondary school. Their fathers are mainly agricultural labourers and small holders whose crops have been ruined in the recent hail storm.

Kota Schools Art Exhibition

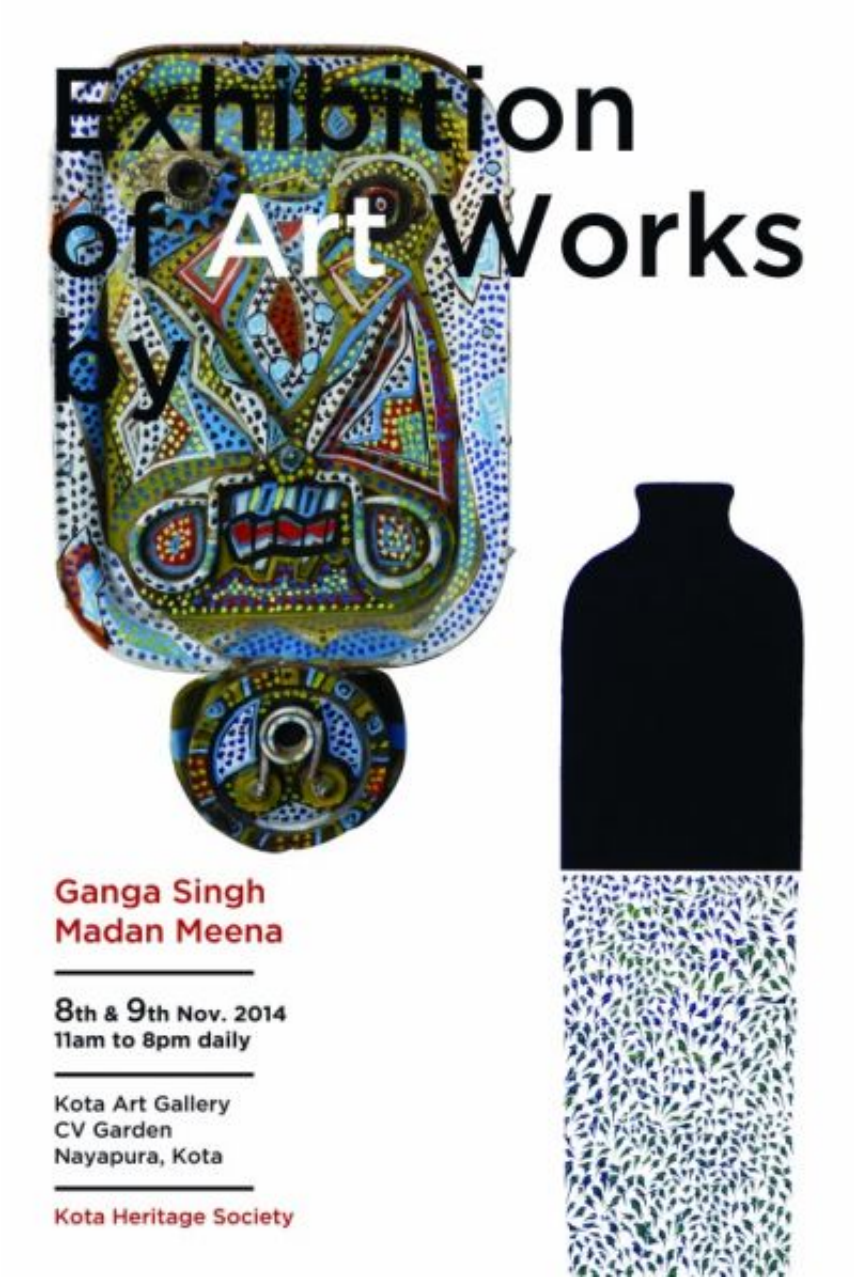
The highly successful, first-ever, ***"Kota Schools Art Exhibition"*** was organised under the auspices of Kota Heritage Society, in association with the *Indian Institute of Crafts and Design, Jaipur*, at the Kota Art Gallery from 17th to 20th January, 2015.

You can find lots more information and feel the energy of the event at *Kota Schools Art* on Facebook.



"Exhibition of Art Works" - Ganga Singh & Madan Meena

The exhibition attracted many visitors and was declared a success. In addition, on the sidelines there was a talk by Ashok and Deepika Hazra on their paintings in the evening of the 8th which saw many admirers and former students turn up for an engrossing talk and slide show. On the 9th Rakesh Vyas signed a limited number of his book "Birds of Rajasthan;" this was followed by a very interesting and thought provoking talk on the reasons why the vulture population had declined.



"Birds and Insects of the Chambal" - Exhibition of Photographs



Click to enlarge

Following the success of last year's photographic exhibition "Birds of the Chambal," the year 2014 saw a shift in focus to local insects as well by calling this year's exhibition *"Birds and Insects of the Chambal."*

The exhibition was held in the *Kota Art Gallery* from 4th October to 6th October to celebrate *Wildlife Week*. Everyone was invited to participate and we mounted and framed a maximum of two suitable photographs submitted in a 8" x 12" format by each entrant. There were about 50 entrants.

The exhibition was opened by the *Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Kota University Prof. Madhusudan Sharma*.

Dr. Nita Jain along with *Dr. Kusum Dang,* both of whom lecture at Government College, Kota, gave a presentation at 6.30pm on Saturday, 4th October on *"The Amazing World of Insects"* with special reference to Hadoti. A select but enthusiastic group was present. On Monday, 6th October at 10.00am they also held a special session for schools on this same topic, which was very well attended.

Tapeshwar Singh in association with the *Forest Department* organised an insect spotting trek on Sunday morning on 5th October. In the evening at 6.30pm, *Tapeshwar*, who is also the President of *Mukundra Wildlife and Environment Society*, along with other members of the society, gave a short presentation on *"The First Kota District Waterfowl Census 2013."* Following this presentation, *Urva Sharma* gave a wonderful talk and slide presentation based on her vast personal experience on using flash photography using automatic cameras to survey animals in the wild. She related some fascinating incidents that she and her colleagues encountered while conducting these surveys. *Urva* is from Kota and her work takes her to all parts of the country.

This year's exhibition was sponsored by *Digital World* and *Ahuja Pictures*, and art activities by *St. Joseph's e-School*. We are very lucky to have the patronage of our sponsors.

This exhibition is also on facebook !!!

Dr. Murray Salder's Descendants Visit from South Africa



This year we arranged our AGM around the visit of a group of eight South Africans, five of whom were connected to the assistant surgeon Dr. Murray Salder, who was murdered in the Residency compound by the rebels on 15th October, 1857.

The Titch Tours group hosted a lunch at Sukhdham Kothi on Friday 21st March for some KHS members. And then we showed them around Kota which included a visit to the British Cemetery, the likely last resting place of Dr. Salder.

On Saturday the 22nd , we arranged a tour of Kota's fortifications by cycle rickshaw, and then we had our AGM while the Group explored Bundi. The Group joined us for tea afterwards, and here Pat Patterson is presenting $530 to the society.



For more photographs, go to the *"British Cemetery Kota"* link.

Educational Status Survey of Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes of Rajasthan



A national survey of de-notified tribes is being carried out under the auspices of KHS for the state of Rajasthan. The funds for this survey are being channelled and disbursed through us to ensure proper accounting of all expenditure.

Sixteen people, mainly from the nomadic and semi-nomadic communities that they are surveying, came together in September 2013 at Sukhdham Kothi for a training weekend. The government would like to know their educational status, experience of schooling or lack of it and their aspirations. The nomadic communities being surveyed in Rajasthan are: *Bhat, Gadia Lohar, Multani, Kalbelia and Raika (Rabari)*. The other tribes specified were *Baori, Kanjar, Mogia, Nut and Saansi*. We added *Bagaria* which is a very poor broom making tribe.

Between 125 and 250 families from each community are being covered depending on its size. A de-notified tribe is one which was notified as "criminal" by the British and then de-notified at Independence, but they are still referred to as "denotified" which perpetuates the stigma.



Training Weekend at Sukhdham Kothi

(For more information please look at the Educational Status... survey link under Heritage Projects.)

"Birds of the Chambal" - Exhibition of Photographs



Click to enlarge

To celebrate *Wildlife Week* we invited local amateur photographers, including school children, to submit two photographs each on the theme *"Birds of the Chambal."* We had photographs from over thirty different people and these were framed thanks to sponsorship from *Ahuja Pictures*, and displayed from 2nd of October to the 4th of October at the Kota Art Gallery.

There were wildlife films each evening and workshops and interactive events during the day. We wanted to encourage Kota residents to appreciate the varied and colourful birds in the area and to be more aware of the effects of litter and pollution in waterbodies on local birdlife.

Tears of Dancing Letters - A film about calligraphy



At our 2013 Annual Monsoon Meeting we screened the film **"Tears of Dancing Letters,"** a documentary about calligraphy. This gentle and thought provoking film was made by Kota film enthusiast Sarvesh Singh Hada, who was there to discuss the film and answer questions. It was in Hindi and English with English subtitles.

This was an enjoyable occasion and was followed by tea thanks to Sukhdham and those who contributed food. We were able to welcome Madan's wife, Rekha, who is next to him in this photograph.

Second Eye Camp for Women Weavers

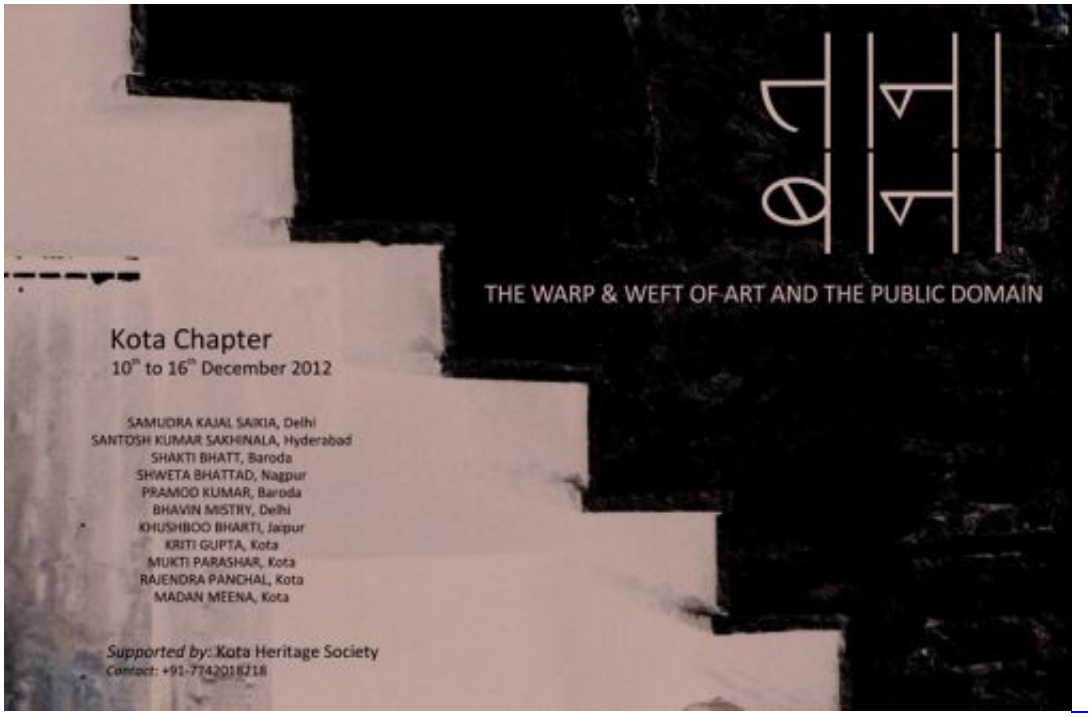


Dr. Raj Kumar and patients

A second eye camp was held on Sunday 24th March at Sister Aurora's St. Clare Seva Sadan in Kaithoon. This time the glasses were subsidised rather than completely free and 100 weavers received spectacles.

In this picture some of the women are listening to Dr. Raj Kumar of Emmanuel Mission advising them on eye care.

Tana Bana - The Warp and Weft of Art and the Public Domain



(Click on image to enlarge)

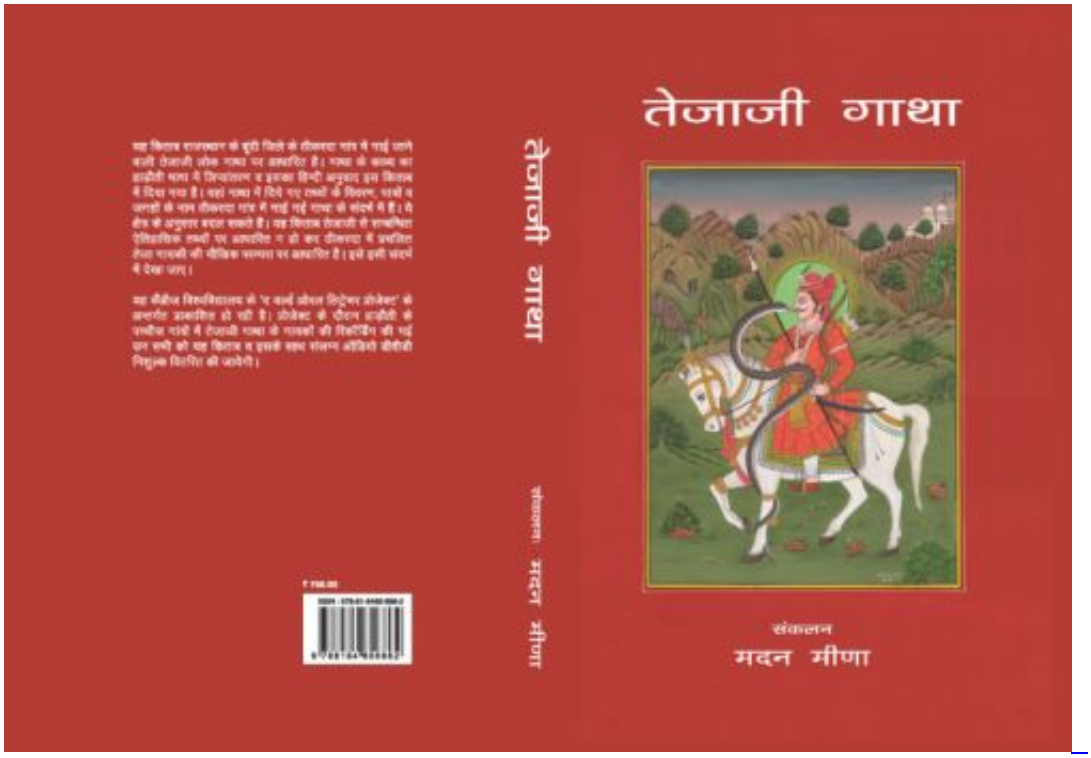
Kota Heritage Society was recently associated with the Tana Bana project.

Udaan - A Short Film Festival - 2012



Kota Heritage Society was very happy to be associated with Kota's first short film festival which was held at the *Kota Arts Centre* on 9th and 10th June.

Tejaji Book Launch



Tejaji Gatha book cover (click on pic to enlarge) (ISBN 978-81-8465-686-2)

Tejaji Gatha, the ballad of Tejaji, was launched at the Thikarda shrine near Bundi on Wednesday 15th February 2012. The book launch was a very memorable and colourful event. The musicians sang for two-to-three hours and the *bhopa* attained a state of trance. Maharaja Rajendra Singh Dugari received the first copy of the book, and KHS member Frances Yeowart received the next two on behalf of Cambridge University. Over forty copies were presented to the musicians and other local people who helped with the book and the recordings. The presentation was followed by a *dal bati churma* feast provided by Madan Meena for the musicians and guests.

Each book contains the transcription of the entire ballad in *Hadoti* and a 19-hour audio DVD. By a happy coincidence, four British members of KHS were there.

Copies of the book are available for Rs.750, or Rs.500 to members. Part of the sale proceeds will go to KHS to finance Madan's recordings of other versions of the Tejaji Gatha.

Hancock Commemorative Bench



Hancock Bench (click on pic to enlarge)

The Hancock commemorative bench was finally delivered, inscribed and placed in position at the British Cemetery. It commemorates Lt. Charles Hancock who died on 14th April, 1858 of wounds received during the retaking of Kotah. It also commemorates all those who lost their lives in the 1857-58 Kotah Uprisings.

BACSA gave a grant of 200 GBP which was used for painting the area around the gate and for some planting work. But the six bottle palms planted have died mysteriously during the monsoon and we must think again.

Jharu Katha Documentary



"Jharu Katha" DVD Cover (click on pic to enlarge)

We were privileged to premiere "Jharu Katha" a film by Navroze Contractor, the renowned documentary maker at Sukhdham Kothi in August 2011. "Jharu Katha" or "Broom Stories" gives a fascinating insight into the lives of broom makers. This film is now available on DVD and can be purchased through KHS using our contact form on this website.

Madan Meena is the Assistant Director of the film.

Visitors to this Website

Visitors are presented with interesting information about the Society, but will be able to access all the features on being accepted as a member.

Members

Members please login to access additional information.