

## PRESS RELEASE

Wed 22 April 2009  
For immediate release



# An(other) Story

## Folk and Tribal Art from India

Curated by David Schischka Thomas and Saleem Arif Quadri MBE

**Dates:** Saturday 2 May - Sunday 19 July 2009

**Preview Event:** Friday 1 May 2009, 6pm to 9pm

**Opening Times:** Mon to Fri 10am - 7pm, Sat 10am - 5pm, Sun 11am - 4pm

**Admission:** Free

For the first time in the United Kingdom, the **New Art Exchange (NAE)**, Nottingham launches an inspiring and historic exhibition showcasing Folk and Tribal art from India. **An(other) Story** is the first collective exhibition of its kind in the UK, combining multiple art forms from all over India.

An(other) Story brings together a show of Indian arts and crafts from British collections and new commissions from India. The exhibition explores the diversity of artistic styles and techniques, which have been embraced for centuries throughout India. The visibility of Indian Folk and Tribal artists within the wider world started with art created by women who lived in villages near the market town of Madhubani / Mithila, Bihar in northern India.

What led these women painters to share their work with the world was a major ecological and economic crisis that resulted from a prolonged drought in 1966-68. In order to create a new source of non-agricultural income, the All-India Handicrafts Board encouraged the women artists to produce their traditional paintings on handmade paper for commercial sale. This 'design intervention' has been a major reason for the survival and revival of folk and tribal arts ever since.

Key themes that have been explored by these pieces of art are:

- The importance of women; and the woman's role in society
- Widely prevalent social issues including women in difficult circumstances, poverty, sexual health, AIDS
- Marriage proposals, and courting - as instigated by women
- Exploring and interpretation of western culture, including relationships, movies such as *Titanic*, Osama Bin Laden and terrorism
- Positivism through art

This exhibition in Nottingham is the first significant exhibition of Folk, Tribal and Intuitive art from India to take place in the UK, bringing together an extensive collection of established artists into one space. Many of these art works tell stories about social and political events affecting the lives of villagers in India. These diverse yet topical themes include: HIV/AIDS, tsunami, terrorism, and women's healthcare. Traditionally Folk, Tribal and

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Intuitive art has been produced by women as part of seasonal and religious festivals, often on the walls of their houses.

The sympathetic interest of the Indian government and other cultural organisations brought about a proliferation of work which continues today.

As Mahatma Gandhi said:

*“Our people have inherited great talents. Our way of life is imbued with the sense of beauty. Our women paint on the walls naturally. Our craftsmen know how to make with their hands everything that we have in India. If we have faith in them, they can perform miracles.”*

An(other) Story will explore work that uses narrative to reflect a world that is fast changing and perhaps (might be) disappearing too, allowing the audience to connect with the journey the work has taken and the future ahead, engaging in a story that has not been touched upon in a contemporary British space before.

To complement **An(other) Story** The New Art Exchange will be exhibiting textiles from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in the Mezzanine gallery, as well as holding a series of educational workshops, and arts events. Further details on these can be found on the New Art Exchange website.

Our partners on the exhibition include Nottingham City Council, Nottingham Asian Arts Council, Paramparik Karigar and Gujarat Samaj, Nottingham. An(other) Story has been funded by Arts Council England and New Art Exchange.

- Ends -

**For further press information please contact - Raam Tarat, Marketing and Communications Manager - Freelance, T: 0115 924 8630, M: 07944 271979, E: [raam.tarat@thenewartexchange.org.uk](mailto:raam.tarat@thenewartexchange.org.uk)**

### Notes to Editors

#### Exhibition

- **Dates:** Saturday 2 May to Sunday 19 July 2009
- **Opening Times:** 10am - 7pm daily, except Saturday 10am - 5pm, Sunday 11am - 4pm
- There will be a series of events and workshops supporting the exhibition, including arts; handicrafts and dance
- **Admission to the exhibition, events, education and outreach is FREE.**

#### Preview

- **The Private View takes place on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May, 6pm till 9pm.** There will be a live DJ playing *Indian Soundscapes*, and refreshments will be provided.
- For **press interviews with David Thomas and Saleem Arif Quadri** prior to the launch, please contact Raam Tarat to arrange this.

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### Curators

*Saleem Arif Quadri MBE* has a long career as an exhibiting artist, both nationally and internationally. He has exhibited in numerous solo shows and was part of the seminal exhibition: 'The Other Story', Hayward Gallery, 1989. He has his work placed in many collections including the Tate Gallery, London and the Arts Council of England.

His numerous research visits to India have ignited an ambition to curate exhibitions in Europe of little seen Indian art. He was the curator of the successful touring exhibition Kanu Gandhi's Mahatma, a photographic exhibition of Mahatma Gandhi. He was honoured with an MBE for his services to the arts in 2009.

*David Schischka Thomas* is the senior curator for the New Art Exchange. As well as the successful exhibitions so far at the NAE, including the major commission by Zineb Sedira 'Floating Coffins', he has curated many exhibitions and commissioned work by artists such as: Samson Kambalu, Keith Piper, Shaheen Merali and Chila Kumari Burman.

He has visited India on many research visits and has grown to admire the work produced by people within rural India.

### Education

- In support of these exhibitions, NAE is working closely with **education and outreach** practitioners, presenting a free programme based around the residual themes of *An(other) Story*.
- A series of **educational workshops** will take place with local artists, as well as artists from India this Summer. For further information on this, please contact us on [education@thenewartexchange.org.uk](mailto:education@thenewartexchange.org.uk) or 0115 924 8630.

### New Art Exchange

- **New Art Exchange** launched with the venue with the opening of its inaugural exhibition, **Next We Change Earth** on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2008.
- **New Art Exchange was awarded £5million** of funding from Arts Council England, Nottingham City Council, the Greater Nottingham Partnership, East Midlands Development Agency, Radford and Hyson Green New Deal for Communities, and European Regional Development Funding, and took 18 months to build. The organisation was a big winner in Arts Council England's the January 2008 review of national arts funding gaining a 58% increase in its annual funding grant. The award was made in recognition of the organisation's vital role in supporting visual and performing arts.
- **The building designed by architects Hawkins \ Brown**, boasts 5 -storey building provides 1360 sqm space dedicated to visual arts with; galleries, workshop/performance/rehearsal space, artists in residence facilities, and a cafe. Distinguished from the red clay buildings of the neighborhood by its black brick façade and arrangement of frameless windows ranging in size (from 0.16 sqm to 4.84sqm), offers incidental and unexpected views into and out of the building.
- **Mission:** *The New Art Exchange's ambition is to become a national centre of excellence promoting contemporary arts development within the cultural and creative industries, to deliver an innovative and exciting programme of activity to promote, support and advocate contemporary multi-cultural arts development in visual and performing arts and new media. To be a cultural centre led by African, African Caribbean and South Asian arts practice. To serve an international community from roots firmly embedded in the local area.*