A Framework for Training in Art Conservation

Under the Trust’s Art Conservation Initiative, two training courses in conservation of specific materials (Oil Paintings and Stone) were successfully completed by year end 2021, this quarter saw the commencement of the third Training Course in Conservation of Paper (Prints, Drawings, Maps) at Museum of Art and Photography, Bangalore, giving momentum to the initiative towards achieving its outcome of training art conservators in specific materials. The newsletter highlights facets from the two completed training courses that hopes to build a directory of trained conservators, faculty and pedagogy related to art conservation training.

The newsletter also highlights some past projects supported by the Trusts: read about the challenges and innovative solutions to architectural conservation works carried out between 2012-2020 at the Qutb Shahi Heritage Park in Hyderabad, where nine major monuments were conserved; the set up of a paper conservation lab at Roja Muthiah Research Library, Chennai carried out between 2015-2017; and watch Abeer Gupta and Latika Gupta in conversation on a project at IGRMS, Bhopal where Abeer was an IFA fellow under the Archival and Museum Fellowships initiative.

The new year began with our worlds being upended one more time as the Omicron variant spread across the globe. However, it offered some respite with quick recoveries for a majority of the cases. While this third wave led to the postponement of some project activities, plans were back on track by the end of the first quarter of the year.

From the Arts and Culture Archives...

Through a 2-year grant from 2015-17, Tata Trusts supported the Roja Muthiah Research Library (RML) to establish a paper conservation unit, train conservators and conserve over 5,000 pages where 70,000 pages were conserved. The oldest book conserved was a religious text titled “Thiruporur Sannidhimurai”, published in 1839.

Founded in 1994, RML seeks to preserve, catalog and expand the collection of Roja Muthiah—a signboard artist and eclectic bibliophile who, through the latter half of the 20th century, collected over 1,00,000 print materials related to Tamil culture. Today RML boasts of a collection of more than 4,00,000 items.

Conservation efforts at the Qutb Shahi Heritage Park, Hyderabad

Tata Trust’s partnership with the Asia Khan Trust for Culture for the conservation of nine major monuments in the Qutb Shahi Heritage Park, Hyderabad, has established benchmarks in India’s heritage conservation efforts.

A presentation by Abeer Gupta, a fellow under India Foundation for the Arts (IFA)’s Archival and Museum Fellowships, supported by Tata Trusts, discusses his curatorial intervention in the Ladhaki Kitchen at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal.

This session was presented as part of IFA’s Project Showcase where they curate dialogues around projects they have supported. They are presented here.

Old Routes, New Journeys

A participant conservator undertaking manual surface cleaning of an oil painting during the 3-month Training Course in Conservation of Oil Paintings, hosted by Kolkata Institute of Art Conservation, under the Tata Trusts Art Conservation Initiative.