

Living Lightly

Journeys with Pastoralists

Exhibition Report, Ahmedabad
5th-8th October 2017



LIVING LIGHTLY



Journeys with Pastoralists

Curatorial Team

Lead Curator
Sushma Iyengar

Co-curators
Carole Douglas
Kudraj Ji Kalaayi
Craft Narratives
Meera Goradia
Saanjha Bazaar

Curators
Shabnam Virmani & Vipul Rikhi
Rooh Ji Rehaan
Music & Poetry
Sanjay Barnela
Someplace Else

Design Team

Oroon Das, Surajit Ranjan Das
& Sarah Kaushik
Supported by Vyom Mehta
Exhibition
Design Habit
Film Exhibit
Smriti Chanchani
Film & Graphics

Coordinator
Shouryamoy Das

Curatorial Anchor
Aarati Halbe

Website: www.livinglightly.in

Coverpage & Back Photo by Ritayan Mukherjee

This report has been prepared with inputs drawn from:

Shouryamoy Das
Sandeep Virmani
Sushma Iyengar
Vasant Saberwal

Picture Credits:

Smriti Chanchani
Nipun Prabhakar

Design & Layout:

Bhawna Jaimini

Organised by



Centre for Pastoralism

Supported by



Government of India, Ministry of Culture

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
The Green Political Foundation



adani
Adani Solar



“

यही है मालधारी

सबसे प्यारे हमको बादल हैं
और उनकी बूंदों की झड़ी
लेकिन यह भी वक्त आया
जब बारिश न रकी
और ढा दिए गाँव के सात बच्चे
और सात सौ गाय
तब भी हमने बनाए रखी
अपने दिलों की दिलेरी
चलते गिरना, गिर के उठना
फिर चलना, यही है मालधारी

किसी राजा ने दी चारागाह के लिए जमीन
तो किसी जुल्मी ने हमें मार पीट भगाया
हमने तो दी सब को दिल से दुआएं
और जानी दुश्मन को भी गले से लगाया
रखते हैं लोग भरोसा हम पे और हम उन पे
क्योंकि हमने किया है कुदरत से वादा
दुनिया के जंजाल हमको रास नहीं आते
हमको तो प्यारा है अपना जीवन सीधा साधा
ज्ञान विज्ञान का जमाना है भाई,
सुधर जाओलोग कहते हैं,

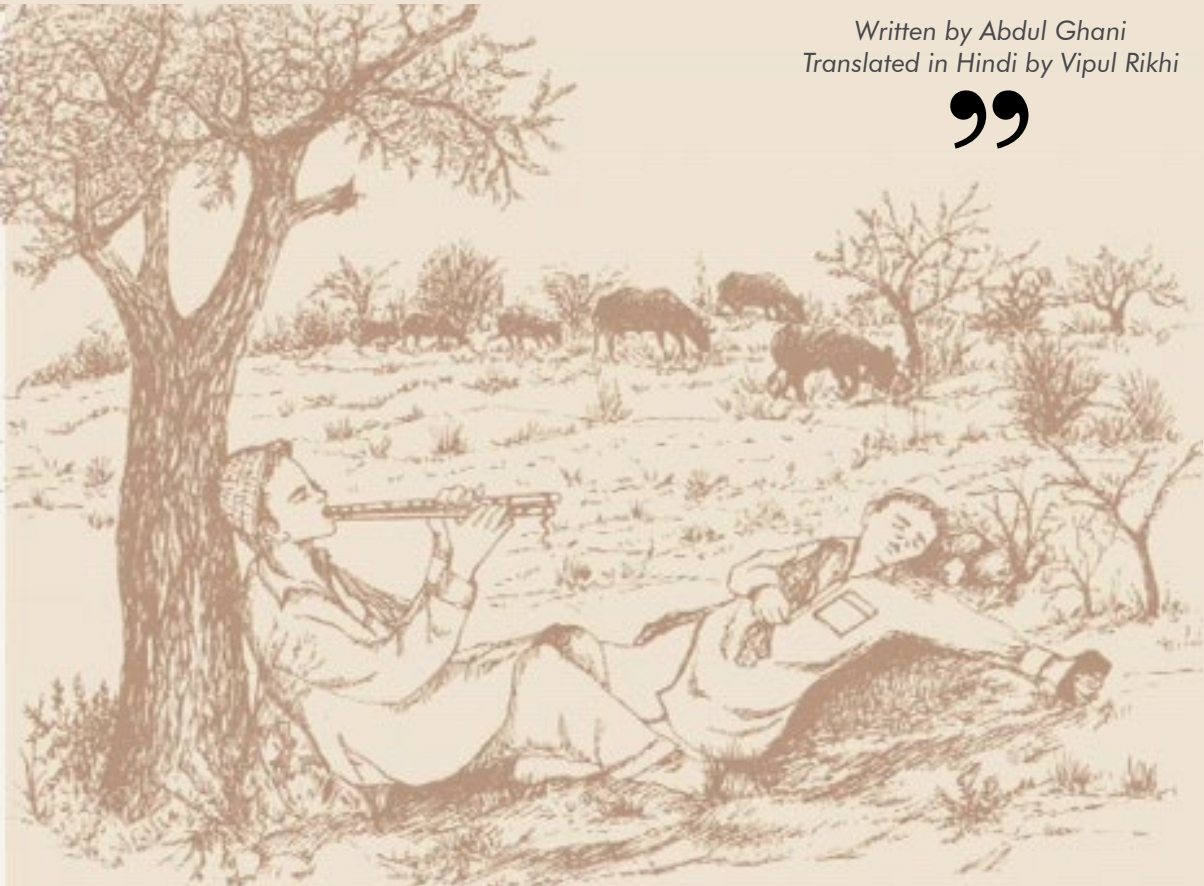
कब तक चलोगे पुराने ख्याल पे?
सच है, दुनिया चढ़ गयी चाँद और मंगल
हम अब भी चल रहे गाय-भैंस की चाल पे
कोई न लाया चाँद से दूध और मखन
बाजार तो चल रहे अपने ही माल पे
तो हमने कहा भाई तुम ही सुधर जाओ
और चारागाहों को रखो सभाल के
कला और कसब का संग
कहानी और लोक गीत का रंग
सुरों में बांसुरी और चंग
ऐसे ही करते रहेंगे हम सत्संग

चलते गिरना, गिर के उठना
मालधारियों की फितरत है
नवसजरन की शक्ति जो रखती
हमको पालती वो कुदरत है
परकृति, पशु, परिंदे और परेम्
इन सब में हम सहमत हैं
मालधारी रहेंगे तब तक
जब तक कुदरत की रहमत है

Written by Abdul Ghani
Translated in Hindi by Vipul Rikhi

”

Illustration by Sushama Durve



Contents

4

About The Exhibition

Organiser's Note
Curator's Note
Inaugural Note

10

Exhibits

Vathaan
Kudrat ji Kalayi

26

Performances

Rooh Ji Rehaan
Dastaangoi

30

Activities

Craft Workshops
Pastoral Food & Workshops
Sanjha Bazaar
Film Screenings

36

Conversations

Livelihoods Consultation
Breed Conference
FRA Workshop

44

Media

Organiser's Note

By Vasant Saberwal
Director, Centre for Pastoralism

During the Living Lightly exhibition in Delhi, in 2016, there was a suggestion that an organization be established with a mandate to undertake focused work on pastoralism and its many associated issues. Sahjeevan, with its extensive experience of working with pastoralist communities in Kutch, Gujarat, offered to host such an organization, and Sahjeevan's Centre for Pastoralism duly came into being. The Centre may choose to hive off as a separate organization in the months and years to come, but that is in the future.

CfP sees itself as a facilitator and hopes to collaborate with NGOs, universities, government and the private sector on a range of initiatives to revitalize Pastoralism. While we initiate research aimed at improving our understanding of these systems, we are also identifying approaches that might improve returns from pastoral livelihoods; we also hope to harvest our learning from both research and programmatic interventions to work with policymakers, school and college students and with society at large, towards building an enabling policy environment that is more supportive of pastoralist livelihoods and lifestyles. Ultimately, through much of what CfP does, we hope to engage with the younger generation pastoralists who are moving away from pastoralism, increasingly disenchanted with a way of life that is seen as having

less and less relevance in India today.

Living Lightly has now had its second edition, this time in Ahmedabad. In late 2018, we hope to host this exhibition in Bangalore, with a far greater focus on North Karnataka's rich pastoral heritage. And sometime in 2019, we anticipate that Living Lightly will travel to the Himalayas, to showcase the myriad ways in which pastoralism has developed up north.

Living Lightly remains our most significant platform for outreach and enables us to connect with a wide range of audiences. More than any other aspect of our work, Living Lightly demonstrates the remarkable ways in which pastoralists live, and how pastoral livelihoods intersect across landscapes, geographies, cultures and economies. We hope something in all of this touches you. Do not hesitate to contact us, should you wish to share your work and thoughts, or wish to advance an idea we simply haven't thought about!

Illustration by Sushama Durve

Lead Curator's Note

By Sushma Iyengar

After its launch on the sprawling grounds of Delhi's IGNCAs in December 2016, the exhibition moved to Ahmedabad and found an iconic venue in the Mill Owners Association building. The building, with its strikingly long central ramp, stretched out like a camel's neck, sprang alive with visitors and pastoralists who thronged the second edition of Living Lightly. Through four very warm days in October, exhibits and stories of pastoralism revealed themselves from the overhanging ledges, shade screens, and grand pillared halls of this modern structure which was designed by the renowned Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier in 1954.

While retaining most of the exhibits from the first edition, we added a section on grasses to celebrate this life force of Pastoralism - the 'low-born and low-dwelling' one as Kahlil Gibran's put it -

*Said a blade of grass to an autumn leaf,
"You make such a noise falling!
You scatter all my winter dreams."
Said the leaf indignant,
"Low-born and low-dwelling!
Songless, peevish thing!
You live not in the upper air and
you cannot tell the sound of
singing."
Then the autumn leaf lay down
upon the earth and slept.
And when spring came she waked
again—and she was a blade of
grass
-Kahlil Gibran*

I owe it to Abdullah kaka, an old herder from Banni - Asia's

largest grassland - who inspired this exhibit on grasses. This man, with a face both ancient and childlike from years of herding, unravelled for me the large kingdom of biodiverse species of grasses, dicots and legumes, each with a distinct flavour and taste - a sumptuous 'thali' for the herding animals! It is believed that grasslands, nourished and fed by the dung droppings of the animals, are the most productive ecosystem on the subcontinent and in fact, the essential foodplate for India's 35 million herding animals who, in turn, feed us. So in this exhibition, we chose to highlight the wondrous world of our vanishing grasslands.

Through the visualised narratives, visitors perhaps caught a whiff of what life looks like when it is lived in shared spaces - whether it is pastoralists governing their grasslands together or collectively conserving the genetic stock of their breeds. But we also tried to take a peek into the extremely solitary nature of the herding activity, which has led to some of the most extraordinary creative impulses amongst pastoralists. So once again we celebrated the cultural expressions of pastoralists in Kutch - through song, text, image and film - all of which have been shaped by the pastoralist's seemingly paradoxical life of shared space and solitude.

It is equally important though, that these aspects are not romanticised or disjointed from the political economy and ecology

of pastoralism. For instance, the range of poetic oral expressions, mystic tales and craft skills linked with the shearing of sheep wool across all communities of sheep herders in India, cannot be disassociated from the dismal decline in the procurement, processing and markets for local sheep wool. The range of consultations, held on the sidelines of the exhibition, did precisely this - where pastoralists, government representatives, and sectoral experts came together to negotiate some of the stubborn issues and growing struggles of pastoralists.

Taking advantage of the varied and vibrant student community in Ahmedabad, the exhibition was preceded by university talks and performances on pastoralism, as pre-events which reached out to young amдавadis. And we were delighted to see the venue fill each day with the chatter, curiosity, candid critiques and comments of students from universities across the city.

It was even more heartening to see pastoralists and herders from the margins of Ahmedabad come to claim their own space in the exhibition. They came, sat around, checked out the exhibition, conversed with other fellow herders from other States, and left by taking some of the pastoralists to their homes for dinner - heartfelt connections and exchanges that gave this effort its true worth and warmth.



Inaugural Note

By Sandeep Virmani

The Inaugural function began with the Jodia-pava, a double flute, that serenaded guests into the inaugural event. The instrument played by Noor Mohammad, is typical and unique to pastoralists of Kutch and Sindh.

The chief guest Jaya Jaitly, and the Guests of Honour Shri Vasant Gadhvi, Hartingaramji Raika and Jasuben Rabari, inaugurated the exhibition with a unique Khuta ceremony, practiced by pastoralists in many parts of Gujarat. A large Khuta - wooden nail - was hammered into the ground, symbolising the establishment of a temporary herding camp where the herds stop for a night - the nail which holds up a tent, and to which the animals are sometimes tethered in the night.

Sushma Iyengar, the lead curator of the exhibition, welcomed the guests and spoke of the quiet and light world of pastoralists, who create wealth in unison with nature, often showing us ways to live in our stressed times of climate change and globalised wealth. The exhibition, she said, was inspired by the possibilities that pastoralism holds for our future, even as it celebrates one of the oldest livelihoods in human history, and seeks to create a better understanding of their contemporary struggles. Jasuben Rabari and Hartingaramji both pastoralists from Kutch and Madhya Pradesh respectively, invited the audience to step into their lives for a short while. They took the visitors on a roller coaster ride through their stories.... unfurling first the



beauty and richness of their journeys and relationships, and then reminding everyone not to dwell in romantic notions of their lives, but to participate more actively in understanding their mobile lifestyles and livelihood struggles.

During the launch of the exhibition in December 2016 in Delhi, FSSAI gave its clear ace for Camel Milk to be marketed. 10 months later, in this inaugural event of the Ahmedabad exhibition, the Chairperson of Sarhad Dairy (a subsidiary of Amul) Valamji Humble, handed over the first cheque of Rs. 4.6 lakhs to representatives of the Camel Breeders Association, to mark the beginning of camel milk procurement in Kutch. To everyone's excitement, he announced that Amul would bring Camel Milk

Chocolates as a Diwali Gift to the nation. Valamjibhai explained how the dairy has, within seven years, brought livelihoods to more than hundred thousand pastoral households in Kutch. And that this was possible only because of the high quality animals herded and bred by pastoralists of the region. Even as he spoke, the audience was served camel milk ice-cream made with fresh milk from the camel herders of Kutch.

Shri Vasant Gadhvi, the State Information Commissioner and writer, began by acknowledging his community of Gadhvis - pastoral people who conserved, protected and lived off the grasslands, while also being bards and carriers of some of western India's most lyrical oral folklore traditions in song, poetry and story - the Chhand, Dohas, and Dayras. Shri Gadhvi commended the spotlight that this exhibition has brought to the life stories of pastoralists. With passion and concern, he spoke about the diminishing access to grasslands and grazing rights, the conflicts and struggle for fodder and water, the slow death of pastoralism and all that it stands for. He expressed hope that the exhibition would sensitise society and policymakers towards nomadic pastoralism as a sustainable life and livelihood.

Jaya Jaitlyji, founder of Dastakari Haat Samiti and a well known craft expert and public persona who has enabled a new profile for handicrafts in India, took the audience across the pastoral landscapes of Kutch to Kashmir. She spoke about her own personal history with pastoralists and their crafts in these regions. She observed that it is possible that all our family and community genetic



The chief guest Jaya Jaitly, and the Guests of Honour Shri Vasant Gadhvi, Hartingaramji Raika and Jasuben Rabari, inaugurated the exhibition with a unique Khuta ceremony, practiced by pastoralists in many parts of Gujarat



The Chairperson of Sarhad Dairy (a subsidiary of Amul) Valamji Humble, giving the first cheque of Rs. 4.6 lakhs to representatives of the Camel Breeders Association, along with Shri Jaya Jaitlyji and Shri Vasant Gadhvi

histories could find their ancestral roots in completely different geographies across the world; with interest, she shared how a gene pool test that she undertook, linked her own genetic history to Africa. It was perhaps movements and journeys such as the ones undertaken by pastoralists even today, she said, that has led to such a rich intermingling of cultural histories, practices and identities.

The program concluded with Pankaj Joshi, director of Sahjeevan, expressing his gratitude to the guests. And Sandeep Virmani, the founder of Sahjeevan and Master of Ceremony for the day, inviting everyone to a specially scripted performance of Dastangoi, called 'khanabadosh', by Ankit Chadha, one of the few Dastangoi artistes in the country.

The Exhibits

Vatthaan | Kudrat ji Kalayi | Heddan-Hoddan | Manzar

Vatthaan

A Place of Pause

Grass & Dung Narrative

Grasslands are sumptuous 'thalis' for the grazing herds. The famed Banni grasslands of Kutch, for instance, is home to 43 dishes - grasses - on the plate; some for nutrition, some others for 'masala', and yet others as dessert! *Dhannai*, for instance, is the roti, grazed for health and energy; *Dhrabad* dehydrates the animal, after which they drink a lot of water, like fried chips; *Dhaman* grows in sweet soil but is bitter like bitter gourd and purifies the blood of the animal. *Saaun* is sweet like dessert, *Oin* increases fat in the milk, *Chichni* improves the texture of the milk; *Dhamur* is the first grass that grows after rains - on eating it the animals get diarrhoea, cleansing their stomachs and helping them to digest all the other grasses! So, it goes on and on like the veritable Gujarati thali, with a huge and tasty array of foods...

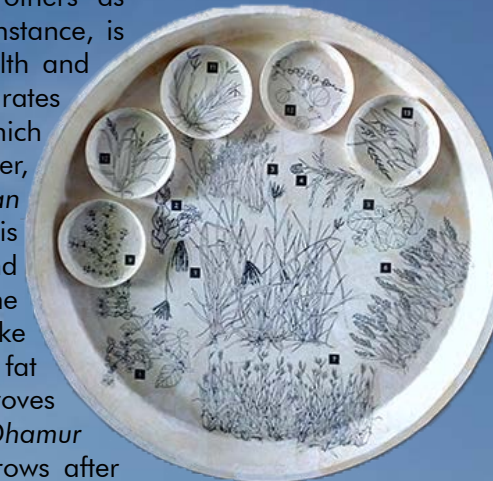


Photo by Nipun Prabhakar



The facilitating maldharis took visitors around the Vathan, explaining virtues of all the grasses through live grass specimens, grown especially for the exhibition. A large oversized installation mimicked a thali displaying grasses with their unique tastes and flavours, giving visitors a unique view of the science of grasslands from the lens of a buffalo and the knowledge of pastoralists.



A large oversized installation mimicked a thali displaying grasses with their unique tastes and flavours, giving visitors a unique view of the science of grasslands from the lens of a buffalo and the knowledge of pastoralists

The dung exhibit



The exhibit of cattle shit shocked visitors first, before drawing them into the regenerative orbit of dung. As the Government of Gujarat's Principle Secretary of Agriculture, Sanjay Prasad, remarked "after the green, white and blue revolutions which extolled the virtues of production from farms, dairy animals and the sea respectively, the brown revolution is around the corner - expressing care for the soil and its health through organic production". Anecdotes from across the world showed how pastoralists have, in fact, been part of this silent brown revolution for centuries, bringing the fertility and nutrients from the forests to the farms by penning, or having their animals s(h)it on the fallow farms in a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Students of Riverside School, Ahmedabad in front of the dung exhibit



Map of Movements

An interactive Map of Movements teased out the migratory routes of nomadic pastoralists. And the touch of a screen disclosed herding journeys across the Himalayan ranges, plains of the Deccan, forests, fields and deserts of India. This is work in progress as these journeys have not been charted closely by those outside the communities. And will grow as the exhibition travels. The map was researched and coordinated by Varsha Mehta and designed by Digital Jalebi, Delhi.



“The films pointed to the praxis of civic exchanges and the Commons which are emblematic of a sophisticated and modern and non-capitalistic understanding of resources”

Rumaal Mein Sauda
 In a corner of the 'Vatthaan', a young pastoralist from Kutch taught visitors the art of striking a financial deal through 'finger language' - under a concealing scarf. This is an ancient and continuing tradition of silently negotiating the price of an animal, without speaking.



Illustration by Sushama Durve

Heddan-Hooddan

Here and There

Film Exhibit

“

Heddan Hoddan na thee, handu veh. Don't move around here and there, stay at one place. My mother used to say this in Sindhi. Perhaps my being a female and a wandering one made her say that. But States also say that to wandering and meandering tribes, the disciplining voice of a parent and state merge all too often insisting on sedentarization. The exhibits at Heddan Hoddan in Living Lightly foregrounds the ethic of exchanges and human-nonhuman interaction that is an integral part of nomadic pastoralism. The films pointed to the praxis of civic exchanges and the Commons which are emblematic of a sophisticated and modern and non-capitalistic understanding of resources. To my mind, this section provided the deepest understanding of sensitive economics and ecology.

*By Rita Kothari
 Scholar and translator based in Gujarat*

”

Played in loops every hour, a series of three short films projected on 180 degree screens enveloped the visitors as they swirled on their seats to follow the buffalo breeders of Banni, dive into the mangrove creeks to meet the swimming 'Kharai' camels and their Jat herders or roam through a remote island of east Kutch to meet the Kankrej cow breeders and herders. The 45-minute film experience gave viewers the feel of the land, the breed and the herder even as they discovered a culture of the Commons.

Manzar

View

Photo Essay

There are few places on earth that can compare with the beauty of pastoral lands. Stunning landscapes, robust breeds, and elegant people has moved many photographers, from India and abroad, to wander into the heart of pastoralists. They have made the hard journey and emerged with exceptional photo essays showing the beauty and hardships of the pastoral life. Manzar, the photo exhibition invited Kalyan Varma, Michael Benanav, Monisha Ahmed and Sankar Sridhar to give us a peek into their personal journeys and carry us to into the life and lands of the Dhangars, Van Gujjars, and the Changpas. Manzar also gave an insight into

the life of pastoralists from the lenses of the pastoralists themselves. The curatorial team had worked with 20 youth from various pastoral communities, encouraging them to turn the gaze on themselves and embark upon a new journey, camera in hand. Ishaan Raghunandan, a young photographer from Bangalore was invited to spend time with these young boys and girls in their habitats, and teach them photography skills on a point and shoot camera. The outcome of this learning journey - for both Ishaan and the youth - was a collection of more than 2000 photographs of which 200 were curated into a special photo exhibition.

Vali Mohammed, one of the young maldhari photographers interacting with a visitor





As long as we have open grazing lands we will hear the sound of copper bells.
 Haasnikka Rayi, Banni Buffalo Malchun

UTTHOD

Utthod has a stronger, more robust sound than the sarai. And used more often on the buffaloes.

HAKKAD

Hakkad, as compared to Utthod and Sarai, is of an entirely different type. It has a very clear, big sound, and resonates across long distances. It is mostly used by village herders.

SARAI

Sarai is the sweetest and most tuneful of the three sounds. It is most often used for cows and goats. When a bell is tuned to play sarai, the noise holds for a long time, a quality that captures the Maldivian's heart!

Kudrat Ji Kalaayi
The Hands of Nature
 Craft Narratives
 Photo by Smriti Chanchani



The Rabaris, who largely bred the indigenous and wolly sheep breeds called Marwadi and Makdi till recently have had a symbiotic relationship with the weaving community of Vankars in Kutch for many generations. However, the Rabaris find no market today for their indigenous wool even as the market and weavers have switched to imported, low cost, machine-spun wool from the Merino sheep of Australia. Weavers created narrative panels to commemorate their relationship with the herders.

“

In ‘Living Lightly – Journeys with Pastoralists’ I was amazed to see a fairly unrecognised world of relationships shared between maldharis and the artisans of Kutch in the section ‘Kudraj ji kalaayi’. Pastoral needs, material and identity that spawned crafts of great utility and beauty. Be it the sheep, goat & camel herding maldharis lending their wool, yarn and motifs to the looms of the weavers, the ajrakh adorning maldharis driving the demand from ajrakh artisans, leather craft artisans blessing the auspicious ceremonies of pastoralists to this day with embroidered hand crafted shoes, or kumbhar potters designing vessels for the maldharis’s milk and its many forms.

In a true sense, the tacit knowledge which maldharis and craft artisans have shared here hold tremendous insights for a circular economy, for a fearless co-existence with nature & animals, for a garden of mutually dependent communities, and all the embodied values of shared space. We are in times when bottled waters have swept the rivers off our lives, and we make claims to a fourth industrial revolution; a time where we humans have nearly forgotten the natural instinct of communicating - non verbally - with birds, animals and nature’s creatures. This section was a reminder of the spaces we must reclaim, the relationships that we need to nurture within us for crafts to become true expressions of a harmonious co existence.

By Pradyumna Vyas,
Director, NID

”

“This section was a reminder of the spaces we must reclaim, the relationships that we need to nurture within us for crafts to become true expressions of a harmonious co existence”

Photos by Smriti Chanchani



Pastoralists at the exhibits

Words aren’t enough to describe my experience of this exhibition. The stories, history, culture and crafts of the pastoralists are truly fascinating. I had no idea about the rich heritage that exists around us. Thank you for bringing this exhibition to Ahmedabad.
-Radhika Rani



The cloth, needle and the thread travelled everywhere with the herders. This is a life embroidered - embellishing blouses, veils, skirts, cradles, pillows, quilts, coin purses, shoes, sacks, bags - reserving some of the finest work for their animals, with exquisite trappings and saddlery. These objects were on display from the special collection of Mr. A. A. Wazir.



The show stopper seemed to be the embroidered panels tracing a year's journey of the camel and her herder, as they traverse through a range of ecosystems.



The exhibition showcased Erroll Nelson Pires' special collection of camel girths called tang. The camel girths made of goat hair yarn by the herders are special because of their strength and beauty.

From birth to marriage to death, the ajrakh accompanies sindhi kutchi maldharis in celebrating all their life cycle events. Maldharis still wear ajrakh today, but the close ties that coloured their lives with the khatri's clientele. The traditional hand block printed, natural dyed, double-sided ajrakh is no longer affordable or available to the maldhari today, who buys the cheaper screen printed ajrakh. And the khatri's clientele. The khatri's clientele. The traditional hand block printed, natural dyed, double-sided ajrakh is no longer affordable or available to the maldhari today, who buys the cheaper screen printed ajrakh. And the khatri's clientele. The khatri's clientele.

Sufiyan Khatri, a young inheritor of this art, which his community of Khatri's describe as 'rang utaarna aur rang chadhana', was inspired to create this ajrakh narrative panel for the exhibition after he and a group of young ajrakh artisans met with an older generation of maldharis over chai. They met, hugged, and argued for



In earlier times, the ajrakh artisan went long distances to deliver the printed ajrakh to their only clients - maldharis living in distant villages. The colours and motifs remained the same for generations but so did their emotional ties with each other - signified by the white border around the circle below.

hours - who had abandoned whom? The Khatri's who went after world markets, or the maldhari who began to wear synthetic ajrakh?

His narrative circles around the two spheres of their universe with the maldharis - then and now. In earlier times, the ajrakh artisan went long distances to deliver the printed ajrakh to their only clients - maldharis living in distant villages. The colours and motifs remained the same for generations but so did their emotional ties with each other - signified by the white border around the circle below. Now,

Sufiyan and his friends thrive in an urban market which makes creative demands - new designs, more colours, and finer cloth. Ajrakh has survived well, but their ties with the maldharis are now frayed, as the circle above shows. You get some, you lose some. Life, for us, has revolved around these two circles, says Sufiyan.

Rooh Ji Rehaan

*A Gathering of
Souls
Music & Poetry*

Photos by Smriti Chanchani

Welcome to this rooh ji rehaan – a gathering of souls - where poems, songs and stories are shared, questions asked, yearnings expressed. Living closely with the elements, as herders do, can bring forth deeper inquiries. Where have we come from? Why are we here? Cast the gaze of a poet around you and every element of the landscape – moon, mountain, camel, cloud, hurricane or river – begins to glow with hidden meanings. You hear many voices here - Sindhi, Kutchi, Gujarati, Hindi - some of the recent poets and some of poets who lived many centuries ago, who stay alive because they are sung, shared and quoted in the day to day lives of the herder communities of Kutch.

With these words, Shabnam Virmani and Vipul Rikhi, curators of 'Rooh ji Rehaan' invited visitors into an immersive space where they briefly experienced the psycho- spiritual, philosophic universe of a maldhaari, and how she understands herself and her world.

For the first time in my life of 54 years, I heard the beautiful and soulful melodies of the desert. The simplicity of their music struck me. Thank you for exposing me.
-Ravi John

Rooh Ji Rehaan was a beautiful realisation that we need more poetry in our lives. Thank you!
-Gauri Bharat



Performances

Dastangoi | Rooh Ji Rehaan

Dastangoi

The art of storytelling is alive still in this media-saturated age. Ankit Chada gave life to "Dastan-e-Khanabadosh" basing himself on a wonderful interpretation of the "Dastangoi" form. Dastangoi is a word of Persian origin, and this form of storytelling has had its own Indian career since the 13th century. The form was revived in 2005. Ankit is a young dastango, or storyteller, and has evolved contemporary stories using the dastangoi style.

The storyteller, dressed in white kurta and churidar, wearing a characteristic embroidered cap, caught our attention straight away! The auditorium was packed,

and so many of those whose story he was about to tell – the Kutchi Maldharis – joined him on the stage. So we had story teller and characters of story, all dressed in their impressive finery, in front of us!

Ankit told the story in fluent hindustani. Urdu words and couplets with their sonorous brilliance, took us away from the auditorium into the wide open spaces where the nomadic pastoralist maldharis live their lives. The drama of free movement, the spirit of shared destinies, the deep reverence for nature, and the joyful acceptance of all that life gives – these came through as

Ankit moved from point to point in his fluent and enjoyable narration.

The story itself cannot be put in other words! The life of the people -on-the-move, moving slowly, in no hurry get anywhere, less interested in reaching and more concerned with being – this was contrasted to those who live in one place, constantly striving to reach never-to-be-reached goals. The

contrast between these two modes was sharply brought out through the imaginative metaphor of the race between the tortoise and the rabbit!

Ankit laced his tale with a humour that was without a trace of bitterness, and effortlessly showed up the relevance of the story's moral message to contemporary life. The story-teller's art lies in making the story become a mirror to the listener, while never preaching or hectoring. And Ankit did this with great charm and captivated everyone's ears eyes and hearts.

By Neelkanth Chhaya
Educator & Architect

Ankit Chaddha performing at the Kanoria Centre for Arts, Ahmedabad, which partnered the pre-event organised on 3rd October'18, before the exhibition.



Photo by Nipun Prabhakar

Rooh Ji Rehaan

A gathering of souls

Music & Poetry

Hosted by the House of MG, in the iconic Agashiye, the Rooh Ji Rehan installation from the exhibition came alive in a live offering by the Wai singers Sumarkhan Jat and Mithakhan Jat, the soulful singing of Mavji Jagaiya, and the raw and pure rendering of Abdul Latif Bhitai by Saidu Ibrahim the herder singer - all from Kutch. Ahmedabad music lovers were all in their seats well in time to receive, not only the songs and music of the pastoralists, but also listen to the curators Shabnam Virmani and Vipul Rikhi speak with passion, lyricism and clarity on the Zahir (the outer and apparent) and Baatin (the inner and the hidden) embedded in the folds of these songs which are sung, heard and quoted by pastoralists across Kutch.

On the evening of October 7th, even as pastoralist musicians from Kutch were enthraling Ahmedabad with the Rooh Ji Rehaan concert at House of MG, Ahmedabad theatre artistes were captivating pastoralists from Saurashtra and Kutch in Tagore Hall where the play 'Akoopar' which is based on the lives of Maldharis living in the Gir Forest, was being specially performed on that day. 'Akoopar' written by Dhruv Bhatt and directed by Aditi Desai. Treated as special guests on the front rows of the theatre, the pastoralists were very moved by the sensitive portrayal of their own lives. They were emotional when they left the theatre, saying they had never before had the opportunity to sit back and see their own life come alive on stage. For those who saw the play, this was clearly the highlight of the entire week for them!

Wai singers, Sumarkhan & Mithakhan along with others

Photo by Nipun Prabhakar



Audience at Agashiye, House of MG



Activities

Craft Workshops | Pastoral Cafe & Cheese Workshops |
Sanjha Bazaar | Film Screenings



Photo by Smriti Chanchani

Craft Workshops

Craft workshops were organised by Khamir to enable visitors learn about the materials, techniques, aesthetics, practicalities, and textures of pastoral crafts while, hopefully, changing the way they perceive handcrafted objects. The artisans from different communities of Kutch taught the art of lacquer, wool spinning and embroidery to people who came from both Ahmedabad and outside to specially learn these special pastoral skills. Errol Pires, a noted designer also conducted a workshop on split-ply braiding. Errol Pires is one of the few people who have worked to revive this lost art which was traditionally used by the pastoralists to make a variety of strong, flat ropes. The participants got a chance to not only see the exhibits from the land of maldharis but to also experience a slice of it through these workshops.



Lacquer workshop in progress



Wool spinning workshop in progress



Krishni Shroff at the Zen Cafe pastoral food stall

Pastoral Food & Cheese Workshops

Ahmedabad - the land of intrepid food and foodies, opened their curious taste buds to the flavours of camel milk. Aditya Raghavan, a physician and cheese maker from Mumbai facilitated a cheese celebration at the exhibition and taught the art of goat feta and camel cheese making to a group of registered and eager participants at the venue, and followed it up with a demonstration for the chefs of Ahmedabad's famed 'Agasheye'. Krishni Shroff, expert baker and chief chef of the festival brought her baking and cooking skills to 'eat lightly' and savour the tastes and flavours of the camel and goat cheese through a simple assortment of snacks and beverages, all organized by Hema of Zen Cafe. And even as visitors thronged the cafe for repeats of camel milk cream, camel milk latte and camel cheese sandwiches, camel herding pastoralists at the venue gaped at them with glee - this could now mean the beginning of a market for their camel milk!



Visitors chatting over camel milk latte



Aditya Raghavan conducting camel cheese workshop with the participants from Ahmedabad

Sanjha Bazaar

The exhibition was accompanied by a pastoral craft market organised by Khamir, allowing buyers to connect with the life style, life world and habitats of pastoralists through their craft products. We celebrated the unique fibres of the camels, sheep and goats, bred and herded by our pastoralists. And connected with the material culture of pastoralists through the craft skills, material and aesthetics that poured into the products on display here. The highlights of the bazaar were desi sheep wool stoles and shawls designed by Shyamji Vankar, Murji Hamir from Kachchh, sheep wool and ajrakh jackets by Archana Shah and natural leather bags and shoes designed by Ranabhai Paba and Jogi Panghaal. Lac turned wood memorabilia from Srishti Verma, and unique apparels by Shabri Wagle designed with a host of Sindhi women artisans. Along with crafts, the commons market also featured a bookshop which attracted the book lovers of Ahmedabad. A host of authors working with pastoralists had lent their books for sale and browsing. Books by Christina Noble, Michael Benanav, Sagari Ramdas and Nitya Ghotge, Ilse Köhler Rollefson, as well as books published for the LL exhibition found many buyers.



Shoes designed by Jogi Panghaal

Visitors at the Sanjha Bazaar



Film Screenings



Someplace Else, a film space which featured two films on pastoralists, was curated by Sanjay Barnela, a film maker and educator at Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore.

In their search for pastoral films, Sanjay and his team found films that have dived deep into subtle nuances and drama of pastoralism as a way of living. They also found cinema which explore the stark landscapes of pastoral worlds and some which challenge the way we look at pastoral communities. Many of these films are, however, not readily available on the digital or retail platforms and were therefore selected for screening here.

While the first edition of the exhibition at Delhi had screened four films, the Ahmedabad exhibition could only have two due to constraints of time and space. The curatorial team selected Shepherdess of the Glaciers and Story of the Weeping Camel. Shepherdess of the Glaciers has been directed by Stanzin Dorzai, a film-maker who comes from a pastoral family in Ladakh.

This film, shot on the snow clad mountains of the Himalayas traces the life of Stanzin's elder sister who is a practising shepherdess and herds her animals in solitude, through the hostile weather and harsh terrains.

The second film, Story of the Weeping camel is based in the Gobi Desert of Mongolia and depicts the travails of a pastoral family as they try to save the life of a new-born camel, rejected at birth by its mother.

The audience which included film lovers from local film clubs of Ahmedabad loved the films, and many of them expressed desire to buy copies of the films for personal viewership or to screen the selections at their local meet-ups.

Shepherdess of the Glaciers has been directed by Stanzin Dorzai, a film-maker who comes from a pastoral family in Ladakh. This film, shot on the snow clad mountains of the Himalayas traces the life of Stanzin's elder sister who is a practicing shepherdess and herds her animals in solitude, through the hostile weather and harsh terrains.

Conversations

Livelihoods Consultation | Breed Conference | FRA Workshop



National Workshop

on Recognition, Registration and Conservation of Livestock Populations in Pastoral Ecosystem

This workshop was organized with the broad objective of launching of a nationwide programme using a commonly accepted methodology for the identification, registration and conservation of indigenous livestock breeds that are developed by pastoralists in different regions and for different purposes. These include cattle breeds, goats and sheep, ponies, donkeys and so forth – livestock upon which the livelihoods of pastoralist communities are founded. The workshop was a collaborative initiative of Government of Gujarat, Centre for Pastoralism (CfP) and the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR),

The workshop was inaugurated by Smt Krishna Raj, Honorable Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, Government of India and was attended by senior officials from the Government of Gujarat, the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, and by animal husbandry departments from many states. Large numbers of representatives of pastoralist communities from across the country were present alongside members of civil society organizations and academics.

Following an inaugural session, the 2-day workshop was divided into three technical

sessions, on (i) the Importance of indigenous breeds: An Economic and Climate change perspective; (ii) the Registration of Pastoral Breeds: Policies, Participatory Documentation and Registration Process; and (iii) State Experiences: Policies and Program on Identification and importance of Pastoral Livestock Breeds. A concluding section generated a series of recommendations.



The workshop was inaugurated by Smt Krishna Raj, Honorable Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, Government of India and was attended by senior officials from the Government of Gujarat, the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, and by animal husbandry departments from many states.



Key Highlights

Participants and various sessions highlighted the value of indigenous breeds from a variety of perspectives, including -- climate change, value of waste material produced by indigenous breeds; the contribution of pastoral breeding to animal populations maintained by agricultural communities, dairies in various parts of the country and the meat economy.

A broad methodology for undertaking breed recognition studies was shared and discussed and will probably form the basis for such work going forward.

A number of speakers made reference to the idea that it is insufficient to simply focus on the breeds as part of a registration exercise. Breed recognition needs to take place alongside an understanding of the ecosystem and cultural practices within which such breeding is embedded.



Ramzan, a maldhari from banni felicitating Shri Sanjay Prasad, Principal Secretary, Agricultural and Co-operation, Government of Gujarat

The Director of NBAGR shared a comprehensive plan with regard to advancing the workshop's agenda of recognizing, registering and conserving indigenous breeds. He stressed the importance for communities to take the lead in this process.

NBAGR and CfP expressed interest in establishing an MoU to demarcate the roles and responsibilities each might take on in moving this process forward.

There was broad-based agreement on the dramatically superior adaptation of indigenous breeds to local extremes of climate, topography and vegetation. Sophisticated genetic analysis supporting this notion was shared in the meeting, representing a significant advance in our understanding of the mechanisms by which such adaptive capacities have developed.

A decision was taken to have state level consultations in 3-4 states to start with, as a means of identifying populations that should be prioritized for further study, and for developing a methodology that might be followed in that state.

A number of states expressed interest in working with NBAGR and CfP to initiate work on the Recognition, Registration and Conservation of indigenous breeds in each of their states.

All participants unanimously recognized the need to initiate a program aimed at recognizing, registering and conserving indigenous breeds.

A comprehensive listing of indigenous populations across the country took place, in the expectation that these need to be studied and documented to understand whether these are unique populations.

Goat Cheese, Anyone?

Livelihoods Consultation

As part of Cfp's interest in exploring ways to raise herder revenues, a half-day consultation was organized to explore the potential for and challenges that might accompany a pilot aimed at the production of goat cheese. This objective followed from the hypotheses that (i) there is growing urban demand for goat cheese; (ii) the bulk of goat cheese consumed in India appears to be imported; and (iii) goat concentrations in India, necessary to enable adequate procurement of goat milk, are almost entirely linked to pastoralist herds. These themes found broad resonance during our deliberations, attended by cheese-making entrepreneurs, members of civil society organizations working with pastoralist communities, and pastoralists themselves. Our discussions revolved primarily around experiences shared by Chris Zandee, of Himalayan Cheese; Apoorva Oza, of the AKRSP, and Aditya Raghavan, cheese-making consultant and artisanal cheese enthusiast.

A number of likely logistical challenges associated with the production of goat cheese were highlighted, including the key question of hygiene, the criticality of maintaining optimal temperatures during both production and curing of goat cheese, its relatively short shelf-life, the problem of procuring undiluted goat milk, and the capacity to handle large variations in capital flows. But there was also a sense that this was a good time to embark on a pilot, given rising urban demand and India's almost complete dependence on imported goat cheese.

Access Livelihoods Consultation, based out of Hyderabad, expressed interest in embarking on a goat cheese-making pilot. This would require the commissioning of a feasibility study to identify potential locations, partners, costs and potential financing. While ALC has no direct experience in cheese-making, it does have extensive experience in the dairy sector. An industrialist in Surendranagar, formerly associated with AKRSP's lapsed experiment in goat cheese production, has also expressed interest. He would likely have the infrastructure, but would need assistance in organizing pastoralists for the supply of milk.

At the end of the day, any such effort would make sense from a livelihoods perspective only if there is the potential for significant gains to herder revenues. As one of the participants put it "The issue is not about making cheese – it is about enhancing revenues for the farmer." Converting goat milk to cheese could be an exciting option, but it will need to be undertaken by an entrepreneur with the desire and capacity to stay invested over the long haul.

Consultation

on Forest Rights Act and Rights of Pastoralists



The implementation of the FRA has thus far focused primarily on Individual Forest Rights, and has tended to ignore the empowering provisions of community forest resource rights (CFRs). No more than 3% of the estimated potential for CFR recognition has taken place under the FRA. Accordingly, the provisions for rights of vulnerable communities such as pastoralists and particularly vulnerable tribal groups have not been implemented across the states. Non recognition of rights of pastoral communities has resulted in continued restrictions on traditional access to forest areas for grazing and other resource use. There are also cases of violation of their rights in protected areas (wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and tiger reserves), in areas proposed for forest diversion for various projects, and in areas where plantations have been set up under CAMPA and other forestry programs.

This consultation was organized to discuss the status of access rights of pastoral communities and how these may related to the FRA, key initiatives already undertaken by pastoral communities with regard to filing CFR claims, and the nature of the state's response to these initiatives. The consultation was attended by members from civil society organizations working with pastoral communities, representatives of pastoral communities from different states, researchers, activists and students.

Plans and key strategies put forward by the group:

Awareness on the provisions of the FRA needs to be increased amongst pastoral communities. NGOs and research institutes can be identified to undertake more systematic work on the FRA-pastoral community interface. A template based on the experiences of Maldhari pastoralists of the Banni grasslands in Kutch, and the Gaddi herders of Kangra District in Himachal Pradesh can be prepared and shared with other communities and actors from civil society.

Devise action plans to increase the numbers of CFR claims forwarded by pastoral communities. Training and capacity building of community leaders and facilitators will be needed to enable an increase in such claim-filing.

The constitution of a working group to anchor CFR claim-making and to devise ways of dealing with legal problems arising from pastoralist eviction from Protected Areas as well as where cases have been filed against pastoralists.

Document the experiential knowledge of pastoralists to develop the argument that traditional forest management practices by pastoral communities are not necessarily detrimental to forests, grasslands and other forms of natural resources.

Sensitize the Animal Husbandry Departments on the FRA and claims of pastoral communities to ensure the Department's involvement and support.

Visitors

“

Have we not been told, so many times by those wiser than us or by our classical books which we have read and reread, that we should live lightly - without any expectations, worldly pressures and material pleasures? Well, all those pearls of wisdom came alive when I had the good fortune to visit, and spend some time at the exhibition - 'Living Lightly' - which brought out the science, logic, art and philosophy of pastoral communities and was an attempt to present the Maldhari's way of life. Apart from the fact that the exhibition was a learning experience, it touched me in many ways. It was aesthetically appealing, emotionally engaging and spiritually elevating.

Most exhibitions are for promotion of some thing or self. What made this exhibition unique for me, was that it was not an exhibition to promote any thing, but to present a way of life. I was drawn into an eco system which links so many lives together! While teaching a course in a local Law College on the subject 'external aids for interpretation of Statutes', I always refer to a case decided by Supreme Court using a website for interpreting a provision of Food Adulteration Rules for treating camel milk as covered by the said rules. I never knew or thought, that one day, I would be able to eat or drink some thing made from camel milk, or appreciate its merits, which I did here!

I was indeed awestruck to see the way pastoralists move and herd and was humbled to learn how lightly they do indeed live! Being from the world of music, I loved the selection of music and poetry. Rooh-ji-rehan brought to me the poetry of a poet saint from Sindh and his Surs, each so heart warming. Pt. Omkarnath Thakur candidly admits that our classical music has its roots in folk music. And so many folk tunes are used even in our classical ragas!

By Amar Bhatt
Advocate & Singer

”



The culture of pastoralists has such a wealth of knowledge systems that the nation can learn from, and this uniquely wonderful exhibition has brought so many of its facets to us. I do hope this travels into all the regions of India'

Sujata Prasad
Additional Secretary, Ministry
of Culture, Government of
India

“

The "Living Lightly – Journeys with Pastoralists" exhibition was an extraordinarily 'complete' experience for the visitors - going beyond being a mere 'beautiful', 'informative' or 'anthropological' exposition of pastoral lives.

Our travel and work in Uttarakhand has made us quite familiar to the lives of the Van-Gujjars, their annual migration and plight for grazing lands; but learning about the unbelievably long annual migratory route of the pastoralists from Kutch for instance, who traverse so many States with proficiency in several languages, was a revelation for the visitors. And the film about a lone shepherdess from Ladakh carried us to yet another, completely different dimension of pastoralists' herding lives at high latitudes in snow clad areas.

The all encompassing twirl of the pastoralist's herding stick, it's symbolic presence in their lives, the language of the stick so to speak, and the nuanced communication between the herder and the animals unlocked a whole new world for us. As did the craft of the animal bells, which bound the luhar crafts person (the bell maker), the maldhari herder, and the animals into a fascinating story of identity and sound ...that pastoralists identify their own animals through the varied sounds of bells gave us a fulfilling glimpse into their intimate relationship with animals.

Photographs taken by young pastoralists themselves were able to capture stories and spaces that other photographers would find very difficult to enter. And the story telling performance - 'dastangoi' - invited us to enter and behold the clash between the unhurried and transient lives of nomadic pastoralists and our own sedentarized and rushed lives! Lastly, the evening of music and poetry with the pastoralists of Kutch took us from fascination and learning to a state of divine ecstasy.

By Rajendra & Rupal Desai
Architects

”

In Gratitude

CONTENT SUPPORT

Sandeep Virmani, Ramesh Bhatti, Varsha Mehta, D.K. Sadana, Arvind Lodaya, Dr. Sabyasachi Das, Dr. Pankaj Joshi, Mahendra Bhanani, Mamata Patel, Dr. Ismail Khatri, Shyamji Vankar, Murji Vankar, Bhojabhai Marwada, Late Salim Node, Jaisinghkaka, Paresh Mangalia and Srishti Verma

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Splat Studio, Delhi,
Nikhil Joshi, Digital Jalebi, Delhi,
Knownsense Studios

TO

ABHINAVA SHUKLA, Secretary General
ATMA, MILL OWNER'S ASSOCIATION BUILDING

TO

KHAMIR, FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY, HOUSE OF MG, QASAB, SRISHTI FILMS, SRISHTI INSTITUTE OF ART, DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY, KANORIA VISUAL ARTS CENTRE, JANVIKAS, SETU ABHIYAN, SOORVANI, KMVS, HUNNARSHALA FOUNDATION, K-LINK

Special Thanks To

Vasant Saberwal, Lal Singhji, Aditya Raghavan, Rj Devaki, Zen Cafe, Kirti Khatri, Dipesh Shroff, Abhay Mangaldas, Erroll Pires, Rajiv Khandelwal, Meera Goradia, Archana Shah, Sarita Sundar, Dhruvi Shah, Krupa Dholakia, Abdul Gani, Kirit Jadeja, Juhi Pandey, A.A. Wazir, Jogi Panghaal, Niharika Shah

&

The Generous Photographers
Sankar Sridhar, Ajit Patel, Ishaan Raghunandan, Kalyan Varma, Smriti Chanchani, Ritayan Mukherjee, Nipun Prabhakar, Monisha Ahmed

&

The Illustrators
Sushama Durve, Tapas Upadhyaya, Roy Varghese

TO

EVENTS AND ACTIVITY COORDINATORS

Organizing Team

Harish Hurmade, Vimal Mehta, Nimish Gor, Aditi Thakkar, Dhara Pithadiya

Supported by Ritesh Pokar, Dipika Thakkar, Sattar Theba, Sandeep Kanojia, Mukesh Senma, Dharmesh Antani

Pastoral Times
Bhawna Jaimini and Puneet Bansal

Craft Production
Paresh Mangalia and Shabri Wable

Music
Asif A. Rayama

Pastoral Food
Krishni Shroff with Nilam Sompura, Jay Anjaria & Punita Patel

Craft Workshops
Apoorva Joshi and Katrin Parotat from KHAMIR

Animal Mannequins
Kishorbhai Shankarbhai Bhatt

Book Store:
Kruti Patel, Derin from KMVS

Translation Support
Sanjay Dave, Kruti Patel, Ambar Anjaria

Field Facilitation & Coordination
Pravin Muchadiya, Bharti Nanjar, Nita Khubchandani, Narendra Nandaniya, Imran Khan Mutwa, Rasool Sodha, Hanif Hingorja, Habu Marwada, Navinbhai Sodha, Rasikbhai.

Promotions
Prakshal Mehta and Wricha Johari, World Around You
Design and Coordination - Bhawna Jaimini

Media Support
RED FM
KINESIS

Volunteers
Vivek Rawal, Sankalp Sinha, Kartikeya Chhaya, Kavya Francis, Mauli Pandya, Margi Choksi, Poonam Kathuria, Brian Bond, Tanvi Choudhary, Sakshee Jaimini, Mridul Ganguly, Ghatit Laheru, Bhavya Jain, Hiren Patel, Neel Jain, Nirnay Gandhi, Nishita Talatiya, Rahul Chandrashekar, Ravi Kathariya, Namrata Dadawala
wirh Moved by Love Sevaks; Saanchi, Kishan, Madhu, and Pratyush

SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH, DOCUMENTATION, DEVELOPMENT
& LAUNCH OF THE EXHIBITION

Ford Foundation
Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC)
Donald & Lucy Peck, U.K
Tata Power Community Development Trust
Agrocel Pvt. Ltd.
Excel Industries
Asha Kiran Trust
Aarti Foundation
Shroff Family Charitable Trust
Kesar Trust
Heinrich Böll Foundation
Reshma Patel and Light Publications
Bharat Rural Livelihood Foundation

Community Contributors

Aaqil Khyali Halepotra, Amriben Rabari, Damji Premji,
Gulmamad Node, Gulmamad Salam, Halepotra Aakel
Khyali, Halepotra Gulmamad Salam, Halepotra Haasam
Idris, Halepotra Hasam Idrees, Halepotra Jakab Aakel,
Halepotra Jusab Haji Aaraf, Halepotra Lalmamad Husain,
Halepotra Lal-mamad Husen, Halepotra Mirmamad Misri,
Halepotra Musa Mamad, Halepotra Nurmamad Alarakhiya,
Halepotra Peermamad Aamad, Halepotra Salaam Haasam
Haji Haroon Haji, Halepotra Salemamad Fakirmama,
Halepotra Salemamad Fakirmamad, Halepotra Valimamad
A Rehman, Harikaka Rabari, Himaben Rabari, Imran Khan
Mutva, Imran Mutva, Isha Meran Mutva, Jabbar Hajimusa,
Jabbar Hajimusa Node, Jakab Arkal, Jat Aamad Varid, Jat
Bhul Liya, Jat Ismail Aamad, Jat Laxmi Husen (Child Artist), Jat
Mamad Rabrakhiya (Sufi Singer), Jat Nasibibai Shermamad, Jat
Rabrakhiya Hajimeran, Jat Rahish Rabrakhiya, Jat Shermamad
Sale, Jussab, Maharaj Nathu, Mamad Node, Marvada Khima
Natha, Meermamad, Musa Mamad Halepotra, Musamamad,
Node Aminbhai, Node Saleem Deshar, Noormamad Allarakha,
Pandhi Khyali Halepotra, Pathan Hidhaibahi Usman, Pathan
Shakiladha, Pirmamad Aamad, Qamruddin Hajiadhu Mutva,
Rabari Harkhuben, Rabari Jasuben, Rabari Jesangbhai, Rabari
Ladhuben, Rabari Manjula Shikha, Rabari Mohanbhai, Rabari
Nagjibhai, Rabari Naranbhai, Rabari Rana Mamu, Rabari
Raniben Mamu, Rabari Samatbhai, Rabari Sartaniben, Rabari
Sattiben, Rabari Vejabhai Rana Rasulbhai, Raysipotra Musa
Juma, Salaam Haasam Halepotra, Salemamad Fakirmamad
Mutva, Salim Deshar Node, Sendha Visa, Shekh Saidhu, Sumar
Bhura, Valimamad Mutva, Valimamad Rehman, Vikramsinh
Jadeja

...And Many Others from the Camel Breeder's Association and
Banni Breeders Association

Centre for Pastoralism

Close to 35 million pastoralists graze India's forests, grasslands and farm fallows, and are a familiar sight by the roadside, as they migrate between summer and winter grazing grounds, often over hundreds of kilometres. Their many contributions have rarely received the recognition they have deserved, as mainstream society has tended to see them as relics of an outdated way of life.

They are "keepers of genes", custodians of India's remarkable animal diversity; they are significant contributors to our dairy and meat industries; and their music and crafts find resonance and expression in much of what we see as mainstream culture.

Perhaps most critically, pastoralist mobility, as an adaptive response to the climatic extremes they experience, marks them out as communities particularly well adapted to a changing climate regime. The Centre for Pastoralism, a Sahjeevan initiative, hopes to undertake research aimed at enhancing our understanding of pastoralist ecosystems, collaborative programs aimed at enhancing livelihood security, and outreach activities to educate the wider society about their contribution to the mainstream.

Photo by Nipun Prabhakar

Said a blade of grass to an autumn leaf,
"You make such a noise falling!
You scatter all my winter dreams."

Said the leaf indignant,
"Low-born and low-dwelling! Songless,
peevish thing!

You live not in the upper air and you
cannot tell the sound of singing."
Then the autumn leaf lay down upon the
earth and slept.

And when spring came she waked
again—and she was a blade of grass

-Kahlil Gibran



