

Topic: Artistic practice and/or research as community building.

Title: The Living Scroll: Integrating Visual and Performing Arts in Community Narratives.

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Abstract:

Art has long been debated for its purpose – whether it exists purely for aesthetic pleasure or serves as a medium of communication. Among various traditions, *Pattachitra Katha*, the scroll-based storytelling form of eastern India, exemplifies how art functions as both a visual expression and a performative narrative. Originating in West Bengal, this tradition is renowned for its intricate detailing, vibrant colours, and depiction of mythological and folk tales. Historically performed by the *Patua* community, artists narrate stories through painted scrolls accompanied by songs. In Naya village of Pingla, West Midnapore, around eighty-three *Patua* families continue this legacy, transforming the village into a vibrant cultural hub known as the “village of performers.”

This paper explores how *Pattachitra Katha* operates as a form of community building, where art becomes a collective act of storytelling and cultural preservation. It examines how the integrated practice of theatre, song, and painting nurtures social cohesion and intergenerational learning within the community. Furthermore, it considers how the principles of *Pattachitra Katha* can inform contemporary participatory practices, fostering collaborative creativity and cultural continuity. Thus, *Pattachitra* emerges not merely as a visual art form but as a living theatre of community expression.

Keywords:

Pattachitra Katha; Community Building; Participatory Art Practice; Visual and Performing Arts

Disciplinary Field: Community Art and Performance.

Format of Presentation: Paper presentation (15 minutes) followed by a performance and a 5-minute question-and-answer session.

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Bikram Pal is a Gold Medalist in MFA (Applied Arts) from Banaras Hindu University (BHU), a Central University in Varanasi, India, and holds a BFA , Major in Applied Arts & Minor in Painting from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, India. He is a recipient of the Junior Research Fellowship and the National Scholarship from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. A multidisciplinary visual artist, theatre practitioner, and educator, he has worked as Junior Art Director at Langoor, Bangalore, and has participated in national and international exhibitions and workshops. He has been invited as Guest Speaker and Visiting Fellow at BHU and is recognized for his contributions to visual communication and design innovation.