

MEDIA RELEASE

Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre extends art & crafts exhibition SWADESH due to overwhelming public demand

Mumbai, May 29, 2023: Owing to unprecedented public response to watching traditional master craftsmen at work, the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre has decided to extend Reliance Foundation's SWADESH exhibition. The exhibition is an experience zone offering visitors a unique journey of watching and interacting with skilled expert artisans from famed traditional art forms such as Pichwai, Tanjore, Pattachitra, weaves from Patola, Venkatgiri, Benaras, Paithan and Kashmir and Blue Pottery from Jaipur among others. Craftspersons at work – on traditional looms making carpets and saris, using vegetable inks and needles to create paintings – while interacting with audience, have created a unique and much appreciated experience for visitors to the Centre. This has elevated the pristine appeal of the craft to a performing arts experience.

“India's artisans are the pride of our country. Their arts and crafts are integral to our culture. It has been an honour for us at the NMACC to offer them a global platform to showcase their skill and talent, honed and passed down over generations.” said **Mrs. Nita Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation**. “It gives me the greatest joy to see the attention and appreciation they have received in abundance from our Indian and international guests. I cherished my interactions with them, and it was overwhelming to hear their stories and see their extraordinary passion towards their craft. Swadesh is a celebration of our heritage, and I hope it marks a new beginning of respect, recognition, and sustenance for our artisans.”

When the artists came home to NMACC:

Ever since the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre opened to the world, visitors have been appreciating many aspects about the Centre and its offerings. The SWADESH experience zone recreated the traditional artists' space with beautifully designed stalls for the Cultural Centre audience to not only watch the skilled artisans at work but also buy their works. Originally scheduled as a three-day event till April 2nd, this has now been extended due to the overwhelming admiration of the artisans, visible in the extensive footfalls and daily number of orders placed with the artisans, the entire proceeds of which goes to the artisans themselves.

In the extended exhibition, the additions include Palagai Padam - Tanjore Painting from Tamil Nadu, Venkatgiri Weaves from Andhra Pradesh, Patola Weaves from Gujarat, and Tholu Bommalata Leather Shadow Puppetry from Andhra Pradesh.

The extravagant gold foil depictions of deities in Tanjore paintings; the fine fabrics with intricate zari patterning of Venkatgiri Weaves; Patola weaves of Gujarat, created by tying and dying warp and weft threads before weaving them together; the Tholu Bommalata Shadow Puppetry from Andhra Pradesh the Indian bobble-head in a mixture of paper and clay; are part of the extended showcase.

Set with Athangudi eco-friendly tiles and a rustic classic South Indian ‘the wooden touch’ décor, the entire space becomes a living breathing experience in itself.

Through the years, Reliance Foundation has given traditional Indian artisans a platform to showcase their talent, and take their work to a wider audience. Endangered art forms get a new lease of life with livelihood opportunities for traditional artists and crafts persons, to ensure their work continues to be viable. The unprecedented success of this effort adds another aspect to the credo of the new Cultural Centre – that of showcasing India’s rich heritage on national and global platforms.

These efforts have helped preserve and protect artforms while providing continued employment opportunities to artisans. SWADESH is yet another step in that direction as part of this long-standing commitment to artisans.

About the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC)

The Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre is a first-of-its-kind, multi-disciplinary space in the sphere of arts, within the Jio World Centre, located in the heart of Mumbai’s Bandra Kurla Complex.

The Cultural Centre is home to three performing arts spaces: the majestic 2,000-seater Grand Theatre, the technologically advanced 250-seater Studio Theatre, and the dynamic 125-seater Cube. The Centre also features the Art House, a four-story dedicated visual arts space built as per global museum standards with the aim of housing an array of exhibits and installations from the finest artistic talent across India and the world.

Spread across its concourses is a captivating mix of public art by renowned Indian and global artists, including ‘Kamal Kunj’ – one of the largest Pichwai paintings in India.

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About Reliance Foundation

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing India’s development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Smt. Nita M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working for the overall well-being and enhanced quality of life for all, focusing on rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment, urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of more than 69.5 million people across India, in over 54,200 villages and urban locations. More on www.reliancefoundation.org