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Bangalore artists launch make-shift, shared art gallery

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BANGALORE: The city artists have hit upon a novel idea and joined forces to launch a makeshift art gallery with common ownership for sharing and learning from peers and seniors.

"Samuha", a collective of art practitioners, was launched on Monday. The project involves artists of various disciplines, including painting, sculpture, new media arts and performance arts.

Driven by artists, 'Samuha' from junior artists to eminent ones like S G Vasudev, Pushpamala and Sheila Gowda, would facilitate an art space that encourages contemporary artists to showcase their work and interact with local residents.

Artists of the collective would use this rental space to exhibit their own work as well as collaborate and curate works of art practitioners and peers.

The project would run for 365 days, which means its 20 members would each have 17 days at the space to use.

"Essentially every member commits to paying Rs 2000 per month for 12 months. This will enable them to own 17 days each at the creative common space," Suresh Kumar G, who initiated this project, along with Archana Prasad and Shivaprasad S, said.

The trio have been in dialogue with artists, art critics, art schools, gallery owners and curators here over the last seven months.

Added Archana Prasad, "Samuha is an autonomous collective. It is an artist-driven and artist-run initiative. Each artist-member is a time-share holder of the 'Samuha' space. Every member has ownership and rights within their time slot."

"Samuha is about self-reliance and self-promotion. It is about building a community of individuals who have a common desire -- to share and learn from their peers, to explore and educate their public on art and its practices," she said.

At 'Samuha', there would be no hierarchies within the community. Artists, irrespective of their fame, seniority or discipline, share the same rights and powers at Samuha. They work in the same space with equal dignity.

On the inspiration behind the venture, Suresh Kumar said that artists were dependent on galleries for everything -- infrastructure, assistance and facilitators.

"But with only a handful of galleries in the city, these spaces couldn't be held responsible or expected to launch every new artist from every type of discipline within visual culture," he said.

"I felt that there was a gap between the artists and gallery pathways. We needed a bridge between the ending of art school and the point at which an artist is prepared to be picked up by a gallery," Suresh Kumar said.

"We needed a self-sustaining system that would take you in, encourage you, enable you and deliver you to an audience. Young artists need to engage in this process to grow and explore their practices so that they would mature into proficient practitioners," he added.

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