

# ‘Fine Arts Fair’ – A Celebration of New Learning Processes and Applying Them through Art, Craft and Design for Bridging the Gap between Society and Creative People

Praful N. Gohel\*

Department of Applied Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

**Abstract –** The word 'Fair' itself suggests its meaning. People think of games, rides, toys, crafts, furniture, textiles etc. through this word. Here I am going to discuss on the 'Fine Arts Fair' of Faculty of Fine Arts, The M.S. University of Baroda. Prof. K. G. Subramanian (Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan and Padma Shri awardee) started this tradition. His original idea of introducing this fair was to learn and explore new materials as well as various production techniques of art and craft and then bringing them into art and design. I will discuss various learning processes through 'Fine Arts Fair' and how artists and designers have adopted it in their works through specific case studies. I will also throw the light on how this fair helps to bridge the gap between common and creative people.

**Keywords:** Ideas, Crafts, Art, Colours, Learning, Creativity, Design, Performances, Games, Theatre, Dance, Explorations, Experiments, Excitements

-----X-----

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The word 'Fair' itself suggests its meaning. People think of games, rides, toys, crafts, furniture, textiles etc. through this word. Here I am going to discuss on the 'Fine Arts Fair' of Faculty of Fine Arts, The M.S. University of Baroda. Prof. K. G. Subramanian (Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan and Padma Shri awardee) started this tradition. The Fine Arts Faculty Fair started first time in 1961, taking inspiration from the fairs and 'melas' that were prevalent since early 20th century at the well-known art institution in Santiniketan, West Bengal. Sculptor Sankho Chaudhury, who taught at the Faculty, had initiated the Fair after having studied in Santiniketan. Besides the fun and festivities that it brought, the Fair served an important role in supporting less privileged students and in reaching out to the local community. It became an occasion where the public could view and buy artworks that were produced by students. Over the years, the Fair expanded in scale and scope, bringing into its fold different activities, such as theatre performances, puppet shows, experimental artworks, and traditional art forms.



Fig. 1.1 (left) Prof. K. G. Subramanian is preparing for fair, 1967

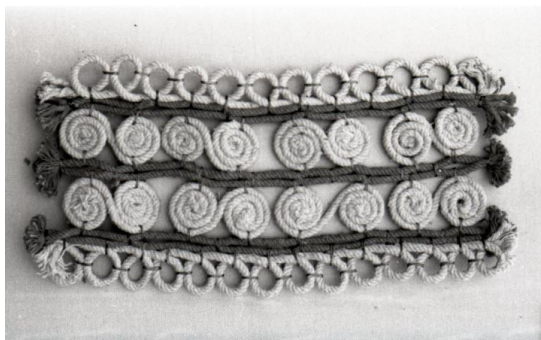


**Fig. 1.2 (right) Bamboo Sculpture, 1967**

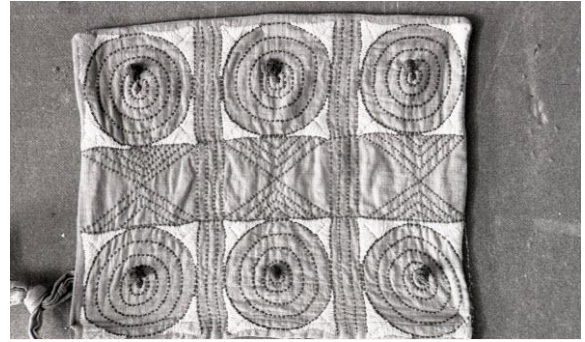
His original idea of introducing this fair was to learn and explore new materials as well as various production techniques of art and craft and then bringing them into art and design.

Here, I am discussing various learning processes through 'Fine Arts Fair' and how artists and designers have adopted it in their works through specific case studies. I am also throwing the light on how this fair helps to bridge the gap between common and creative people.

**2. EXPLORING AND EXPERIMENTING VARIOUS MATERIALS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF ART AND CRAFT**



**Fig. 2.1 (left) A design using rope, 1967**



**Fig. 2.2 (right) A pillow cover using embroidery, 1969**

The above images shows that how interestingly the thread and the rope can be used for producing useful household and home decor products. They are beautifully crafted using various techniques. In the initial years of the fair, natural materials were broadly explored. Nowadays plastic, paper, fibre, metal, glass, rubber and foam waste are much trendy in the Fine Arts Fair.



**Fig. 2.3 (left) Painted stones, 2020**



**Fig. 2.4 (right) Painted wooden magnet, 2020**

There are sayings e.g. "People can earn money by selling stones if they know how to sell it" and "Best out of waste". Students of Fine Arts work with those materials which are freely available and create best products for fair. The above images are just glimpses

of it. Painted stones can be used as paper weight in office and wooden magnets are hot favourite among children.

### 3. ENJOYING NEW LEARNING PROCESSES IN FOUNDRIES & WORKSHOPS



**Fig. 3.1 (left) Wooden Toys, 2009**



**Fig. 3.2 (right) Screen Printed Calendars & T-shirts, 2009**

Fine Arts Fair is an amalgamation of traditional as well as new teaching learning processes through workshops and experiments. Students are free to work in any department during this period. They exchange the departmental strengths and skills with each other. The workshops like natural dyes, metal casting, textile printing, book binding, weaving, bamboo crafts are few of them. The students learn patience, sincerity, marketing, working in groups and unity through this methodology.

### 4. ARTISTS WHO ADOPTED THE MATERIAL FROM THE 'FINE ARTS FAIR' AND EXPLORED IT THROUGH THEIR ART



**Fig. 4.1 (left) Phenomenal Nature, fibre, Mrinalini Mukherjee, 1984**



**Fig. 4.2 (right) Yogini, fibre, Mrinalini Mukherjee, 1994**

A preeminent voice within Indian contemporary art, Mrinalini Mukherjee is well known for her hemp rope sculptures and organic forms. Born in Mumbai, Mukherjee studied under KG Subramanyan, whose modest and earth bound materials informed her early works. Her knotted sculptures draw form a rich history of India's artisanal history, and have been described as simultaneously erotic, divine, human and vegetal.

In 1994, Mukherjee was invited to exhibit at the Modern Art Oxford (then the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford) which placed her amongst leading contemporaries, including Marina Abramovic and Donald Judd. The artist passed away in 2015.

## **5. BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN COMMON AND CREATIVE PEOPLE**

Fine Arts Fair has been a bridge between common and creative people. Children, parents, uncles, in-laws, artists, alumni, art investors and professionals generally visit the fair. People get to know about outstanding ideas, crafts, designs, visualisation and drawing skills. They try to connect their selves with creative people. Many school teachers, preschool owners collaborate with the students to organise workshops at their places.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

After so many years, we are still following the same roots and aims which are hidden behind the Fine Arts Fair. It gives so many things to the students, society, teachers and the nation at last. It is the symbol of unity also I should say. It is an event of celebration where students and teachers learn and earn through innovative teaching-learning processes. The profit of this fair is mainly used for students' welfare e.g. students' scholarships, developing infrastructure facilities, planning of academic trips and purchase of equipments.

## **REFERENCES**

<https://aaa.org.hk>

[www.saffronart.com](http://www.saffronart.com)

---

### **Corresponding Author**

**Praful N. Gohel\***

Department of Applied Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

[prafullgohel@gmail.com](mailto:prafullgohel@gmail.com)