

## **THE BARI RESIDENCY 2008**

It can be said that today Bangalore and its art scene is at a crossroads. The factors are broadly the cities unprecedented growth, the escalating cost of living, as also its relatively new exposure to a larger national and international network of artists, museums and galleries and new opportunities to travel.

The days of a small coherent and transparent artist community, which was easy to access and whose work was easy to survey where information could be disseminated easily, seems to be over. Many artists are just too busy to meet and while opportunities and connections to the international art world and art marketplaces has burgeoned, there is still a dire shortage of public spaces for the exchange of ideas and for artistic mingling and socializing.

While there is a welcomed openness, much enthusiasm and a unique effervescent energy, a growing sophistication towards art practise, the limitations of our times and a fragmentation of social networks, tend to lend itself to misunderstanding, sometimes unhealthy competitiveness and a kind of directionless confusion. And this can lead to a tendency to retreat into private spaces for producing and viewing art, away from a critical public or any debate or lively conversation, which provides a healthy and stimulating context for ideas and creativity. We strongly believe that keeping alive such venues for meaningful interaction is essential, for any city to grow into a human and culturally diverse one.

### **Bengaluru Artist Residency Project (Bar 1)**

This is a non-profit exchange programme by artists for artists to foster the local, Indian and international mutual exchange of ideas and experiences through guest residencies in Bangalore. Bengaluru Artist Residency One is registered as a Public Charitable Trust. The website {[www.bar1.org](http://www.bar1.org)} will be set up later this year.

Our Residency programme, which provides accommodation and a workplace for mainly visual artists, was founded in 2001 and was probably the first of its kind in India. From July 2001 until January 2007 we had a studio-apartment in Mallesvaram and were directly affiliated to the Artist Residency Gaesteatelier Krone in Aarau, Switzerland. Since 1, October 2007 we have rented a new studio apartment in Vivekanandanagar near Cooke town, cantonment area and our first guest came in November 2007 for four months.

A new partnership with Pro Helvetia (the Swiss Arts Council) in New Delhi resulted in a contract for 3 years (which will be renewable for an additional 2 years). Since then 12 Indian artists, 16 Swiss artists and a Palestinian artist have spent 3-6 months at the studio apartment we provided.

We have been able to offer both the invited Indian and international artists inexpensive living and studio space and provide a context for them to interact with local Bangalore artists, an introduction to the art scene and other existing cultural institutions, colleges, student groups and the basic infrastructure required by artists - be it market places and resources for appropriate art material shops, or facilities for the making of their work.

The charm of this Residency Programme in Bangalore so far has been its personal and hands on way of functioning. It has been run and conceptualized by the local Bangalore artist community, many of whom have been recipients of residency programs in Switzerland and across the world. Over the years, we have acquired the skill to both host and manage such a residency in addition to continuing our own successful art practise. This has resulted in many close friendships being built across cultures, and within the group. The residency has also been responsible for facilitating interactions between artists, and organizing workshops with other institutions such as art colleges and their student bodies. These visiting artists to Bangalore city have had access to the galleries and public spaces such as Gallery Sakshi, Gallery Ske, Alliance Francaise and CKP. Often times they have also transformed their workplace or studio into a space for exhibitions, adding to the growing list of venues for art and culture and public interaction in the city of Bangalore.

The success of this programme has largely been due to the enthusiasm, commitment and hours of unpaid work by the organisers in the collective. Since October 2007 we have appointed a coordinator to take care of the guests. And through this full time coordinator we also hope to collaborate with similar cultural initiatives.

#### **The Annual Programme**

Our new flexible annual plan ideally foresees guest residencies during 6 months for the Swiss, 3 months for other international artists and 3 months for Indian artists.

The international invitees cover their expenses through sponsorship by cultural institutions or funding from their home country. This financing model has worked well in the last few years. To make it easier to handle, the financial commitment made towards our guests, we are – beside our important partnership with PHND – looking for temporary or longer partnerships with other international art councils or foundations regarding other international guests.

#### **The India- India Residency programme**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> July to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008 we envisage a Indian artists residency at the Bar1- studio-apartment, located at 'Rayaan Mansion', No 9 + 9/2, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cross Vivekanandanagar, Bangalore 560033

We hope to invite upto 4 Indian artists, who are emerging artists and not fully settled yet in the art world. We would like them to come from other parts of India other than Bangalore. These artists may be working in diverse fields of art, in any media, addressing any of the human senses. The artist could therefore be a cook, a maker of documentaries, a poet, a sound or body artist as

well as a maker of images. We hope to attract artists from an extended field of cultural practises be it in visual arts: painting, drawing, sculpture, performance, installation, video, new media, audio: sound, music; verbal arts: poetry and writing; creative applied arts: design, architecture, advertising, and performance.

Criteria for applying are that the artists be seriously researching or/and developing their own language or the language of their art form. They should be open and willing to live and work together for that period without too much privacy.

We will attempt to shape a concept for the artists who will share a space together over a period of 6 -12 weeks. This will not be a theme based way of bringing together artists. Rather the collective will attempt to curate the group to encourage a wide, diverse and constructive exchange of ideas without any pressure to exhibit or produce finished work at the end of the residency. The selection of this group will take place with a panel comprising of the organizing committee, appointed members of IFA and one external jury member from the arts or curatorial practise.

### **Detailed information**

The residency will be half way between a residency and a workshop situation and will try and encourage artists who are beginning their careers and may need the time and space to develop their work. They will also try and invite more established artists who may be attracted to living in Bangalore by desiring a change of scene, from their routine and a known environment. They would like to encourage those who may want to explore Bangalore city and the institutions that exist here be it in science, or information technology or alternative schooling, Kannada culture, landscapes of the region, the environment and ecological issues etc. The program would like to encourage artists from diverse backgrounds and regions in India to encourage contact and exchange between artists that do not normally have a space to share ideas with in depth. The “emerging” artist may mean a crossover artist, who may want to shape a more artistic approach to their work, than what they may have specialized in. This could be a person with experience in advertising or an acoustic engineer, a sound recordist, a film editor or cinematographer, who may want some time to develop more experimental and artistic work. The residency would like to encourage writers, poets cultural critics, journalists to share in this residency program with visual, performance, new media and sonic artists, so that the interaction can lead to interesting partnerships or collaborations in practise. However, this is not to be an essential component of the residency. The group feels strongly that the invited artists should have the freedom to develop their work at their own pace and interpret the residency from their own perspective, without any control from the organizing collective.

Invitations for application with CV and documentation will be sent out at the earliest.

### **Motivations**

We understand this residency to be an “India – India” cultural exchange Residency a kind of a laboratory in time-space. And if a theme should evolve, it is constituted by the residency participants themselves, such as:

- 1) The creative urge and inspiration of the participants that opens up by the interacting with a new context outside their familiar surroundings and particular, regional cultural set-up,

2) The impact of development and such rapid change specific to Bangalore, with its own contemporary cultural exigencies between Indian traditions, local ways of life and the globalized future technologies and cultures,

3) The 3 months sharing and interaction with other artists from diverse cultural fields, that come from other parts of India than Bangalore city

4) The interaction with a Bangalore public, invited by Bar1 and IFA, to non-formal salons like situations at the bar1-venue, hosted by individual artists, with the opportunity to present their work and/or whatever is important to them and with the chance to familiarize themselves with the Bangalore arts scene.

There will also be a culmination of the residency with a public event. We do not see this, as an exhibition of final work, rather work in progress, towards which our guests would have to plan for during their residency. Any outcome, interaction with the other participants of the residency or not, will be welcome and open.

The residency sees itself as evolving a shape and as being as flexible as it can be. Each group of artists will themselves define what shape the residency takes.

### **Logistics**

Our guests will be taken care of by the facilitator and coordinator of Bar1, Dhanya Rajaram, supported by an assistant for that period and by the artist members of Bar1. Bar1 and its coordinator, is responsible for the logistics, contact, arrival, networking, workshops, interactions, arrival and departure and for the introducing the guests to studio-space, the geography of the city, its art venues, the Bangalore artists, colleges, artist material shops and, if desired to prominent cultural figures who live in Bangalore.

The travel costs to Bangalore and back home will be covered upto a maximum of 6000Rs, as well as a per-diem for each artist, at Rs 10,000/month approximately Rs 20,000 against bills for a material stipend.

The Bar1 studio apartment has a kitchen, where the guests will cook themselves. There will be someone to help keep the apartments clean. Besides the two-bedroom flat there is a roof terrace, which can be used as a working and meeting place. BAR 1 might also need to rent another space either as a living space or work space for the artists. There will be a neighbourhood doctor available in the event that a participant falls sick but no emergency fund for more serious health care.

Each flat will have a wifi internet connection, a common computer with a hard disk for storing material and assistance in editing and other technical requirements may be organized at the artists expense.

### **Documentation**

This residency July –September 2008 will be documented in order to facilitate discussion towards creating a publication sometime in the future. This documentation will involve both recording of conversations and assimilation of discussions at salons, between participants, other artists and cultural practitioners to enable the program to elucidate its interdisciplinary nature. A critical narrative report will thus be written and submitted to IFA at the end of the residency which will analyse the nature of the residency and its artistic interactions and projects.