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In support of the 20th anniversary
of the 2003 Convention



unesco
Intangible Cultural Heritage

organised by



international partner



PREVIEWSHOW2023

of

**DURGA
PUJA**ART

KOLKATA

october 11 – 15

““ it is very impressive to see in the commitment of the people and the authorities in the relation to durga puja specially in the town hall. we have witnessed several artists. we have been amazed to see the variety of handicrafts and their Art work. i want to congratulate the massArt organiser for this great initiative to bring people together. ””

– evagoras vryonides
ambassador of cyprus to india

““ it is the highest show of Art and culture anywhere in the world. you cannot find so many types of culture, Art and artisans. we destroy, dismantle to create new things every year. so we are the creators – the people of bengal. ””

– firhad hakim
mayor of kolkata & minister-in-charge - urban development & municipal affairs department
govt. of west bengal

““ durga puja is basically a very religious festival. there is an addition to the religious element of the festival which now comes with modern Art. i find this Art very interesting because it shows how much alive, how vibrant this festival is. maybe this is the biggest folk Art, street Art festival in the world and it goes beyond the worshipping aspects. it has more additions to it. massArt, i must say, is to be praised and commended for this addition to the traditional durga puja. ””

– dr. philipp ackermann
ambassador of germany to india

““ concept and execution and the inherent essence of aesthetics drew me to durga puja Art installation. i felt it amazing. ””

– theresa blegvad,
member of aarhus city council, denmark

““ i have come many times to kolkata but this is the first time i came for durga puja. so this is a very very special trip for me. visiting the pandals is a very interesting experience because each pandal has a different architectural structure. you enter it like you are entering an Art installation and you try to navigate it to understand what is the message, what is the inspiration that has driven the artist ””

– david puig
ambassador of dominican republic to india

““ our hon'ble chief minister and the government of west bengal have been actively involved in launching innovative initiatives to promote bengal's Art, culture, and tourism on a global scale. i am happy that massArt has taken steps to organize the preview show highlighting durga puja Art centres, thus carrying forward her vision. ””

– indranil sen
minister of state - i & ca, tourism,
technical education, training & skill
development department
govt. of west bengal



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durga puja Art an introduction

every autumn, the city of kolkata (formerly calcutta) wakes up to an explosion of creativity, with every neighbourhood decked up in a unique mélange of traditional Art and contemporary concepts, that are diverse and creative enough to rival any international Art biennale but defies comparison by dint of its spread across the city and by being rooted to a religious event. durga puja is bengal's biggest festival that takes place over a week or so in september - october, on varying dates every year. at the centre of the celebration is the figure of goddess durga, crafted traditionally in clay, who is worshipped in the act of vanquishing the demon mahishasura. while the worship of durga and her four divine children remains the ritualistic core, the temporary shelters of the idols – structures created from months in advance in street corners – become exquisite works of artistic expression, unique to each locality every year.

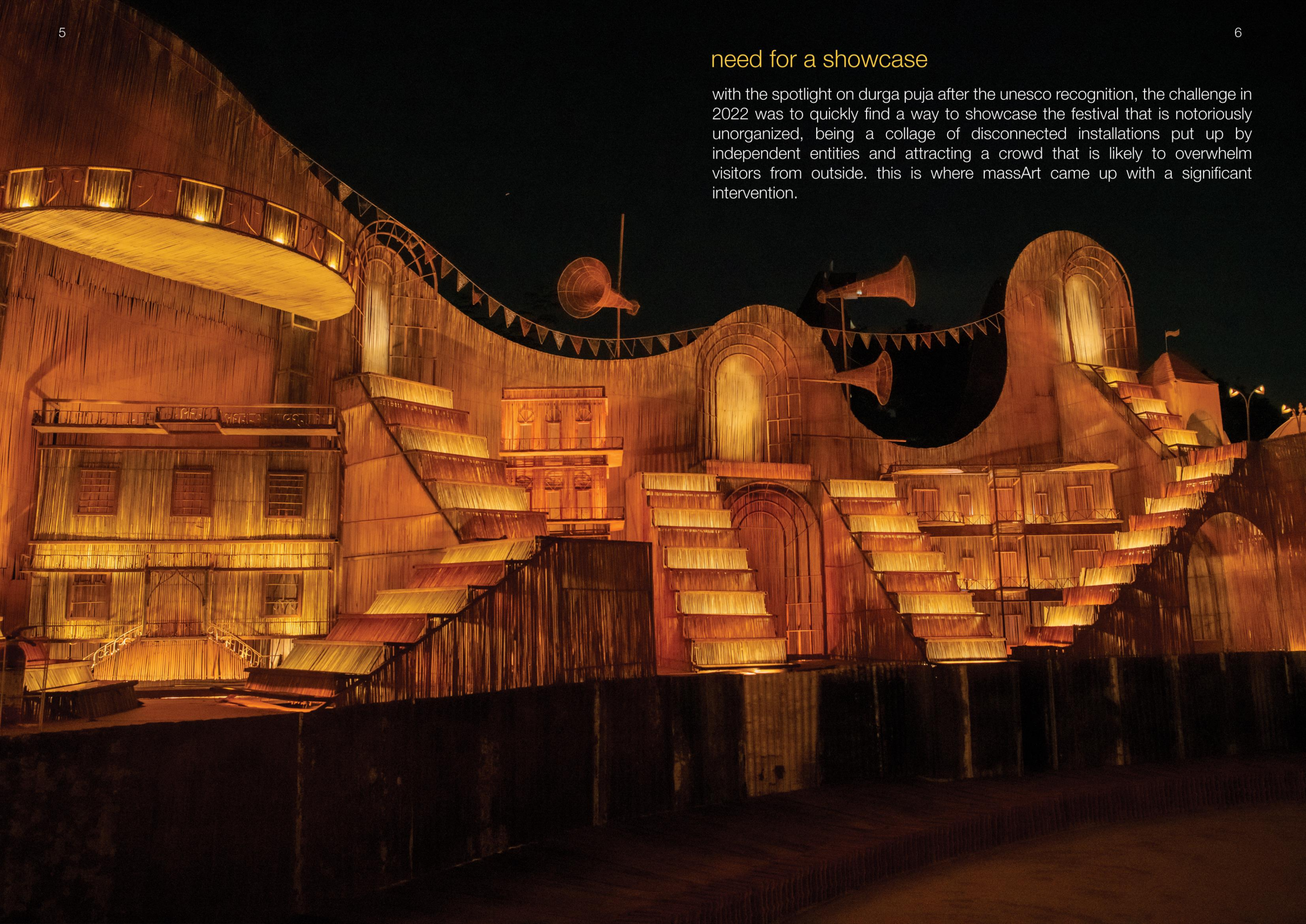




the big salute

the evolution of durga puja of kolkata into an inclusive, community-driven celebration of Art has been hailed by unesco, which describes it as "the best instance of the public performance of religion and Art, and as thriving ground for collaborative artists and designers...".

durga puja was inscribed on unesco's list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity in 2021.



need for a showcase

with the spotlight on durga puja after the unesco recognition, the challenge in 2022 was to quickly find a way to showcase the festival that is notoriously unorganized, being a collage of disconnected installations put up by independent entities and attracting a crowd that is likely to overwhelm visitors from outside. this is where massArt came up with a significant intervention.



the preview show & us

massArt, an organisation set up in june 2022 with the objective of promoting Art and culture of bengal, identified durga puja as a platform to encourage and enhance indigenous and contemporary Art, culture and heritage and expand their reach to a global arena.

it got its highly competent, experienced and it-enabled team of professionals from different creative and social spheres to work on creating a property that would cater to visitors looking to be introduced to the artistic activity surrounding durga puja.

the socio-culturally inclined not-for-profit organization, registered under the west bengal societies registration act 1961, came up with the idea of a durga puja Art preview show — a centrally managed property that would provide guidance to tourists, bring independent puja organizers on the same page and attract national and international artistic talent to visit, appreciate and even collaborate.

why it works

the biggest ace of this out-of-the-box idea is the timing. the preview takes place a week or so before the actual ritual starts, thus bringing tourists in before the pandals are opened to the public and avoiding the crowd.

some of the pandals would be nearing completion and tourists get to watch the craftsmen at work.

the streets are still relatively snarl-free. parking regulations are not in place yet. this means visitors' cars can be parked close to the pandals.

how it works

instead of having viewers crisscross the city in search of quality, a selection is made in advance. from a pool of over 3,500 pujas of different budgets and wildly varying artistic merit, 26 pujas are chosen for the preview show, keeping quality and variety in mind.

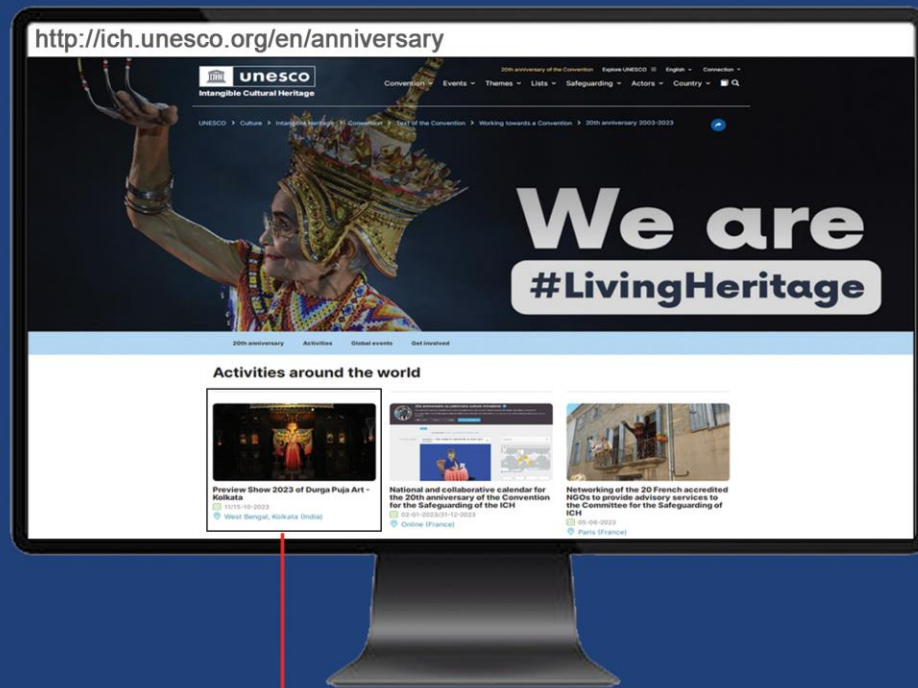
registration takes place online at massArt.in entry is ticketed or by invitation.

preview show pass holders get a route map with google map locations, which is invaluable for tourists who might be new to the city.

the 2023 edition highlights

the first preview show of durga puja Art in kolkata was exclusively for tourists from outside the state. this created such a demand locally that in its second edition, in 2023, the viewing was opened to select bonafide citizens, allowing more Art-loving people to experience the exquisite artistry in the pandals.






Preview Show 2023 of Durga Puja Art - Kolkata

 11/15-10-2023

 West Bengal, Kolkata (India)

showcased by unesco

on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage,

 **unesco** offered all stakeholders involved in the safeguarding of living heritage an opportunity to celebrate the inclusivity of living heritage. under the theme we are #LivingHeritage, the anniversary also showcased activities around the world raising awareness about the diversity and richness of intangible cultural heritage and fostering international cooperation. massArt's preview show was a proud inclusion in the unesco showcase.

the implementor



massArt

the work periphery of massArt is based on its inclination towards varied social and cultural spheres. a non government organisation by identity, its focal point is the promotion of indigenous Art, culture and heritage and their expansion around the globe.

massArt holds the operational capacities by means of quality human resource with special acumen in aesthetics and implementation.

inclusivity, participation and life and livelihood opportunities of artists and artisans are the core emphasis of massArt. preview show of durga puja Art conforms this work arena of massArt to achieve the objective and implement the vision.

partners on board

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of the 2003 Convention



unesco

Intangible Cultural Heritage

to touch the highest level of international essence and widespread global connectivity, preview show required partners of repute. inscription of kolkata durga puja on unesco's intangible cultural heritage list laid the foundation. and the proud inclusion of preview show in unesco's mentionable list set the momentum of the endeavour. unesco is thus the inevitable partner of massArt 's preview show.



in 2019 british council had undertaken a project to map the creative economy of durga puja thereby having a vivid introspection about the festival. the initiative made them immensely valuable as international partner of the show.

participants in durga puja Art preview show

category :

- 1 - artist from Art institutional background
- 2 - artist from other institutional background
- 3 - woman artist
- 4 - durga puja Art in collaboration with international artist
- 5 - consistent contemporary durga puja Art installation
- 6 - ideal sponsor projected durga puja Art
- 7 - model organiser driven durga puja Art
- 8 - traditional durga puja Art
- 9 - aristocratic household durga puja Art (bonedi bari)



arjunpur amra sabai club

title of durga puja Art : ganadebata
[jato mot tato path]

artist : bhabatosh sutar

area : 15000 sqft.

dum dum tarun dal

title of durga puja Art : the
remembrance [kaal bela]

artist : pradip das

area : 3200 sqft.





dum dum park bhara chakra club

title of durga puja Art : fallacy
[bhranti]

artist : anirban das

area : 4200 sqft.



sreebhumi sporting club

title of durga puja Art : disneyland

artist : romio hazra

area : 7000 sqft.



dum dum park tarun sangha
puja committee

title of durga puja Art : relation
[natun roop-e tarun saaj-e]

artist : manas das

area : 8000 sqft.



tala prattoy

title of durga puja Art : kahan
a narration by susanta paul

artist : susanta paul

area : 33000 sqft.

hatibagan sarbojanin
durgotsab committee

title of durga puja Art : doshor

artist : tapas dutta

area : 1800 sqft.



kashi bose lane durga puja samity

title of durga puja Art : chai na hote uma

artist : rintu das

area : 9200 sqft.

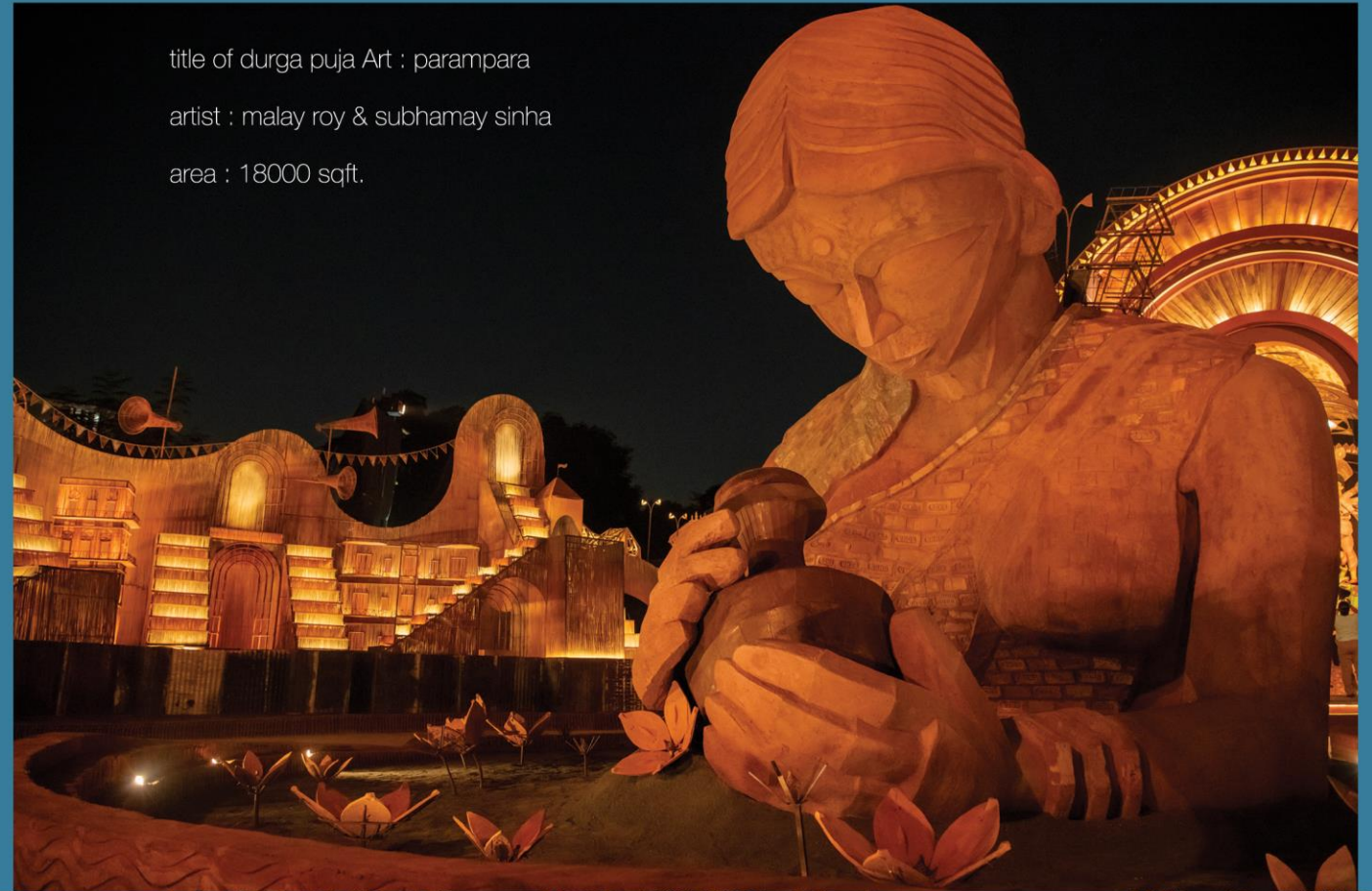




chorebagan sarbojanin durgotsab samity
title of durga puja Art : onubhuti
artist : debasis barui
area : 9000 sqft.

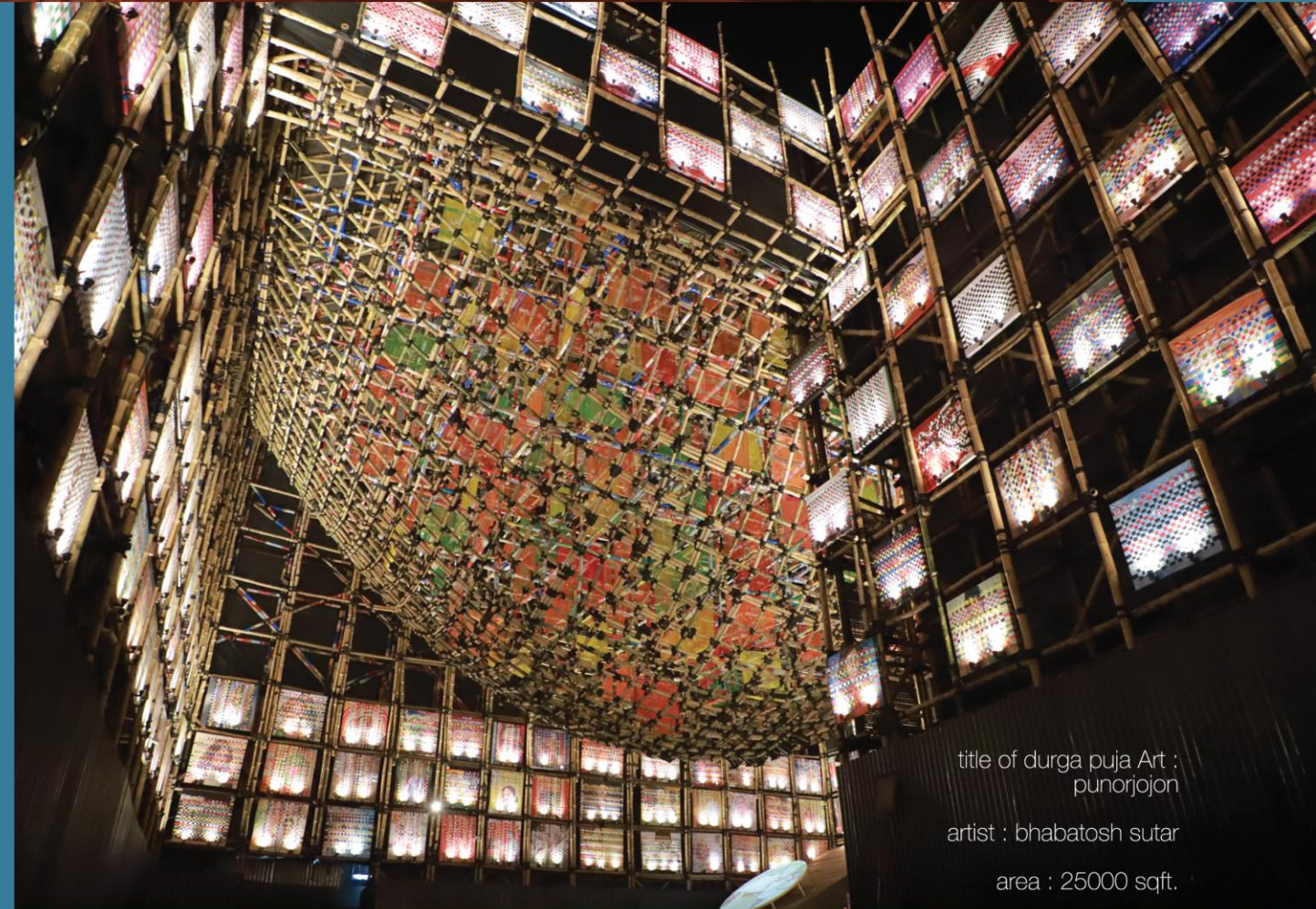
rajdanga naba uday sangha

title of durga puja Art : parampara
artist : malay roy & subhamay sinha
area : 18000 sqft.



beliaghata 33 no palli bashi brinda

title of durga puja Art : shailarti
artist : subrata banerjee
area : 3120 sqft.

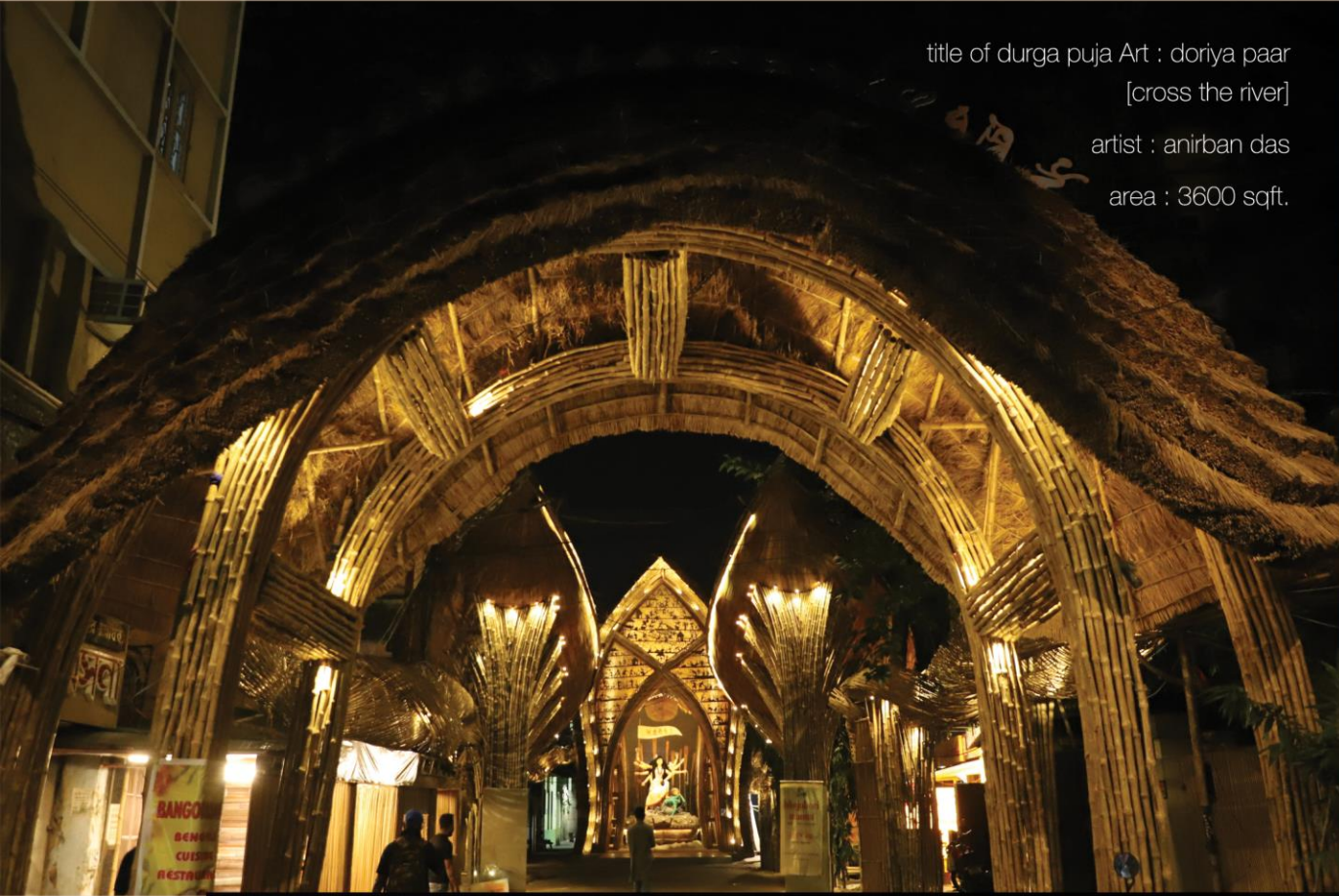


title of durga puja Art : punorjojon
artist : bhabatosh sutar
area : 25000 sqft.

jodhpur park 95 pally sarbojanin durgotsab

gariahat hindusthan club

title of durga puja Art : doriya paar
[cross the river]
artist : anirban das
area : 3600 sqft.



ballygunge cultural association

title of durga puja Art :
kathabali
artist : bimal samanta
area : 4600 sqft.



title of durga puja Art : sri sri durga sahay
artist : krishanu pal
area : 2500 sqft.

samaj sebi sangha



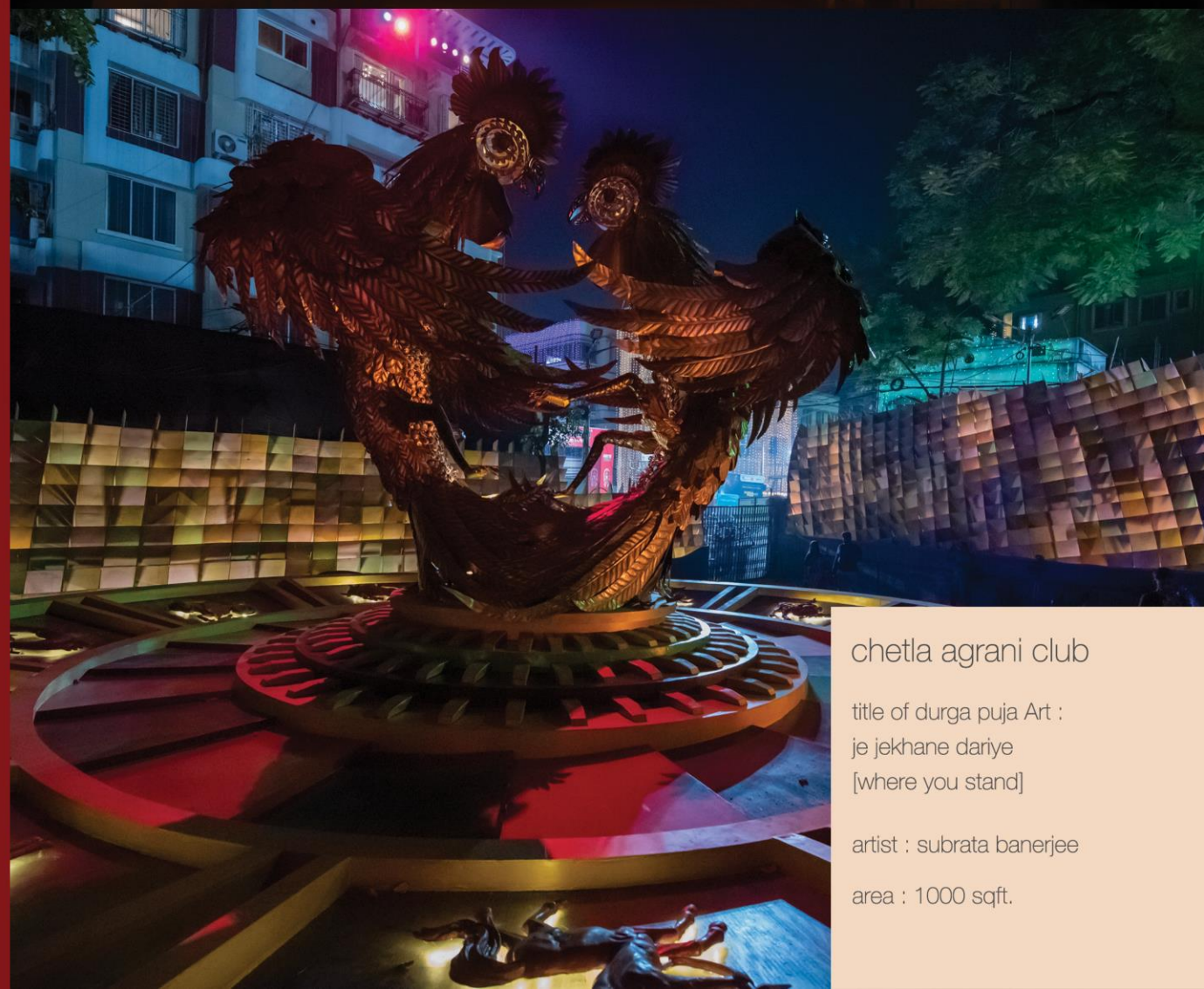
tridhara akalbodhan
title of durga puja Art : utsab
artist : gouranga kuila
area : 3000 sqft.

kalighat milan sangha

title of durga puja Art : adhisthatri

artist : biswanath de

area : 4800 sqft.



chetla agrani club

title of durga puja Art :
je jekhane dariye
[where you stand]

artist : subrata banerjee

area : 1000 sqft.

suruchi sangha

title of durga puja Art : maa

artist : gouranga kuila

area : 25000 sqft.



behala friends

title of durga puja Art :
marg darshan

artist : upasana chatterjee

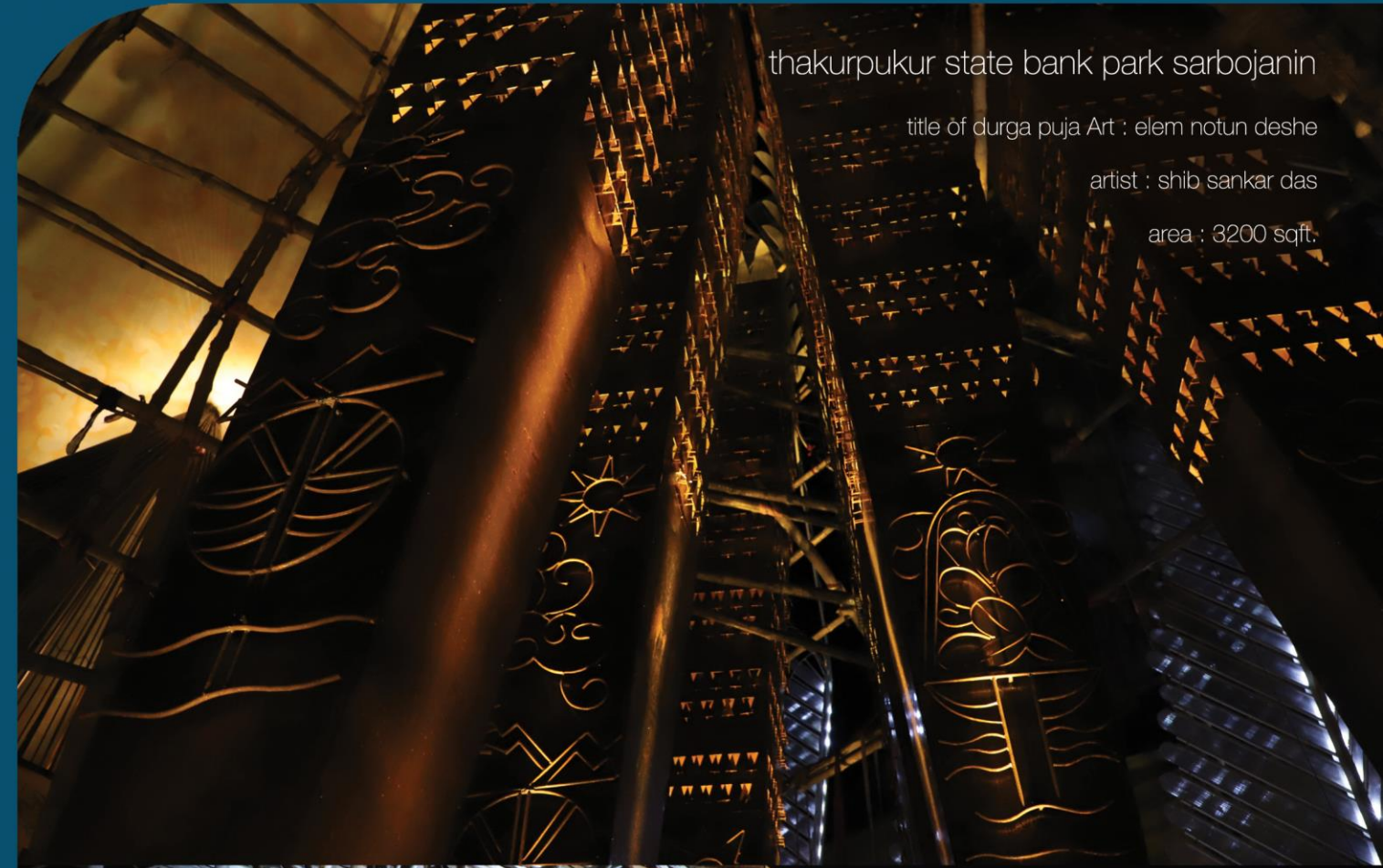
area : 5000 sqft.



behala nutan dal
 title of durga puja Art : tushti
 artist : ayan saha
 area : 3500 sqft.



barisha club
 title of durga puja Art : destruction and
 creation [bhanga-gara]
 artist : rintu das
 area : 7000 sqft.



thakurpukur state bank park sarbojanin
 title of durga puja Art : elem notun deshe
 artist : shib sankar das
 area : 3200 sqft.



naktala udayan sangha
 title of durga puja Art : hridaypur
 artist : pradip das
 area : 10000 sqft.



colootola roy bari



jorasanko daw bari
nandalal daw debottar
estate



'making of durga puja Art' an exhibition

alongside the preview show at the puja sites, an exhibition on 'making of durga puja Art' took place during the period at the iconic town hall. the exhibition was a journey through the entire process, from conception to execution, using audio-visual footage and live demonstration. there was also an opportunity to sample the craftsmanship of artistes and collect specimens of their Art before stepping out to enjoy the creations on view at the chosen puja sites.

a bonus was an audio-visual installation which was a result of an indo-german collaboration. 'jol kotha bole | water speaks' had german light and media designer thomas eichhorn and indian sound artist sukanta majumdar joining hands to seek inspiration in the essence of river ganga in india and river elbe in germany through a canvas of light and sound. the artists aimed to connect the stories of these rivers and the lives on their banks thousands of miles apart.

what they said



colette copeland
united states,
visual artist,
Arts educator and Art writer

have you been to kolkata before during durga puja ?

this is my first durga puja. It's been very exciting, getting to meet the artists and artisans.

would you tell us about your experience and observation on preview show?

for me what makes durga puja so unique is the large scale installation Art. i have seen how communities come together and work for months — artisans from villages, artists, designers, sound artists...

you are seeing this massive crowd on the streets in daytime too and durga puja has not even started. what do you think of the organisational efforts that have been put in to host this festival?

it's amazing that there can be this huge influx of millions of people coming into the city and everything is running so smoothly. massArt has organised the visits of dignitaries at the big installations, managing traffic to ensuring that visitors get to see behind the scenes of work and ensuring everything runs really really smoothly. i just want to say i am overwhelmed.

in the context of the preview show of durga puja Art, you also saw the indo-german installation by sukanta and thomas eichhorn. how did that work add to your experience?

thomas's work specifically has to do with water, it has to do with the scarcity of water, the preciousness of water. it has to do with environmental conservation and that is globally a very important issue. the other thing that i really connected to in that particular installation was the intimacy.



simona cosentia
italy,
research scholar,
nottingham trent
university, uk

you have been in the city for quite sometime now. tell us about your experience of the city.

i have been in the city almost a month and i am seeing how the city has changed in this last month for the preparation of durga puja. there is something extraordinary about the festival that you cannot understand if you are not here from the mini pictures that you find online, on facebook — how big and how creative it is.

tell us about your understanding of the process of the making of the durga puja

one of the main things that struck me is how it involves all members of the community as well as this continuous innovation that is behind it and the impact that is associated with it. it is extraordinary to see how it really impacts communities in a positive way, especially from the economic point of view.

which aspects attracted or touched you?

i was very impressed with some of the pandals that i have seen so far for the social messages they communicated.

you are experiencing durga puja through massArt's preview show. how is your experience of the massArt intervention?

i think massArt's preview show is a great idea because this way it can facilitate the processing and the understanding of the different pandals and their core messages without facing what is expected to be a big crowd during the festival. i think the main impact of massArt's intervention is to promote durga puja internationally, also to generate new livelihood, encourage more artists in participating as well as giving more recognition to the artists and workers involved in the making of durga puja.

during the preview show we also had an indo-german light and sound show by thomas and sukanta. how did that impact you at the beginning of your durga puja journey?

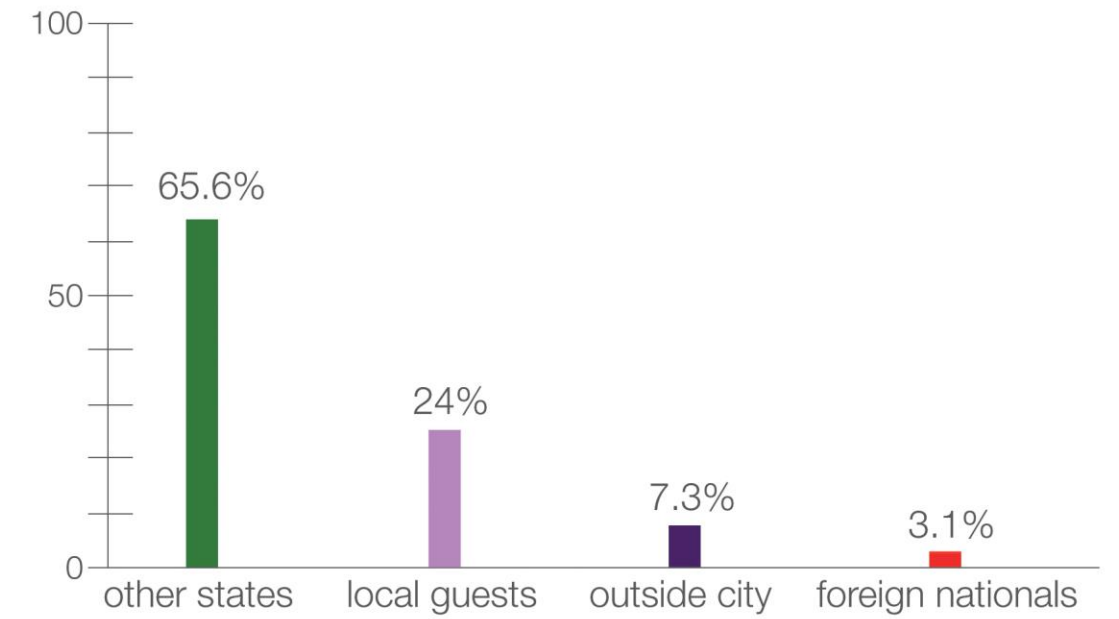
i found the relationship very thought-provoking because of the metaphor of the water and the river that is continuous and flowing, changing and flexible, creating its own path. it is the same for culture and people.

demographics

durga puja Art venues of preview show , spread across the city of kolkata, were witnessed by the influx of visitors came from local, national and international places. visitors, as per their preferred slots of viewing time, covered the venues during five nights of festivity. thus the number of visitors combining registered and invited ones, chose their specific time periods resulting an encouraging demographics.

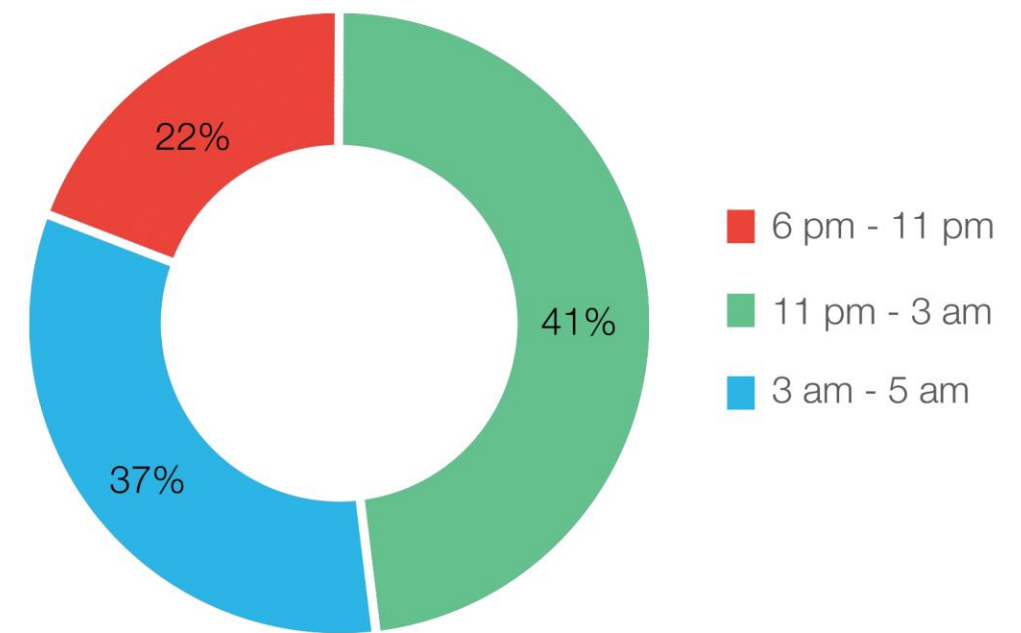
data sheet

type of visitors



total number of visitors - 34,960

visiting time



visiting hours - 6 pm to 5 am

social events

durga puja Art is for all and psdpa adds a human touch by including faces of those who are not so privileged in some sense or other. hence introduced certain inclusive events in psdpa for the orphans, old age people and differently abled children.

organising guided durga puja Art tour by luxury coach – looking after their comfort and convenience – is the basis of the endeavour.



for orphans

- partner orphanage – sos india
- no. of participants – 27
- support team of 8 persons
- guided by – ms puja bhagat
- provision for green corridor by puja committees
- puja visited – tala prattoy, hatibagan sarbojanin, tridhara akal bodhan, gariahat hindusthan club, ballygunge cultural association, samaj sebi sangha



for elderly people

- partner ngo – snehodiya
- no. of participants- 25
- support team of 8 persons
- guided by – joy mukherjee
- provision for green corridor by puja committees
- puja visited – tala prattoy, hatibagan sarbojanin, tridhara akal bodhan, gariahat hindusthan club, ballygunge cultural association, rajdanga naba uday sangha

for differently abled children

- partner ngo – pathfinder
- no. of participants- 32
- support team of 8 persons
- guided by – md. shamim
- provision for green corridor by puja committees
- puja visited – tala prattoy, hatibagan sarbojanin, tridhara akal bodhan, rajdanga naba uday sangha



through the lens

in association with kolkata international photography festival (kipf), a photography contest was organised on the preview show. the contestant photographers, applied through massArt.in, captured the aesthetic elements, installatiin brilliance and the candid moments inside durga puja Art venues. it was a varied range of interpreting Art segments in one's own way. altogether 860 participants took part in the contest. prizes for the top three photographs and later an exhibition with all the entries were the mark of the contest.



1st

photographer : kishor das
durga puja Art : dum dum park tarun sangha puja committee



2nd

photographer : angshuman paul | durga puja Art : kashi bose lane



3rd

photographer : arpan bhattacharya | durga puja Art : tala prattoy

pat on the back

one of the most important activities of the previve show is to ensure smooth movement that enables national and international visitors to witness durga puja Art as in an Art gallery. considering the significance of proper management of durga puja Art venues, a competition among the durga puja organisers has been introduced titled '**best commitment award**'. the best managed pujas take home handsome cash awards.

1st
kashi bose lane



2nd
chetla agrani club



3rd
barisha club





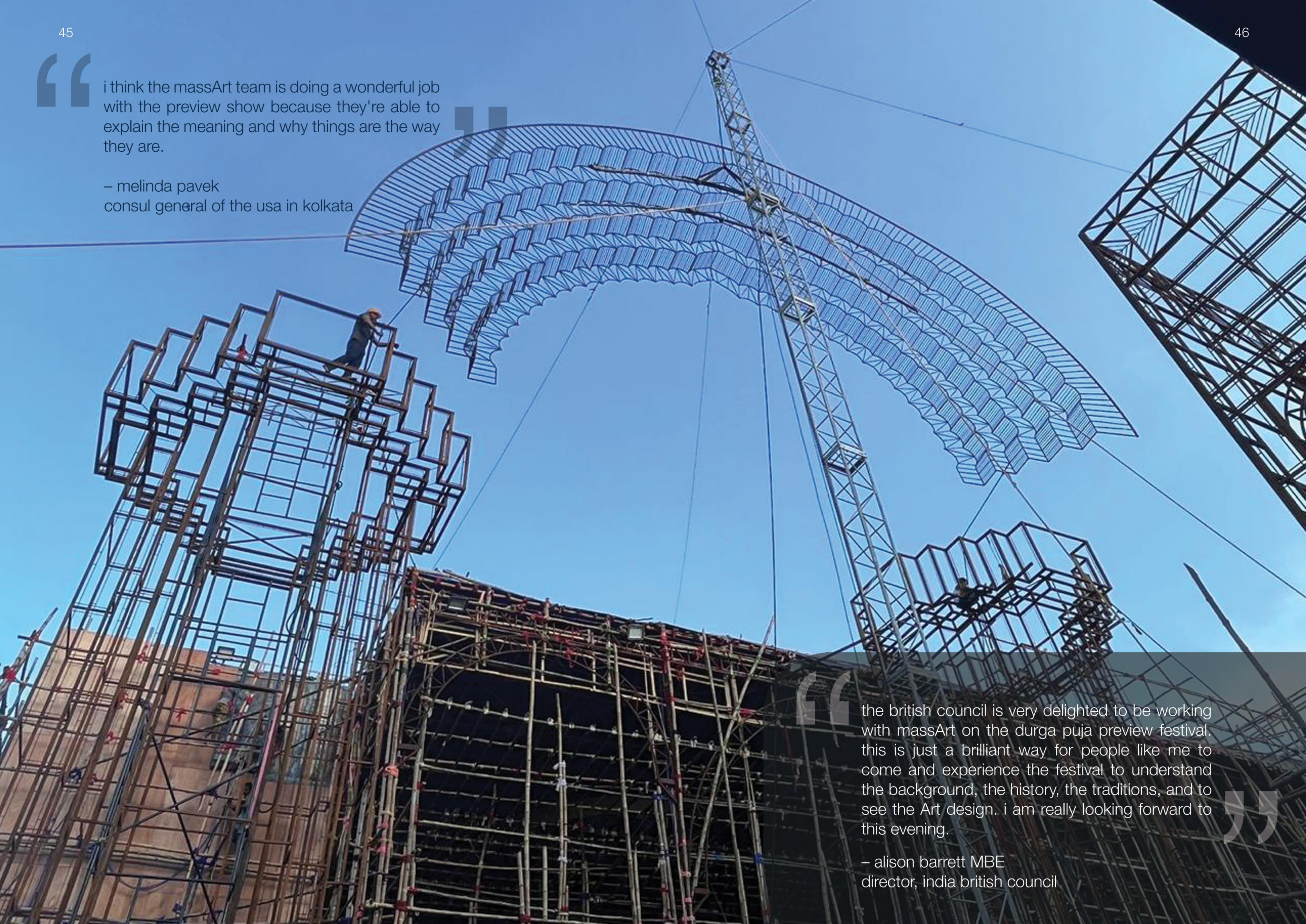
i think the massArt team is doing a wonderful job with the preview show because they're able to explain the meaning and why things are the way they are.

– melinda pavek
consul general of the usa in kolkata



the british council is very delighted to be working with massArt on the durga puja preview festival. this is just a brilliant way for people like me to come and experience the festival to understand the background, the history, the traditions, and to see the Art design. i am really looking forward to this evening.

– alison barrett MBE
director, india british council





overview

durga puja is the biggest festival across eastern india and it is a well-known fact. we are keen to take the Art aspect of this secular and inclusive celebration beyond the borders of bengal.

we embarked on this mission as we think the fulfillment of our objective will popularise the Art and culture of bengal to a larger audience and pave the way for exchanges of ideas, which will give a big push to collaborative Art.

our humble attempt of promoting the Art and culture of bengal will have a far reaching impact on the lives of few lacs people, like craftsmen, folk artists and even food vendors.

the preview show of durga puja Art is a mission to realise an entire gamut of dreams.

dhrubajyoti bose suvo
secretary
massArt

we are really thankful to government of west bengal

msme department
govt. of west bengal

kolkata police
bidhannagar police

kolkata
municipal corporation

massart.in

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