

## **Art and Architecture exhibitions highlight a thriving arts scene**

- *Six of the country's leading arts organisations announce projects and events that celebrate Art, Architecture and Design during the first half of 2022*

The year 2022 marks the start of a series of important and unmissable art and architecture events taking place in Colombo involving artists from across the country and internationally. Six of Sri Lanka's leading arts organizations are coming together to raise awareness and promote their respective projects to the city's residents and returning tourists. Each of their upcoming projects clearly positions Colombo as a must-see destination for local and international art. The participating galleries and institutions are Colomboscope, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka (MMCA Sri Lanka), the Geoffrey Bawa Trust, the John Keells Foundation in partnership with the George Keyt Foundation, Saskia Fernando Gallery and Barefoot Gallery Colombo.

Natasha Ginwala, Artistic Director, Colomboscope, speaking at the event said, "We are celebrating the seventh edition of the interdisciplinary art festival Colomboscope that will be the first event to start off art events in the city from 21 to 30 January 2022. This edition of the festival will bring together over 50 Sri Lankan and international artists, especially fostering South Asian dialogue and encounters with cultural practitioners from the diaspora with exhibitions and events spread over six locations in Colombo. Embarking from the words of poet-artist Cecilia Vicuña: 'Language is Migrant' – artistic and literary contributions map hybrid belonging, diasporic lineages, and coerced dislocation. Across six chapters, this edition explores how language relations form our selfhood and affinities that outweigh the bind of nationhood and citizenship. Between the counterpoints of stillness and motion, we situate practices that critically explore emancipatory and forced mobility—for we cannot deny that the world as we know it is composed of movement at galactic, human, and atomic levels. Artists compose, decipher and perform as vital travellers and storytellers of our times.

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Often, repairing relations by drawing material articulations from deep losses, silence and erasures while inventing language forms as bridges between communal narratives, official records, and submerged histories.”

The second event, will be by The Geoffrey Bawa Trust, and will commence on February 01st, 2022. *It is Essential to be There* is the first major exhibition that draws from the archives to look at Bawa’s practice. Organised in four thematic sections, exploring relationships between ideas, drawings, buildings and places, the exhibition explores the different ways in which images were used in Bawa’s practice. Over 120 documents from the Bawa archives, most of which have previously never been shown publicly, will be on view, including a section on unbuilt work and Bawa’s own photographs from his travels. Although Bawa’s work has been exhibited at multiple venues in the UK, USA, Australia, India, Brazil, Singapore and Germany, this is the first exhibition on Bawa’s work to be shown in Sri Lanka. The exhibition is curated by the Geoffrey Bawa Trust’s curator Shayari de Silva, and includes new photographs and video works by Sebastian Posingis, Dominic Sansoni and Clara Kraft Isono. The exhibition is on view from 1 February until 3 April, 2022 at The Stables at Park Street Mews in Colombo 02. Open daily from 11 a.m.–7 p.m., it is presented in English, Sinhala and Tamil languages. The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive public programme of talks, tours and workshops as well as a website with additional digital content to enhance accessibility of the works on view. This exhibition received generous financial support from the primary partner Kohler, local partners Nations Trust Private Banking, Crystal Property Group, JAT Holdings and the venue partner, Park Street Mews.

Speaking at the event Sharmini Pereira, Chief Curator, MMCA Sri Lanka, said, “We are delighted to work alongside such a stellar lineup of arts organizations in Sri Lanka to promote art and architecture in the country. We hope this drive creates awareness about the high calibre and diversity of art activities taking place in Sri Lanka. MMCA Sri Lanka will be launching our second exhibition titled ‘Encounters’. The exhibition will run from 11 February to 28 August 2022 and will be presented at our new location inside Crescat Boulevard. ‘Encounters’ brings together 56 artworks as part of an exciting series of changing displays that draw from the art collections of the George Keyt Foundation and John Keells Holdings as the starting point. The exhibition will include work by 18 modern and contemporary artists and will include a 6-month trilingual public programme that is free and open to everyone. ‘Encounters’ is generously supported by the John Keells Foundation, the European Union and the Foundation for Arts Initiatives.

Artworks have been kindly loaned to the exhibition from collectors in Sri Lanka and internationally.

John Keells Foundation, the CSR entity of John Keells Group, announced that they together with The George Keyt Foundation are organising the open-air Kala Pola event in August/September 2022. In 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, Kala Pola went online for the first time on [www.srilankanartgallery.com](http://www.srilankanartgallery.com) hosted by John Keells Foundation, and following its success and to continue to empower artists during the pandemic, Kala Pola went online once again in the form of a Christmas Edition in December. Kala Pola has evolved as an eagerly anticipated event in the arts and culture calendar of Sri Lanka providing a platform for over 300 visual artists to connect with over 30,000 visitors from around the world each year, as a launchpad for emerging artists and a forum for artists and art professionals to network and learn while promoting public social dialogue through the powerful medium of art.

John Keells Foundation also noted that the Gratiaen Trust – which it partners as primary sponsor – will be organizing the annual Gratiaen Prize event in late June/early July and is also planning a series of events to mark its 30th anniversary this year. The Trust was founded by Sri Lankan-Canadian writer Michael Ondaatje with his Booker prize money for 'The English Patient' and its objective is to promote Sri Lankan creative writing in English and translations of Sinhala and Tamil literature into English. Its flagship event is the Gratiaen Prize which is awarded annually to the best work of creative writing in English submitted by a Sri Lankan resident in the country.

For the first quarter of 2022, in addition to the monthly calendar of exhibitions, Saskia Fernando Gallery (SFG) is pleased to announce the participation of artists Chandraguptha Thenuwara and Saskia Pintelon in the forthcoming Venice Biennale 2022, Italy. The installations by both artists will be a part of the Personal Structures Exhibition presented by the European Cultural Centre Venice. This January, SFG is also kicking off the first projects of the A4A Production Fund, established in 2021 in collaboration with the Udayshanth Fernando Foundation, with the aim of lending support to emerging contemporary Sri Lankan artists. The fund will support three Sri Lankan artists in the creation, exhibition and publication of their selected project. Finally, the #SupportLocalArt Talk Series supported by Nations Trust Bank Private Banking, established in 2021 with the intention of creating a much needed platform for conversation on the developments of the Sri Lankan art industry, will establish an independent

youtube channel as an archive of previous talks and in keeping with the objective of the talk platform to engage the entire industry, SFG will be passing the baton to the MMCA for the next round of conversations.

Puja Srivastava, Manager, Barefoot Gallery Colombo, speaking on the happenings at the gallery added, “Barefoot was established in 1993 and has been a progressive gallery. We have been known as a venue for various contemporary and modern Sri Lankan artists, we also direct the work of artists from overseas. An exciting new development is the revival of the area above the Gallery known as THE BAREFOOT LOFT. Our objective with The Loft is to enable the Gallery to expand and showcase more artworks and all other forms of expression - turning this intimate loft into a working area.”

Celebrate art in Colombo from January to August 2022, to find out more information on each of the events log on to the websites mentioned below.

- Colombo Scope visit [www.colomboscope.lk](http://www.colomboscope.lk)
- The Geoffrey Bawa Trust visit [bawaexhibition.com](http://bawaexhibition.com)
- Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka visit [mmca-srilanka.org/new-home](http://mmca-srilanka.org/new-home)
- Kala Pola hosted by John Keells Foundation visit [www.srilankanartgallery.com](http://www.srilankanartgallery.com)
- Saskia Fernando Gallery visit [www.saskiafernandogallery.com](http://www.saskiafernandogallery.com)
- The Barefoot Gallery Colombo visit [barefootceylon.com/gallery/](http://barefootceylon.com/gallery/)

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## **NOTE TO EDITORS**

### ***Colomboscope***

Festival Venues: Colombo Public Library (Colombo 07), Rio Cinema Complex (Colombo 02), WA Silva Museum (Colombo 06), Barefoot Gallery Colombo (Colombo 04), Lakhmahal Community Library (Colombo 03), Lak Café (Viharamahadevi Park, Colombo 07)

### ***Full list of participating artists***

Language is Migrant participants include Aaraniyam, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Mounira Al Solh, We Are From Here, Abdul Halik Azeez, Palash Bhattacharjee, Muvindu Binoy, Shailesh BR, Lavkant Chaudhary, Jason Dodge, Liz Fernando, Dora García with Jayampathi Guruge, Aziz Hazara, Baaraan Ijlal, Omar Kasmani, Areez Katki, T. Krishnapriya, Mariah Lookman, Imaad Majeed, Danushka Marasinghe, Vijitharan Maryathevathas, Sharika Navamani, Yoshinori Niwa, Christian Nyampeta, Pinar Öğrenci, Packiyathan Ahilan, Rupaneethan Pakkiyarajah, Pallavi Paul, Rajni Perera, Saskia Pintelon, Mano Prashath, Ahilan Ratnamohan, M. T. F. Rukshana, Marinella Senatore with Hasanthi Niriella and Ashley Fagnoli, Hema Shironi, Hanusha Somasundaram, Pangrok Sulap, Anojan Suntharam, Slavs and Tatars, Thisath Thoradeniya, A Thousand Channels, Iffath Neetha Uthumalebbe, Cecilia Vicuña, T. Vinoja, Elin Már Øyen Vister, Omer Wasim, Jagath Weerasinghe, Belinda Zhawi.

### ***Reading Room Contributors***

Additional contributors to Reading in Tongues, Colomboscope's Reading Room at Lakmahal Community Library include Indran Amirthanayagam, Kadak Collective, Mythri Jegathesan, kal, Kumari Kumaragamage, Mantiq of the Mantis, The Packet, SCROLL: Projects on Paper, Mounira Al Solh and Nada Ghosn, T. Thajendran, Bombay Underground. The seventh edition of Colomboscope is curated by Anushka Rajendran with artistic director Natasha Ginwala.

### ***Geoffrey Bawa Trust***

The Geoffrey Bawa Trust is a non-profit, public trust that was established in 1982 by the late architect, with the objectives of furthering the fields of Architecture, the Fine Arts and Ecological and Environmental Studies. The Trust manages the estate of Geoffrey Bawa, with a focus on increasing access and scholarship around the built work and personal collections of the architect, which includes the archives of his architectural practice. Since the architect's passing in 2003, the Trust has sustained year-round public programmes comprising lectures, educational tours, scholarships, residencies and exhibitions which engage broader discourse on the built environment and the arts in both Sri Lanka and overseas.

### ***The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka***

MMCA Sri Lanka, the country's first public museum committed to the display, research, collection and conservation of modern and contemporary art is located at Crescat Boulevard. MMCA Sri Lanka is founded upon the values of learning and discovery and is committed to artists past and present, living and working across the country and internationally. Alongside its curated exhibitions and education programmes, the museum is the first publicly accessible trilingual venue of its kind in Sri Lanka. The MMCA Sri Lanka was launched in 2019 as a not-for-profit organisation and receives local and international funding. Its first exhibition attracted over 3500 visitors. In addition to hosting 37 school and university groups from across the country. The museum hosted 165 free public events, 11 kids workshops, and 12 trilingual talks by artists, educators and curators during the course of the exhibition.

### ***John Keells Holdings - George Keyt Foundation***

Kala Pola is an annual art fair conceptualized by The George Keyt Foundation (GKF) and launched in 1993. Since 1994, John Keells Holdings has partnered GKF as the primary sponsor and co-organizer of the event, spearheading event planning and coordination through John Keells Foundation under its Arts & Culture pillar, within the Foundation's vision of 'Empowering the Nation for Tomorrow'.

### ***Saskia Fernando Gallery***

Founded in 2009, Saskia Fernando Gallery presents an extensive range of exhibitions and events each year, as well as high-calibre collaborations with platforms, curators, and publications. Representing 15 established and emerging artists with ties to Sri Lanka—either from Sri Lanka or working in Sri Lanka—Saskia Fernando Gallery maintains a lineup of both conceptually and formally rigorous practices, with artists working across a range of media including painting, sculpture, and photography. Throughout all its programming, the gallery focuses on exposing Sri Lankan contemporary art to an international audience, as well as cultivating the local art scene.

### ***Barefoot Gallery Colombo***

The Gallery is part of Barefoot (Pvt) Ltd., the well-known parent company. Barefoot the store and the Gallery have a symbiotic relationship that benefits both: they inspire each other. The Barefoot Garden cafe, which is the heart of this ample space, is a sanctuary for all. Following Colomboscope, the Barefoot Gallery Colombo will be exhibiting the works of Nalin Indrasena on the 8th of February 2022. Nalin is a Sri Lankan artist based in Switzerland, who works with cold wax and oil mixed media - this will be his second solo exhibition at Barefoot Gallery Colombo. The Gallery has an exciting lineup for 2022, including artists Dushyant Patel, Anoli Perera, Dhanushka Amarasekara and Nelun Harasgama.”