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### **MMCA Sri Lanka Adds the Arts to the Classroom**

The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka (MMCA Sri Lanka) particularly focuses on educational initiatives for various target groups across the country. These include the general public, and schools and higher educational institutions in Sri Lanka.

Through its Schools and Higher Education Institutions Outreach Programme, the MMCA Sri Lanka engages with preschools, schools, and higher education institutions within its immediate radius of 10km, as well as those institutions that have an educational interest in arts and culture. Guided tours, activities, specially designed workshops, and additional support (such as guest lectures) related to assignments and curriculum design are offered to educational institutions that would like to incorporate the museum's exhibitions, artworks, thematics and publications in their classrooms.

Sharmini Pereira, Chief Curator at the MMCA Sri Lanka noted that, "Our outreach activities are conceived to dispel the perception of a museum as a mausoleum of dead objects or an elite, inaccessible place of abstract ideas." She added that, "The many student populations of the country will in time, come to shape and form the future of Sri Lankan modern and contemporary art as policy makers, funders, academics, decision makers and creative leaders. They sit at the centre of our future, which begins with the work we are doing today around outreach and learning."

The MMCA Sri Lanka engages with educational institutions via two main ways. The first is an Outreach visit to an exhibition on view at the Museum. The Education and Curatorial teams at the Museum work together to ensure a visit that combines a learning experience including a guided tour, and upon request, an activity, assignment, or reflection/discussion session based on the institution's preferences. The Museum's exhibition spaces are designed in a versatile manner and they can be converted into classrooms and/or spaces to hold crit sessions.

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As of April 2024, the MMCA Sri Lanka has curated and organised visits for approximately 3,200 students from preschools, local, international, and semi-government schools, and public and private higher education institutions.

Pramodha Weerasekera, Curator Education and Public Programmes at the MMCA Sri Lanka said that, “The museum is designed for learning and educational experiences. We are excited to have students join us and contribute to the dialogue and discourse around our exhibitions and modern and contemporary art in Sri Lanka.” She also added that, “One of our larger goals is to expand the Outreach programme further and think about how we can contribute to much-needed changes in the formal education sector as well.”

As the second method of engagement, staff members from the MMCA Sri Lanka visit educational institutions. In these visits they speak about the museum, its efforts, Sri Lankan modern and contemporary art, and the thematics of a current exhibition on display. The Museum curates such visits based on the priorities of each educational institution and how they align with the Museum’s mission of display, research, collection, and conservation of Sri Lankan modern and contemporary art. As of April 2024, the museum’s staff has visited the Overseas School of Colombo, S. Thomas’ College Mount Lavinia, and the Department of English, University of Colombo.

Educational institutions (formal and informal) are encouraged to reach out to the MMCA Sri Lanka at [education@mmca-srilanka.org](mailto:education@mmca-srilanka.org) to request an Outreach visit.

The MMCA Sri Lanka is an education-led initiative that aims to establish a public museum dedicated to the display, research, collection, and conservation of modern and contemporary art for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public, schools, and tourists. The museum is open daily from 10am to 6pm (except on Poya days and public holidays) at the ground floor of Crescat Boulevard, Colombo 3, and entrance to the museum and all its public programmes is free. Information about the museum, and its exhibitions and public programmes can be found via their website [www.mmca-srilanka.org](http://www.mmca-srilanka.org), or on Facebook at [facebook.com/mmcasrilanka](https://facebook.com/mmcasrilanka) and Instagram at [instagram.com/mmcasrilanka/](https://instagram.com/mmcasrilanka/).