

Fresh colours

Companies are engaging with citizens to build awareness and revive art forms

APEEJAY

Bringing joy to the city

Kolkata-based Apeejay group believes that national tangible and intangible heritage can inspire people to value, nurture and preserve cultural identity and give people a sense of place and time.

The group has restored an over 100-year-old residential-cum-commercial heritage property Park Mansions, spread across five bighas on Kolkata's Park Street at an expense of close to ₹10 crore. The restoration work has won the group the Heritage Award from the Municipal Corporation, CMC and INTACH.

The group has also created platforms for public access to experience art and culture. Take The Park's New Festival, for instance. In its 11th year, the festival brings together artistes from the fields of music, art, theatre and dance, and takes them to six cities across the country – New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru.

Another example is Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, the first literary festival in the city which is in its ninth year — where the group has showcased books and writers, and brought in poets, musicians and artistes from across the world. The focus on restoring, sustaining and promoting tangible heritage has resulted in this festival being conducted at venues that were hitherto unknown heritage locations in the city.

The group's purpose was to showcase the rich architecture and cultural heritage of the City of Joy as well as to reintroduce them to Kolkatans so that they are never again forgotten.

To promote languages and regional literature, the group has created Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob, in its third year now, to showcase works of literature and other arts in Bangla language. A celebration of Hindi language



A street play on migration

through the Apeejay Language Festival is in its 3rd year.

In 2014 the group set up a gallery, Apeejay Arts, to promote new media art, a forum committed to showcasing high quality experimental work in new media and emerging technologies from India and abroad. This is the rebirth of Apeejay Media Gallery, a prominent centre of contemporary art in India, founded in 2001 when few recognised new media expressions as art.

The group has also stepped up to preserve, maintain, upgrade and beautify the Jantar Mantar observatory in New Delhi in accordance with conservation guidelines in partnership with National Culture Fund and Archaeological Survey of India.

Monetary and venue support have been lent to bolster initiatives of other organisations, projects, people, and events that keep Indian traditional arts and crafts alive and those that promote excellence in identified cultural fields.

A recent initiative is the use of Truck Art in tea room, Cha Bar and the creation of a Book Cover prize to celebrate the art of designers who draw readers to a book.

A good example of such work is the Anand Art Workshop that has been conducted for thousands of underprivileged children annually for more than 25 years in the lawns and within the premises of corporate headquarters, Apeejay House, in Kolkata. •