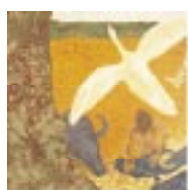


**Arts Research and Documentation**  
Request for Proposals  
2008



I F A

India Foundation for the Arts

Are you a scholar or an arts practitioner or group interested in looking critically at the notion of cultural traditions? Are you seeking to explore new methodologies for making sense of contemporary arts practice? If so, this programme is addressed to you. Please read on.

## Scope

This programme supports scholars and practitioners to undertake projects in the following two areas:

### **1) Research and documentation that critically investigates the making of cultural traditions.**

Rather than being a self-evident category, tradition has a history and is socially and culturally constituted. The making of a tradition involves a selective use and interpretation of the past with regard to its role for the present. Subjecting traditions to scrutiny, therefore, involves understanding the processes through which certain practices are elevated, accorded greater value, standardized and held up as the norm at the cost of others that are disowned or excluded. You may be a researcher interested in investigating the historical construction of cultural traditions in order to contribute to the field of arts scholarship. You may also be an artist keen to investigate the making of a tradition related to your own artistic practice; or a writer, performer/performance group or filmmaker seeking to explore and interpret the construction of a tradition through a work of art.

### **2) Research and documentation that seek to put in place or use new methodologies for studying contemporary arts practices.**

Methodologies that study art practices have conventionally been 'frozen' under the categories of folk, classical, national and the like. Consequently, methodologies that study new directions or phenomena in the arts are either nascent or do not exist. While social science methodologies have been developed to study 'pastness' or relatively stabilized systems or cultures for which documents, records and archives may exist, these tools often prove inadequate for engaging with the here and now. A new methodology might be required just to rise to the challenge posed by the lack of a 'paper trail' or because available ethnographic methods are inadequate for studying what is emerging, unfolding or changing in our own time.

Also, many contemporary arts practices intersect with the age of technology - television and the Internet, for instance - and are infinitely mediated. Conventional disciplinary tools, therefore, may need to be sharpened or even make way for new methodologies that marry disciplines. More often than not, what is required is a lateral mapping of objects and events, without sacrificing methodological rigour. You may be a researcher or an artist interested in developing or using new conceptual and/or technical tools that depart from existing disciplinary methodologies and break fresh ground, while illuminating and contributing to the study of contemporary arts practices.

## Examples of grants made under the above themes in 2007:

### **Manu Devadevan, Bangalore**

Research into the oral narrative tradition of Manteswamy, a sixteenth century saint of Karnataka, and its performance by the Neelagaras, the traditional singers of the Manteswamy epic. The study will excavate the historical origins of the tradition, scrutinise its representation as a Dalit tradition, and examine its contemporary performance contexts.

### **Himanshu Burte, Goa**

Research towards a book of thematic essays that investigate the nature, outcome and predicament of critical practices in architecture of the post-independence era, within a broader culture of building.

### **Deshkal Society, New Delhi**

Research into and documentation of the 'Reshma-Chuharmal' Nautanki, a popular Dalit folk theatre performance of Bihar. The project will explore how identities, caste and power are contested in and through this performance. Different versions of the 'Reshma-Chuharmal' story, both in its performed and written form, will be collated, transcribed, translated and analysed to understand how they reflect a changing sense of identity among the Dalits.

### **Dhritabrata Bhattacharjya, New Delhi**

Research into the production and distribution of 'Ashiq', an illuminated manuscript from the time of the Mughal emperor, Akbar. This study of the material aspects of the manuscript is expected to yield important new insights into the polity, economy and culture of the Mughal era. The research will result in a PowerPoint presentation documenting the Mughal manuscript industry and the Imperial library, and a book on manuscriptology.

### **Shabani Hassanwalia, New Delhi**

The making of a documentary film on the local Ladakhi film industry. The film will explore how and why the Ladakhi film industry emerged, how it sustains itself and where it wants to go.

## Application

Your applications should reach us by June 30, 2008. You can write your proposal in any Indian language including English. Your project may have a maximum duration of one year. You can request support for up to Rs 3 lakh. However, if you are a filmmaker, you can request support for up to Rs 5 lakh. You may budget for an honorarium up to Rs 12,000 per month or up to Rs 75,000 for the entire project if you are a filmmaker.

IFA staff will be glad to answer your questions regarding this grant programme. You are welcome to approach us to discuss your ideas or send us a draft proposal for our suggestions and comments up to May 31, 2008. You can expect grant awards to be announced on or before October 30, 2008.

### **To apply, please send us a proposal describing**

- a) The specific cultural tradition or contemporary practice that you seek to research and/or document.
- b) The research questions that are central to your project.
- c) The research methodology that you seek to follow and/or new methodologies that you wish to try out to tackle your subject of inquiry.
- d) The anticipated duration of your project, as well as a work plan.
- e) The proposed outcomes of your project.

### **Please remember to include the following with your proposal:**

- a) Supporting material, if any, which gives us a sense of your work.
- b) Your bio-data.
- c) A detailed budget breakdown that explains how funds will be used. Please also mention funds anticipated from other sources, if any.
- d) Your address, telephone/fax numbers, and e-mail address.
- e) If you are applying on behalf of an institution, please include background information on the organisation as well as the memorandum of association/trust deed, annual reports, and audited statements of accounts for the past three years.

## General Information

- ▶ Our funds will cover only project-related personnel costs, activities and travel, and can provide for modest equipment and materials, if necessary. Please ensure that each budget category pertains to a specific item of project-related expenditure.
- ▶ If you are an individual, please budget for an accountant.
- ▶ Please do not budget for institutional overheads, building costs and infrastructural development.
- ▶ Please do not make your identity evident in the text of the proposal.
- ▶ Please do not send your final proposal by fax or e-mail.
- ▶ If your proposal is short-listed, you may be requested to respond to evaluations.
- ▶ Your proposal will be assessed with the help of external evaluators, and IFA's decision in this regard will be final.

## Eligibility

You are eligible to apply if you are an Indian national, a registered non-profit Indian organisation, or have been resident in India for at least five years.

**Please address your draft proposals and queries to:**

The Head of Programmes  
India Foundation for the Arts  
'Apurva', Ground Floor, No. 259  
4th Cross, Raj Mahal Vilas, IIInd Stage, IIInd Block  
Bangalore - 560 094  
E-mail: [triptivyas@indiaifa.org](mailto:triptivyas@indiaifa.org)

**Please address your application to:**

The Executive Director  
India Foundation for the Arts  
'Apurva', Ground Floor, No. 259  
4th Cross, Raj Mahal Vilas, IIInd Stage, IIInd Block  
Bangalore - 560 094  
Tel/fax: 080 - 2341-4681 / 2341-4682

Translations of this circular are available in some other Indian languages on request and can also be downloaded from [www.indiaifa.org](http://www.indiaifa.org)