

Silk River Walk to celebrate UK India Year of Culture 2017

London is celebrating the UK's rich cultural relationship with India via Silk River, a spectacular Art Walk along the River Thames, from 15th – 24th September 2017. The unique free 10 day 'art walk' for everyone that will take place across the River Thames between 15th -24th September 2017, and the second walk along the Hooghly River, India, between 6th – 17th December 2017 and will feature twenty colourful hand-painted 6 metre tall Bengal silk scrolls which explore the unique relationship between London and Kolkata, India.

The walk will take place in 10 different locations across London, from Royal Botanic Gardens Kew to Southend. Silk River will begin at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew where participants will uncover treasures from Royal Botanic Gardens Kew's Economic Botany Collection and the trade links between continents and walk among the living collection of Indian specimens in the Palm House.

In Greenwich & Woolwich, and through the eyes of a Lascar sailor, the ship's cook, participants will explore life on board Cutty Sark, one of the finest trading vessels that sailed between the Thames and the Hooghly River.

And culminating in Southend, the walk will allow participants to meet local artists and parade up the pier with all 20 silk scrolls for a finale performance from the Mudlark Choir, and a parting moment when the stories will be sent out into the ocean with a blessing from the Hindu Association for the scrolls safe passage from London to Kolkata.

Kew will host an exhibition during October half term school holidays of all 20 of the silks accompanied by a programme of activities.

Silk River has been created by Kinetika, the internationally renowned company responsible for the art installations that led the Athlete's Parade at London 2012 Olympic Games to the delight of approximately one million onlookers.

Ali Pretty, Kinetika's Artistic Director said: "It was my first visit to India in 1984 that inspired me to work in the arts, using them as a tool for social change and community development. Silk River will build on my experience over the last 30 years, bringing together communities from the UK and India for a meaningful exchange of stories and ideas. By sharing and celebrating the similar histories and narratives between the River Thames and India's Hooghly River, the Silk River Project hopes to encourage the celebration of rich local history, and engage the community along the journey of rediscovery."

Following the London Silk River walk, a twelve-day performative walk will take place alongside the river Hooghly, India, from Murshidabad to Kolkata. Along the journey together from Azimganj, Murshidabad to Botanic Gardens, Kolkata, on boat, foot and by train, participants will engage with contemporary artists, historians, writers and musicians, and participate in curated events comprising of talks, workshops and film screenings. More details about the India walk can be found here: <http://www.silkriver.co.uk/india-walks/>

Silk River is brought together with the associate Artistic Director Ruchira Das from Think Arts, India and an international team of artists, writers and photographers and is supported by Arts Council England, British Council, Dartford Council, Kent County Council, Thurrock Council, Southend Council, Royal Borough of Greenwich, Barking & Dagenham CPP, Metal, Royal Opera House Trailblazers, Thurrock, Long Distance Walkers Association London Group and Royal Botanic Gardens Kew.

About Silk River

Silk River is an ambitious project which explores the unique relationship between London and Kolkata through artistic exchange between communities along the Thames Estuary and India's Hooghly River. Kinetika's Artistic Director Ali Pretty, with associate Artistic Director Ruchira Das (Think Arts, India) and an international team of artists, writers and photographers, will capture and interpret the experience of journeying along these two mighty rivers. Working in 20 locations from Murshidabad to Batanagar (Hooghly) and Royal Botanic Gardens Kew to Southend (Thames) to reinterpret a shared heritage, Kinetika's Silk River will raise cultural awareness of the Indo-British relationship through engaging diaspora communities who live alongside both rivers.

Silk River – London dates

Fri 15th – Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

Sat 16th – Tower Hamlets

Sun 17th – Greenwich

Mon 18th – Barking and Dagenham

Tues 19th – Purfleet

Weds 20th – Dartford

Thurs 21st – Gravesend

Fri 22nd – Tilbury

Sat 23rd – East Tilbury

Sun 24th – Southend

For further information visit www.silkriver.co.uk/UK-walks/

About Kinetika

Kinetika is an internationally renowned company with an 18-year track record of combining world-class design with community projects to produce spectacular outdoor events that engage diverse audiences wherever they work. Founded by artist Ali Pretty in 1997, and inspired by her training in carnival arts in Trinidad and India, Kinetika now has an unrivalled

reputation for working with local communities on projects that change the way people feel about where they live. From local community events in shopping centres, ceremonial boulevards and local high streets, to the Great Wall of China and the heart of Kolkata. The charitable arm, Kinetika People, is known for its high quality community engagement work, running participatory programmes, workshops and artist training schemes, which aim to nurture new artistic talent and engage communities, raising aspirations and building a sense of place. The commercial arm, Kinetika Design Studio, has been commissioned to create work for ceremonies at high profile events including FIFA World Cup 2009, the London Paralympic games/Team GB Parade in 2012 and the European Games 2015. For further information visit www.kinetikaonline.co.uk

About UK/India 2017

UK/India2017 is a year-long marking of the long-standing relationship between India and the UK, which will see a vast programme of cultural exchange and activity take place in cities across both countries. Working with a huge number of partners and institutions, the British Council is developing a programme of cultural activity which will connect and inspire people in both countries; and strengthen and celebrate the UK and India's cultural ties. For more information on UK/India 2017 please visit www.britishcouncil.in