

# ASSEMBLING ART ARCHIVES: WORKSHOPS FOR SOUTH ASIA

2025-26

## PARTICIPANTS



**Bhakti Hattarki** is a researcher, writer, and curator trained in Art History at the Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU Baroda. Her work engages with modern art in South Asia, with a growing focus on the intersections between pedagogy, public art, and popular visual culture. Over the last few years, she has worked across museums, archives, and independent curatorial projects including roles at DAG Museums, Bengal Biennale, and the Shanu Lahiri Archive, where she has undertaken archival research, developed public programming, and produced critical writing. Her practice is shaped by a deep interest in alternative modes of art education, artist-led initiatives, and the role of archival material in revisiting histories.

### **Shanu Lahiri Archives**

The Shanu Lahiri Archive is housed in the Kolkata apartment where the artist lived and worked for decades. It offers a layered view into Lahiri's life not only as a painter, but also as a pedagogue, archivist, and cultural practitioner. The archive holds a wide array of material—from drawings, catalogues, journals, and correspondences to photographs, newspaper clippings, and documentation of public art projects that reflect Lahiri's multidisciplinary engagements and her expansive definition of artistic practice.

Her studio functioned as a vibrant cultural space, hosting musicians, performers, actors, and fellow artists, and her habit of repurposing everyday material into artworks speaks to her experimental methods and collaborative ethos. The archive also reflects her active role in community-based projects and public murals, many involving students and local residents, offering insights into her approach to art as a tool for civic engagement. A founding member of one of Kolkata's first women artists' collectives, 'The Group,' Lahiri also maintained records of meetings and exhibitions that open up alternative readings of Indian modernism.

Alongside her own material, the archive contains works by her brothers, painter Nirode Majumdar and writer Kamal Kumar Majumdar, making it a rare repository of intersecting modernist trajectories in Bengal.



**Bishal Yonjan** is a visual artist and curator based in Kathmandu. He is part of Kalā Kulo, an arts initiative, where he works on a series of archives contextualizing the contributions of artists who have been central to introducing novel artistic vocabularies to Nepal in the 20th century. His recent curatorial research looks into the oeuvre of Tek Bir Mukhiya, examining the artist's prolific book cover designs. His current interests include exploring the regional histories of printed matter and design in South Asia. He is also a member of Aṅkūra Atelier, a creative collective.

### **Kalā Kulo**

Kalā Kulo is a Kathmandu-based initiative dedicated to nurturing the flows and frictions of creative labor. Working across diverse fields and frameworks of knowledge production, the team explores materials and modalities of remembering and recalling—from gathering and archiving the works of Nepali modernist artists, to providing a relational space for reclaiming practices such as tattooing. Kalā Kulo's curatorial efforts also function as interventions that collapse distinct histories of making and belonging. Recently, their projects have engaged deeply with themes of indigeneity, dislocation, identity, and speculation, using these as guiding points to reimagine connections between art, memory, and collective futures.



**Chakshita** is an undergraduate student at Kathmandu University. She currently is engaged in archival research, exhibition design and curatorial storytelling. She resonates with the identity of a "documentarian"—someone who observes, gathers, and pieces together fragments. Her approach is especially informed by ethnographic methods of documentation, and she is committed to shaping bodies of work such as exhibitions that honour both lived experience and cultural legacy.

Chakshita is currently affiliated with RN Joshi Museum/ Park Gallery, where she works as an archivist and curatorial assistant. Her work involves archiving, exhibition development, and community-based projects. Outside her institutional practice, she is a curious listener—drawn to stories, musical gatherings, and documenting what often goes unseen.

### **R.N. Joshi Museum**

The RN Joshi Museum is a family-led initiative dedicated to preserving and sharing the life and work of Ramananda Joshi (RN Joshi). Situated in his former home and studio in Kathmandu, the museum houses a growing collection of his artworks, teaching materials, letters, notes, and photographs—materials that offer a layered understanding of his practice and the artistic networks he was part of.

At its core, the museum explores the broader historical moment Joshi lived through. It focuses on the formative decades of the 1960s to 1980s, a period marked by intense cultural, social, and political shifts in Nepal. The museum aims to explore that reciprocal relationship: how a generation of artists responded to and were made vulnerable by their moment in history through the works, life and lens of Joshi.

By developing both physical and digital archives, the museum hopes to offer more than just a record of artworks. It seeks to contextualise the materials present to understand the then socio-cultural, political and institutional upbringings and artistic pedagogies.



**Chinar Shah** is an artist based in Bangalore whose work explores documentary practices through the screen—using it simultaneously as a tool and a site of photographic inquiry. She is the founder of Home Sweet Home Studio, a research and publication platform dedicated to investigating self-organized, artist-led, and curatorial projects across India. Shah is the co-editor of *Photography in India: From Archives to Contemporary Practice* (originally published by Bloomsbury, UK, 2018; now available through Taylor & Francis) and currently teaches as an Assistant Professor at Vidyashilp University, Bangalore.

### **Home Sweet Home**

Home Sweet Home is a research and publication platform to investigate self-organized, artist-led, and curatorial projects in India. We focus on the modes and materialities of cultural productions through which counter-institutional narratives emerge, ones that do not rely on familiar modes of transactions and values prescribed by hegemonic discourses of art and art history. Home Sweet Home started as an exhibition series in 2015 and occupied domestic spaces to exhibit works of art.

Our work focuses on how ephemeral, artist-led initiatives are documented and remembered. Archiving—through online publishing, oral histories, and printed matter—has always been central to our practice, shaped by limited resources and evolving methods. We conduct and commission interviews with artists involved in self-organised projects, often in collaboration with others. We also compile lists that spark deeper archival research. Currently, our archive is a curated digital collection without a formal storage system. We're now exploring translation as a key part of both archiving and our broader research into self-organisation.



**Johann Peiris** is a sociologist, researcher and musician based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He is one of the co-founders of the Collective for Historical Dialogue and Memory (CHDM) where he manages the history education projects. He has worked with research and curatorial teams that have presented exhibitions on modern Sri Lankan history. Johann's research interests include modernist architectural practice in Sri Lanka. In the last decade he has been exploring the nexus of memory politics/history and visual arts while also supporting personal projects of artists' legacies.

### **Sapumal Foundation**

The Sapumal Foundation was set up in 1974 for the advancement of education, cultural activities and research to establish the means for perpetuating, among other things, the work of the '43 Group, Sri Lanka's first modernist collective. The collection consists of over 700 works of art, including paintings, drawings, sketches and sculptures, with approximately 300 on public display at any given time. In addition to the visual works, the Foundation holds a valuable range of ephemera and textual materials: newspaper scrapbooks documenting the '43 Group since its inception, exhibition catalogues, letters and correspondence, and other primary documents and secondary sources relating to the founder, Harry Pieris, the '43 Group's founding figures, and lesser-known members such as S.R Kanagasabai, and women artists such as Sybil Keyt, Sita Joseph, and Nadine David. Collectively, this archive offers a unique lens into the development of modernism in Sri Lanka and its transnational entanglements.



**Maithili Bavkar** is an artist based in New Delhi. She holds an MA in Visual Arts from Ambedkar University, Delhi and is currently working at Sher-Gil Sundaram Arts Foundation with archives and communications. She was an Artist-in-residence for KHOJ PEERS in 2025 and has been a Curatorial Fellow for Student Biennale, Kochi 2022. In her practice, she works with text across various mediums like artist books, poetry, installation, photography, and video. She is particularly interested in the multiple lives of text, as the *written, printed, scribbled, spoken, coded, patented, repeated or recycled* word, and how meaning shifts as it moves between forms. Her recent work explores the relationship between memory and technology, particularly how digital devices archive, mediate, and transform personal and collective forms of remembering.

### **Sher-Gil Sundaram Arts Foundation**

The Sher-Gil Sundaram Arts Foundation (SSAF) is a Delhi-based non-profit arts organisation founded in 2016 by artist Vivan Sundaram (d. 2023) and his sister the filmmaker and journalist Navina Sundaram (d.2022). SSAF supports artistic and cultural practices with a focus on critical thinking, cultural memory, and alternative histories. Its primary focus is to enable creative work through collaborations, grants, and public programming across disciplines including visual art, photography, theatre, film and pedagogy.

The Estate of Vivan Sundaram is an archive currently being developed at SSAF. It comprises a wide range of material, including his artworks, exhibition catalogues, personal collections, and extensive correspondence with artists. The archive also contains his writings and documents related to key institutions he was associated with or helped establish, such as the Kasauli Art Centre (1976-1991) and SAHMAT (Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust), which he co-founded. Additionally, it includes materials from exhibitions he curated or organised in collaboration with others, such as Place for People, Seven Young Sculptors, and more.



**Mariya Shaikh** is a visual artist, designer, and educator based in Sindh, Pakistan, with over 11 years of experience in the fields of art and design. Her interdisciplinary practice explores the tension between the tangible and the spiritual, blending design approaches, abstract forms, and cultural symbolism to create layered, contemplative works that pose the question: Are you creating roots within society, or appreciating the roots that ground your existence? Guided by the belief that “we are spiritual beings having a human experience,” her art maps internal journeys through color, mark-making, and material memory. As an educator, she is deeply committed to conceptual development in studio-based learning, integrating research-led pedagogies and encouraging students to think critically and create meaningfully (she has also translated *Aspects of Art* by Marjorie Husain into Sindhi, published by Oxford University Press). Her work has been exhibited widely across Pakistan and internationally in Dubai, India, Canada, South Korea, and most recently, at Harvard Square, USA.

### **Institute of Art & Design at the University of Sindh**

Established in 1947, the University of Sindh has played a pivotal role in advancing higher education across diverse disciplines in the region. Among its many faculties, the Institute of Art & Design holds a special place as a center for creative and cultural education in Sindh, Pakistan. Formerly known as the Department of Fine Arts, the Institute has evolved into a multidisciplinary institution offering programs in Fine Arts, Textile Design, Communication Design, Ceramics, and other visual practices. Rooted in both tradition and contemporary discourse, the Institute fosters a dynamic environment where students are encouraged to explore personal expression, historical perspectives, and experimental forms.



**Nimaya Harris** is a curator and researcher currently serving as Project Curator at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka (MMCA Sri Lanka). She is currently working on setting up the archive of the Sri Lankan modernist architect Minnette De Silva, which is the largest known record of De Silva's life and pioneering architectural practice. Nimaya's work spans archival development and research, with prior roles as Senior Researcher at MMCA Sri Lanka and researcher at the Asia Pacific Peace Museum Toronto. Alongside her curatorial work, Nimaya is a Visiting Lecturer at the English Faculty of the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. She has a Master's in World Literatures from the University of Oxford, where her research focused on displacement and narrative in Sri Lankan civil war literature. Her interests lie at the intersection of architecture, postcolonial narratives and memory.

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

The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka (MMCA Sri Lanka) is an education-led initiative that aims to establish a public museum dedicated to the display, education, research, and conservation of Sri Lankan modern and contemporary art. Since October 2024, MMCA Sri Lanka also includes an archive's team which is currently working on the Minnette De Silva Archive project. In partnership with the World Monuments Fund (WMF), the MMCA Sri Lanka is creating an online, digital archive to document, preserve, and share the legacy of Sri Lankan architect Minnette De Silva (1918-1998). The Minnette De Silva Archive comprises between 13,000 to 15,000 records which are currently in the process of being catalogued for the first time. The archive holds a few of De Silva's architectural drawings, but mainly includes printed matter relating to her research, correspondence, teaching material, and unpublished manuscripts. As many of De Silva's buildings are no longer standing, this archive project aims to preserve De Silva's contributions to regional modernism and vernacular architecture.



**Ritwika Misra** works as a Programme Officer at India Foundation for the Arts (IFA) overseeing the Archives and Museums programme at IFA. Previously, she has worked as an assistant archivist at the visual archives of Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC). She worked as a Research Assistant for a multi-year project, Objects, Media Practices, Aesthetics, and Politics: Material Histories and Cultural Imaginaries, India 1940-1960, a project of Max Weber Stiftung, to research, document, and archive the history of publicity and advertisement in India. Her research interest lies in histories of collecting practices, archives and archival practices. She has a B.A. and M.A. in History from Jadavpur University and an M.Phil in Social Sciences from CSSSC.

### **India Foundation for the Arts**

India Foundation for the Arts (IFA) located in Bangalore, India, is an independent, nationwide, not-for-profit, organisation that makes grants and implements projects across practice, research and education in the arts and culture in India. IFA started making grants and implementing projects in 1995 under five key programmes—Arts Research, Arts Practice, Arts Education, Archives and Museums, and Project 560, especially encouraging work in Indian languages other than English.

These projects have had varied outcomes as books, films, photographs performances, archival and educational material and more. Over the years, this material at IFA has grown to become a rich and valuable repository of a legion of artistic and scholarly engagements and reflections of India's artistic experiences which necessitated the creation of the IFA Archive. The online space currently holds the materials of grants and projects supported by IFA from the years 1995 to 2019. At the physical site of The IFA Archive, more materials from projects supported in these years are available for consultation.

The Archives and Museums (AMP) programme at IFA, launched in 2019, aims to energise institutions like museums and archives as platforms for dialogue and discourse. It seeks to provide the institution, as well as scholars and practitioners, the opportunity to generate new, critical and creative approaches to engage the public, based on materials in selected archives and museums.



**Sadya Mizan** is a curator, researcher, and cultural practitioner whose work focuses on community engagement, contemporary art, and heritage. She is the founder and director of URONTO Artist Community, a platform for site-responsive and socially engaged art practices across Bangladesh involving international and local artists. Her projects explore ideas of memory, displacement, and cultural sustainability, creating shared narratives through creative action.

Sadya holds a Master's degree in Fine Arts from the University of Dhaka and is currently completing an MLitt in Museum Studies at the University of Aberdeen. Over the past decade, Sadya has curated exhibitions such as, the archival visual exhibition '36 July' in Germany on the student revolution in Bangladesh, *Desertification* at Kunstverein Neuhausen (Germany) and *Tipping Point* at Oberwelt (Germany) on climate crisis .

Sadya has been actively involved in cultural leadership roles with organizations such as the British Council, Manchester Museum, and IOM-UN Migration, developing community-centered heritage and archive projects with youth, refugees and minor communities. Sadya has been a Fellow at Akademie Schloss Solitude, Germany (2024) and a recipient of the Art Think South Asia Fellowship (2018).

### **Uronto Artist Community**

URONTO is an Artist-Led initiative in Bangladesh, founded in 2012, in order to enforce a new organic platform for societal creative practice and research inclusive of all possible creative disciplines to collaborate to enhance trans-disciplinary works that inspire local and Global community. At the same time upholding their Artistic responsibilities toward the Society. Uronto works toward making art as a social tool by inspiring responsible storytelling through art and design methodology of efficient participatory creative discourses. Harnessing the power of multidisciplinary art and cultural narrative, Uronto creates alternative archive of oral history, community knowledge and soon to be lost heritages. Widely active around Bangladesh but expanded their methodology beyond any geographic borders through collaborations and partnerships.



**Saiyad Saif Ali** is a Dhaka-based artist currently working at Kala Kendra, where he is developing an open-access digital archive of the organisation's exhibitions, public programmes and past activities. As an artist he works with charcoal painting, photography, animation, and installation. He explores themes of colonisation, decolonial practice, climate change, and belonging. He holds a Master's in Drawing and Painting from the University of Rajshahi and is currently pursuing a Diploma in Photo Media Studies at Pathshala.

### **Kala Kendra**

Kala Kendra is an artist-run, volunteer-led space in Dhaka, Bangladesh, founded in 2015 by a collective of local artists. It supports experimental, critical, and socially engaged practices through exhibitions, talks, residencies, and collaborative projects. With an evolving group of contributors, Kala Kendra fosters interdisciplinary approaches across visual art, performance, sound, and writing. Operating as a non-commercial, project-based platform without fixed hierarchy, it prioritises dialogue, reflection, and community-led action at the intersection of local and international contemporary art practices.

Kala Kendra is developing an open-access digital archive, consolidating over 40 exhibitions and public programmes. This evolving archive spans photographs, video recordings of exhibitions and talk programmes, writings, catalogues, etc, which are currently being organised, digitised, and structured to preserve and share the organisation's interdisciplinary legacy across art, performance, sound, and writing.



**Saloni Bhojani** holds a BFA (2018-2022) and MFA (2022-2024) in Visual Arts (Art History) from The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara. Her academic interest lies in early modern and contemporary Indian painting and decorative arts along with Indian performing arts (especially Kathak) which she practices. Fascinated with art history and allied subjects such as museum studies, she began her career with an internship at the Kasturbhai Lalbhai Museum in Ahmedabad in 2022 and joined The Ark Foundation for Arts, Vadodara, in 2024 as an assistant archivist and researcher.

### **Ark Foundation for the Arts**

Ark Foundation for the Arts is a collaborative institution dedicated to expanding the scope of public engagement, pedagogy, and the archiving of artistic histories. The core ambition is to represent the modern and contemporary art of Baroda while contextualizing its significant role within the South-Asian art canon. Launched in 2022, the Foundation's overarching vision & mission statement proposes to play a pivotal role in archiving and (re)presenting artistic histories from the modern and contemporary art of Baroda.

The Ark Foundation's collection comprises over 3000 artworks, including drawings, paintings, sculptures, graphic prints, photographs. In addition to these, we also have artists' sketchbooks, rare artist portfolios, key publications & catalogues, and audio-video recordings. This rich material base is supported by ongoing archival research, oral histories, and acquisitions. The Ark Foundation has recently acquired the archive of Nagji Patel and plans to acquire additional archives in the future. While our digital archive is in its early stages, it focuses on documenting artworks, scanning archival material, and developing structured cataloguing systems and inventories.



**Sampurna Chakraborty** is an art historian and archivist, working primarily in the field of 19th and 20th century South Asian art institutional histories, art pedagogy, and art historiography. She is the Archival & Documentation Officer of the Benode Behari Mukherjee Archives & Research Centre (BBMARC) - Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, supported by the Mrinalini Mukherjee Foundation. Her research focuses on testing the foundational methodologies of the discipline, in conjecture with the advancing premise of *modernisms* in the global south. She is an alumna of Kala Bhavana-Visva Bharati; and has completed her PhD research as a Junior Research Fellow from the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC) Jadavpur University.

### **Benode Behari Mukherjee Archive and the Research Centre**

The Benode Behari Mukherjee Archive and the Research Centre (BBMARC) is a recent addition to Kala Bhavana (Institute of Fine Arts) of Visva Bharati, under the aegis of Department of History of Art, with the support of the Mrinalini Mukherjee Foundation, expanding its repertoire and contribution in the field of South Asian art. The core collection of the archive at BBMARC is built out of artist, writer and pedagogue Benode Behari Mukerjee and K.G. Subramanyan's personal and lifelong collection of records and personal files. As a center for research, the mission is to foster research documentation of endangered art communities, tangible and intangible art heritage, art pedagogy, design and craft histories, art historiography and research based contemporary art practices across India, with the vision to expand and build on the existing core archive collection and create referential thematic and temporal links within the broader scope of the discipline.



**Seher Naveed**, a Karachi-based artist with over a decade of experience in visual arts and academia, explores the socio-political development of urban environments and its impact on daily life. Her work delves into architecture as a reflection of societal aspirations, especially in cities grappling with political instability. Seher earned a BFA from the Indus Valley School of Art Architecture (IVS), Karachi and an MA in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, University of the Arts London (UAL). Currently, she is Associate Professor at the Indus Valley School of Art Architecture, where she teaches courses in drawing and painting. She is co-director of the Urban Repository Archive (URA) and also serves on the editorial board of Hybrid—a transdisciplinary research journal at IVS.

### **Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture**

The Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVS) is a degree-awarding institution located in Karachi, Pakistan, offering undergraduate and postgraduate programs in art, design, and architecture. Spanning over 30 years, IVS is deeply rooted in the city's cultural and artistic history, and has preserved and engaged with the work of renowned Karachi-based artists and architects such as Arshad Abdullah, Ali Imam, and Shahid Sajjad. Their works, archives, and philosophies form a vital part of the school's academic and creative ecosystem. These resources continue to be used by both faculty and students, informing contemporary practice and research across disciplines.

Currently, the school's *Urban Research and Archives (URA)* unit is exploring ways to further develop, expand, and activate these archival materials, particularly within the Fine Art Department.



**Shaheen Jaffrani** is an artist and curator from Karachi, Pakistan, who is currently serving as the Senior Project Manager Creative and Exhibitions, at The Citizens Archive of Pakistan (CAP). With nearly a decade of experience in the arts and cultural sector, Shaheen employs multidisciplinary mediums to curate and disseminate data from the archive, creating immersive and interactive experiences. Her expertise spans conceptual art, curation, design, and dissemination, with a focus on history, culture, social change, and the environment. She has contributed to a diverse range of local and international projects throughout her career.

### **Citizens Archive of Pakistan**

Founded in 2007, The Citizens Archive of Pakistan (CAP) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to cultural and historic preservation operating in Sindh and Punjab with broad outreach across Pakistan. We seek to educate the community, foster an awareness of our nation's history, and instill pride in Pakistani citizens about their heritage.

CAP has focused its attention on the tradition of oral storytelling in Pakistan, emphasising the importance of such narratives in creating a platform for national memory. Through the Oral History Project (OHP), we have collected over 5000 oral histories, over 650,000 photographs, and archival materials. These records provide invaluable insight into the early days of Pakistan and inspire our exhibitions and events.



**Sharmila Sagara** is an artist, art educator and cultural practitioner based in Ahmedabad, with over three decades of experience in arts education. She is Professor and Programme Head of Visual Arts at Anant National University and the Managing Trustee of the Piraji Sagara Art Foundation. At the foundation, she leads efforts to preserve and share the legacy of artist Piraji Sagara.

Her practice explores the intersections of materiality, memory, and pedagogy, with a strong commitment to accessible, vernacular approaches to art education. She holds a Master's degree in Visual Arts (Sculpture) from the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda, and has contributed to academic programme development at institutions including CEPT University and Ahmedabad University.

Previously, she served as Director of the Kanoria Centre for Arts, where she curated exhibitions and organised numerous art events. Her writings have appeared in *Art India*, *Take on Art*, and she has co-edited a volume, 'Ahmedabad: Portraits of a City', published by MARG Publication.

### **Piraji Sagara Art Foundation**

Piraji Sagara Art Foundation (PSAF), established in 1983 and based in Ahmedabad, is dedicated to preserving the legacy of artist Piraji Sagara (1931–2014) while supporting emerging artists across India. The foundation maintains a growing archive of his artworks, oral histories, and related materials, and regularly organises exhibitions, public talks, and educational programmes.

Piraji Sagara was a pioneering painter, sculptor, and educator, widely known for his distinctive burnt wood collages that integrated timber and found materials, reflecting a deep engagement with folk traditions and material experimentation. He taught at CEPT University from 1963 until his retirement, leaving a profound influence on generations of students.

Currently, PSAF is developing a comprehensive publication on Piraji Sagara's life and work, along with vernacular-language art education resources aimed at broadening access and fostering deeper engagement with the archive.



**Shikhar Bhattarai** is an archivist, image editor, and freelance photographer based in Kathmandu, Nepal. As Head of Collections at Nepal Picture Library, he manages the institutional archive, oversees documentation, digitization and metadata development.

At photo.circle, he works on production and exhibition design in collaboration with curators, researchers, and artists, and supports its learning initiatives by mentoring emergent photographers.

### **Nepal Picture Library**

Nepal Picture Library is a digital photo archive run by photo.circle, committed to documenting and preserving the rich and diverse social and cultural history of Nepal. With over 150,000 photographs, along with documents, publications, and ephemera, our archive functions as both a repository and a platform for public dialogue, education, and exhibition.



**Sonya Sarki** is a graduate of the National College of Arts Lahore (2020), where she specialized in Printmaking. Her interest in cultural heritage grew when she joined the NCA Archives in 2022. Since then, she has been involved in a range of responsibilities including digitization, cataloguing, organizing portfolios, and archival publications. She is currently contributing to an upcoming NCA publication as both an author and research facilitator, assisting contributing writers with archival material and contextual research. With a background in printmaking, Sonya brings a material sensitivity to the care and preservation of paper-based records. Her research interests include digital preservation, archival education across South Asia, and community memory—particularly the ways in which archives can preserve underrepresented voices and personal histories both within and beyond institutional collections.

### **National College of Arts Archive (NCAA)**

The National College of Arts (NCA), formerly the Mayo School of Arts, was established in 1875 under British colonial rule and was reformed and modernized in 1958 to align with contemporary educational standards. As one of the oldest formal art institutions in South Asia, NCA has played a pioneering role in art, design, and architecture education.

The NCA Archives (NCAA) serve as the official repository for the institution's historical records, preserving materials from its founding in 1875 to the present. These archives hold significant historical and research value and form an essential part of NCA's institutional memory. The NCAA's primary function is to preserve, manage, and provide access to these materials for researchers, alumni, and current students. Researchers from around the world consult the archives, including former students who often trace family histories through the collection. The archives also play a key role in supporting academic work by providing access to original records for student research and projects.



**Sophia Sansoni** is a designer, strategist and third-generation creative custodian based in Sri Lanka. Rooted in a legacy of textile design and architectural preservation, her practice bridges memory, material, and intergenerational storytelling. Drawing inspiration from her grandmother Barbara Sansoni, renowned artist, designer, and founder of Barefoot, Sophia explores the evolving relationship between inheritance and innovation.

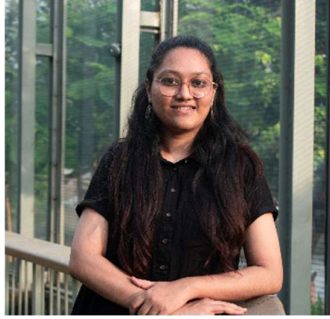
While her own work often reinterprets archival materials through contemporary craft, she contributes to the care and development of the Barbara Sansoni Archive, a growing collection of drawings, writings, textile designs, and architectural records. Now engaged in the day-to-day life of Barefoot, Sophia works closely with long-standing members of the design team, including artisans who once collaborated with Barbara. Through these relationships, she is learning to navigate the complexities of heritage while shaping its next chapter with care, curiosity, and quiet resolve.

### **Barbara Sansoni Archive**

The Barbara Sansoni Archive is a private collection dedicated to preserving the creative legacy of Sri Lankan artist, designer, and writer Barbara Sansoni. Overseen by Sundarika Ratnavibushana, the archive is housed in a dedicated space and continues to grow as a centre for research and reflection.

It holds a rich and varied collection of Sansoni's original work, including architectural drawings of old and often endangered buildings, handwoven textile samples, early design sketches, writings, and illustrations. Alongside her own work, the archive also houses artworks, letters, and documents collected over her lifetime from fellow artists, architects, and designers across South Asia. Together, these materials offer a rare insight into the artistic and cultural networks of the region throughout the 20th century.

The archive has engaged with institutions such as the National Gallery Singapore and M+ Museum in Hong Kong, contributing to broader conversations on art, architecture, and design in South Asia.



**Swilin Haque** is a Dhaka-based researcher currently working as Curatorial Assistant at the Samdani Art Foundation. She supports exhibition research, artist collaboration, and production while also overseeing collection care and archival management. Trained in painting at the University of Dhaka, she holds a postgraduate degree in Art History and Aesthetics from The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, with a focus on political narratives in contemporary art.

### **Samdani Art Foundation**

The Samdani Art Foundation is a Dhaka-based non-profit arts organization that supports contemporary South Asian artists and architects. Established in 2011 by Nadia and Rajeeb Samdani, the Foundation fosters new forms of artistic production, research, and exchange locally and internationally.

As the organizer of the Dhaka Art Summit (DAS), the Foundation offers a research-led platform for art and architecture from South Asia through commissioned large-scale installations, performance works, and discursive events. Its work often engages with ephemeral practices, sustainability, and site-responsive approaches. The Foundation maintains an extensive collection of artworks, which serves as an important resource for research, exhibitions, and public engagement.

At the Samdani Art Foundation, our archival initiative focuses on documenting our collection, exhibition-making processes, and collaborative practices. As part of this, we actively engage with artists working on archival projects by showcasing their work and assisting their research. Still in development, the archive aims to build a digital repository of project documentation, archival records, and related assets to facilitate ongoing research and meaningful engagement with contemporary art in Bangladesh.