

Danfe Arts Presents

HERE, THERE, EVERYWHERE
18th- 25th August, 2023



Here, There, Everywhere

Artists

Avishek Pradhan
Junu Maya Tamang
Naima Kirat Rai
Rose Uprety
Sailesh Rajbanshi
Shreemila Shrestha

Writers

Alfa M. Shakya
Birat Bijay Ojha

Our identities are here, there, everywhere. We find ourselves in each piece of art we make. We also erode some parts of ourselves in the process. We leave ourselves in cities, in memories, in emotions; we also meet ourselves there. We are never quite one thing or the other completely, and navigating parts of ourselves can be a struggle. At times, assurances do not come from society, and we take on the responsibility to comprehend who we are or can be. Whether we mold ourselves or get molded by our worlds, our choices and experiences shape us into defining who we are. Identity is tricky, but finding ourselves can also be magical.

Here, There, Everywhere, an open studio exhibition of Exchange 2023 residency by Danfe Arts, showcases the work in progress of six artists and two writers. During six weeks of the residency, residents learned and unlearned different avenues and intersections of identity. The exhibition represents the confusion and complexity brought about by the search for identity and how it interacts with time and place.

Avishek Pradhan

Avishek Pradhan, currently a fine art student based in Jhapa, started his journey as an artist at a young age. He is fascinated by human anatomy and figurative elements in his practice. He also likes to depict his work through colours and environments. He is fond of traveling and painting plein-air landscapes which he feels connects him closer to nature. He has participated in numerous exhibitions and workshops.

IG: hewhodraws_

Artist Statement

Avishek analyzes how digitalization has changed the way we accept our identity. Why are we so reliant on it and how will it shape the upcoming generation? He employs satire in his work which he gathers from his surroundings. These paintings are personal as he finds himself a part of this phenomenon and longing for change. He observes people close to his age who are so caught up on their phones. He questions the world where mobile phones have become a huge part of one's identity. And he finds a response within 'We cannot undo it, but we can definitely reconsider our human duties.'



Junu Maya Tamang

Born in Dhading, Junu Maya Tamang is a visual artist who recently graduated with a BFA from Kala Bhavana Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan.

Her creations delve into intricate layers, weaving together themes of social relationships, memory, time, and space. Nature has been a profound source of inspiration for her, evident in her artwork that vividly captures its essence. This connection with nature is not only reflected in her art but also resonates deeply with her lifestyle. She has been engaged with the process of traditional methods of paper making and exploring the tools of writing and image making to evolve a contemporary dialogue with it.

IG: tamang_junu

Artist Statement

In a rapidly evolving world, the concept of identity remains a profound and complex aspect of human existence. Handmade papermaking, with its inherent connection to nature, becomes a striking metaphor for exploring identity in a sustainable and harmonious manner. Handmade paper embodies the delicate dance between self and environment. Its production, rooted in sustainability, echoes the aspiration for a balanced existence on a planet facing ecological challenges. Through this artistic medium, the narrative of identity is not only explored but also symbolically lived, reinforcing the notion that just as each sheet of handmade paper carries within it the essence of its creation, each individual's identity is a testament to their unique journey, deeply intertwined with the natural world.



Naima Kirat Rai

Naima Kirat Rai is a young artist, working with clay and film photography. Embracing her identity as an “almost artist,” Naima's curiosity leads her to continually explore newer creative avenues. Through clay, she explores forms and new possibilities while through her lens, she seizes fleeting beauty in film photography. Naima's creative voyage embraces diverse mediums, inviting others to join her in discovering existence through her evolving perspective.

IG: cherywine

Artist Statement

Within her ceramic sculptures, Naima embodies a profound journey, a convergence of fragments that have shaped and touched her. Through the malleability of clay, she shapes these vessels that transcend their physical forms. They become carriers of memories, emotions, and intricate stories of life. She draws inspiration from the poetry of existence, crafting each piece as a composition of time, a reflection of everything she's been and all that she aspires to see. She sculpts these vessels with an understanding that they hold stories of moments embraced and moments released.



Rose Uprety

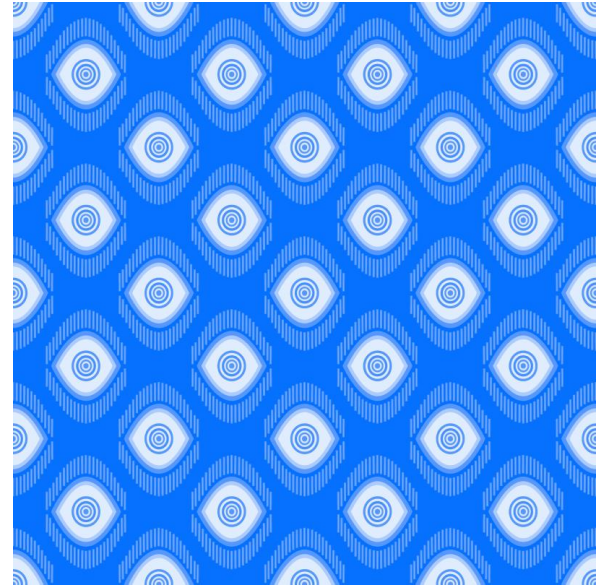
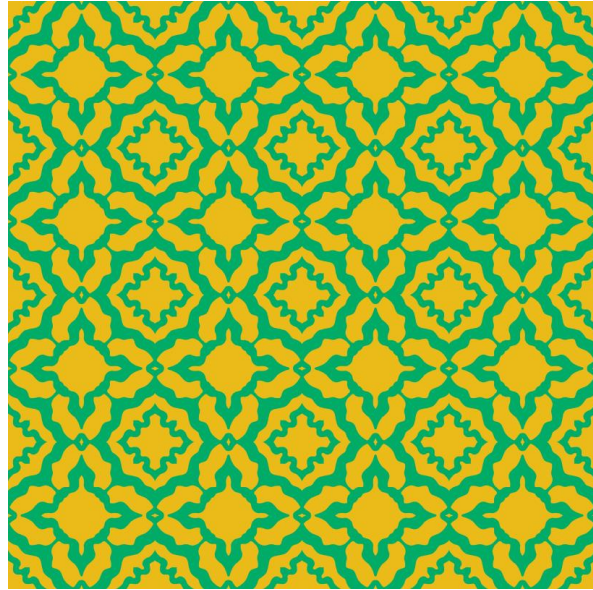
Based in Biratnagar, Nepal, Rose Uprety is a designer who graduated from NIFT, Mumbai, with a Bachelor's Degree in Fashion Design. Her works feature a recurrence of vivid hues, imaginative compositions, and an eclectic blend of ideas. Her art is influenced by the people she encounters and her surroundings. While digital print design is her main focus, she also explores embroidery, crochet, and garment design. Currently, she works as a freelance designer.

IG: [rose.uprety](#)

Artist Statement

The way we feel about things has a significant impact on how we interpret them. They can shape aspects of who we are, shaping our days, months, and years without us ever realizing it. Like fragments of a mosaic, these complex emotions make up the invisible framework upon which our identities rest. Our mental and emotional worlds are inextricably linked, and 'Masked' explores this theme to show how they define our journey together. Our emotional and mental spheres are more than just a byproduct of chance; they are the builders of our world. The art series reveals the unmistakable synergy that affects the human experience by untangling the delicate threads that tie our exterior experiences with our inner selves.

'Masked' encourages us to ponder on the unseen forces that guide our lives and mirror the essence of our being, leading us to a deeper knowledge of who we are.



Sailesh Rajbanshi

Sailesh Rajbanshi is currently an art student, born and raised in Jhapa. He finds inspiration in the Rajbanshi community, which he belongs to, and believes this provides him with the opportunity to explore more about his identity. He has been a part of multiple exhibitions and workshops.

IG: sailesh.rajbanshi

Artist Statement

Sailesh's work primarily deals with the preservation and transformation of the Rajbanshi community. His paintings explore the unique connection between nature and his community, with a special focus on the Seruwa festival where it is believed playing in the mud boosts immunity in the human body. He also explores Mokha painting which is a type of Rajbanshi folk art painted on pillars and walls of mud houses and is currently on the brink of extinction.



Shreemila Shrestha

Shreemila Shrestha is a visual artist based in Kathmandu, Nepal. Her works resonate with values that are often disregarded in the everyday mundane society, focusing on the fragility of life. She is deeply influenced by nature and often dwells in nature's sublime, some aspects of it can be seen in her works. Her practice in visual arts can be seen in various mediums which she uses as grounds to communicate her ideas of impermanence and acknowledging personal values.

IG: shreemila

Artist Statement

Transience

'Transience' is a set of works that dwells in the beauty of a fleeting moment in time. Resonating oneself as a fragile and ever-changing fragment of the cosmos, Shreemila has borrowed elements from nature as a metaphor for self-reflection in her artworks. Contemplating the tragic yet sublime values of impermanence, she evokes a sense of melancholy and nostalgia through this series of works. 'Transience' portrays the essence of the things that we fail to take notice of in everyday life, be it acknowledging personal values or taking a moment to pay attention to see and listen.



Alfa M. Shakya

Alfa M. Shakya is a writer, researcher, and trainer based in Lalitpur, Nepal. She is a writing and research student at The Open Institute for Social Science researching language and literature related to Nepali writing in English. Her areas of interest include language, self-exploration through writing, gender, and belongingness.

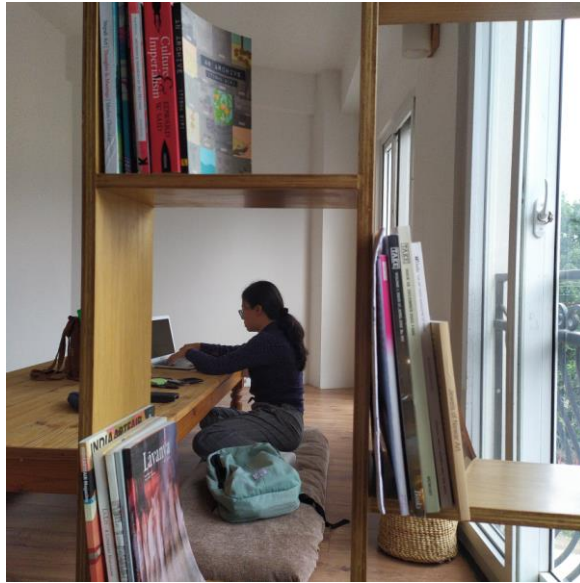
Her first comic, *Ru and the Box*, which she wrote and illustrated was published in *Hearts on our sleeves* comic collection in July 2023. Some of her writings have appeared in *La.Lit Magazine*, *The Record*, *The Himalayan Times*, and *OnlineKhabar English* among others. Alfa is also a multiple award-winning Toastmaster. She is a writer-in-residence at Exchange 2023.

IG: thewordcastle

Artist Statement

Inspired by Bhanu Kapil's "12 Questions," Alfa set out to ask the residents of Exchange 2023 her version of 12 Questions that delves into the joy and pain of pursuing artistic dreams. These emotions and sentiments, in many respects, form a crucial part of how an artist defines herself and her identity.

Why did you become an artist? Do you have a plan B? How do you feel enough? She asks provoking questions and finds sincere answers that reveal both the universality and the uniqueness of the artistic experience. Through these conversations with the residents and her immersion in the residency, Alfa gives words to the often amorphous and enigmatic phenomena of creating art. Simultaneously, she embarks on a journey to better understand and uncover her own identity as a writer and artist.



Birat Bijay Ojha

Birat Bijay Ojha, originally from Itahari is a poet, writer, and educator. Known to be creative, he has explored different forms of writing professionally and personally so far. He started writing as a coping/defense mechanism to deal with teenage angst and the need to feel seen/heard. His writing depicts self-awareness, queerness, anxiety, existential crisis, and desires to be understood, over the years his writing has transformed into conveying the message of radical refusal of the status quo shaped by his passion around queer issues, intersectional feminism, and mental health.

IG: bwriteous

Artist Statement

Birat shares his conflicted journey with the ideas of home through this piece. Born and raised in Itahari, he does not feel at home there because he did not have a safe space to embrace integral parts of his identity. Over the years, being in different places, he went through upheavals of emotions trying to navigate his queerness. His writing here reflects on his lived experiences as a queer man and how alienating it often can be. For Birat, an assured sense of self resembles home, but he did not have that while growing up. Through this piece, he explores different ideas of home- the would-haves, could-haves, and should-haves in retrospect mostly. Along with multiple ideations of home, he explains what they meant to him as an individual whose anxiety is rooted in unconventional bits of his identity.



ABOUT DANFE ARTS

Danfe Arts is a touring art space founded in 2019 that aims to make Nepali art accessible to a wider audience while supporting young and emerging artists. Founded in Kathmandu, the gallery brings to the forefront a diverse range of art along with different narratives from various regions of Nepal.

We aim to retell and reimagine history through an artistic lens of creatives across the country while also creating a safe and inclusive space for them.

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