



# Visual Verses from The Mangalajodi Inheritance

Workshop & Exhibition of Watercolour Paintings



## Visual Verses from The Mangalajodi Inheritance

Organized by  
ILA PANDA CENTRE FOR ARTS  
in partnership with  
OIL & NATURAL GAS CORPORATION

Watercolour Workshop  
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Exhibition  
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Lalit Kala Akademi Regional Centre  
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Bhabani Sankar Das | Bijay Biswaal | Bijay Panda  
Bijay Pradhan | Chandramani Biswal |  
Dasha Murmu | Dilip Chaudhury | Prabal Mallick  
Pradosh Swain | Promoda Kumar Mallik  
Raghunath Sahoo | Ramakanta Samantaray  
Ranjan Maharana | Rohit Supakar | Somenath Maity  
Subhash Pujahari | Subrata Das | Susanta Kumar Panda



*The natural harmony of Mangalajodi  
and Chilika through the vision and visuals  
of eminent watercolour masters*





धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान  
ଧର୍ମେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପ୍ରଧାନ  
Dharmendra Pradhan



मंत्री  
पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस;  
कौशल विकास एवं उद्यमशीलता मंत्रालय  
भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली

Minister  
Petroleum & Natural Gas;  
Skill Development & Entrepreneurship  
Government of India  
New Delhi

## MESSAGE

I am delighted to learn that “Visual Verses from the Mangalajodi Inheritance” – a six day painting workshop has now culminated in a exhibition showcasing works of master artistes depicting their vision and narratives of Mangalajodi wetlands and Chilika lake through the medium of watercolour.

This programme is a first of its kind attempt to capture the natural harmony of Mangalajodi and Chilika through the vision and interpretation of top master watercolour artists of Inida. A rich natural inheritance such as Chilika and Mangalajodi belongs to the whole world. With the ongoing efforts to secure UNESCO World Heritage Site status for Chilika, I believe that this rich habitat and its biodiversity must receive attention through all mediums and communities so that its popularization and conservation is disseminated to the largest numbers. Art is a potent medium to not only showcase the natural beauty but also encourage engagements and discussions on the heritage, legacy and need for conservation of these unique natural resources at all levels.

I commend and congratulate Ila Panda Centre for Arts (IPCA) for their innovative endeavour in conceptualizing this initiative and executing the programme in partnership with Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). ONGC has been contributing immensely towards development of Chilika area, especially Manalajodi, through its CSR. I believe and hope that this unique effort of bringing together art and conservation, will contribute in no small way to highlighting the importance of the legacy and protection of Odisha’s immense biodiversity and natural resources amongst a much wider audience.

New Delhi  
April, 2018

  
(Dharmendra Pradhan)



## foreword



Art has been used as a medium of communication since prehistoric times. Even as language and writing evolved as finer methods of communication, art remained, and continues to be an important means of dispersal of social issues in communities, along with its appeal to aesthetic sensibilities.

The state of Odisha is endowed with a rich legacy of art in various forms. Odisha and Odias are also fortunate inheritors of a magnificent natural legacy in the form of Chilika Lake - a lake that has been serenaded by poets and writers down the ages. “Visual Verses from The Mangalajodi Inheritance” is an attempt to engage artists to visually depict the glory of Chilika through the medium of watercolour art. In the process, we sought to use a community of key influencers, the artists, to proliferate the message of not only its beauty, but also the importance of conservation of this natural inheritance, among the younger generation, who will be the torchbearers for rebalancing our planet which is crumbling under the impact of climate change.

The tiny 10 sq. kms wetlands of Mangalajodi on the north-eastern fringe of Chilika is a veritable avian paradise, hosting more than three lakh migratory birds during winter. From a poacher’s den to a protector’s haven, Mangalajodi stands out symbolic of the unique biodiversity of Chilika, and, hence, finds itself, at the focus of activities initiated for the development of the Chilika ecosystem.

This programme by IPCA and ONGC is also an effort to re-energize the slowly disappearing practice of watercolour painting, in order that this exquisite and fragile style catches the interest and imagination of young and upcoming artists and art connoisseurs.

Our partner, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), a Maharatna, has been a generous contributor to the cause and a key facilitator of development of the Chilika region. Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan has astutely initiated the process of a Chilika resurgence, by initiating an agreement between

UNESCO and ONGC, to work towards securing the status of UNESCO World Heritage Site for Chilika Lake. Amidst these ongoing efforts, ONGC has adopted Mangalajodi village as a pilot for development of the Chilika ecosystem, with implementation of various projects under CSR. The core belief underlying these initiatives is that local communities have to be empowered for protection of habitat and sustainable development.

Ila Panda Centre for Arts (IPCA) records deep gratitude to ONGC for their generous support towards the cause of conservation, and, for “Visual Verses from The Mangalajodi Inheritance” that brings together art and natural heritage.

We are extremely grateful to all the artists, masters and the upcoming, for their energetic and enthusiastic participation in the six-day workshop that included field trips to Chilika and Mangalajodi followed by rendering of visuals in watercolour. The experience of watching master artists and upcoming youngsters aligning ideas, inspirations, and interpretations, to come up with some stunning paintings, has been gratifying and overwhelming.

As a birdwatcher and bird photographer who has been nurtured in the magical folds of Mangalajodi, nothing could have made me happier than to be able to bring about this convergence between art and conservation. Ila Panda Centre for Arts (IPCA) owes immense gratitude to Paramita Mahapatra, Founder Trustee, IPCA, for her unstinting generosity towards promotion of art and artists in Odisha, and, for initiating this event. IPCA will ceaselessly strive to uphold the foundation’s philosophy and work to achieve the mandate that it has set for itself.

This imprint documents an important milestone in the Mangalajodi narrative and hopefully, renewed pride in helping conserve the rich legacies of our art and natural heritage.



Panchami Manoo Ukil

Chairperson  
IPCA Managing Committee



Baladev Prasad Maharatha (Chitradev) completed his BFA from Govt. College of Art and Crafts, Khallikote. He taught at BK College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar, from where he retired as Principal. With works exhibited all over India, he continues to be an active participant at seminars, workshops and art camps across the country. Recipient of the Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi Award among many others, Baladev Maharatha is credited with pioneering 'jugalbandi' - of live painting with classical dance and music in Odisha. Some of the notable performances include 'jugalbandi' with Guru Birju Maharaj, Shri Ramli Ibrahim, Smt. Sonal Mansingh and Pdt. Hari Prasad Chaurasia.

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Untitled-I





Untitled-2



Untitled-3



Untitled-4



Basanta Kumari Samant received her Diploma in Fine Arts (Oil Painting) from Govt. School of Art and Crafts, Khallikote. In 1967 she was appointed as an art teacher in Govt. Girl's High School and in 2001 she retired from active service. Recipient of Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi Award in 1991, Silpi Gopal Kanungo Award in 1998, Nandighosh Award, Basanta Kumari Samant is also a poet, with more than a hundred published Odia poems.

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Born in 1988, Bhabani Sankar Das completed his BFA from BK College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar. He received the State Award in Painting from Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi in 2013 and Camlin Award in 2011. He currently lives in Bhubaneswar and works as a freelance artist.

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*Raha Raha Kshane Baspiya Sakata*





Serenity



Born in Pallahara in 1964, Bijay Biswaal worked with Indian Railways before taking up painting full time. Recipient of many honours in the field of art including felicitations from Govt. of Odisha, he has been an invitee to prestigious national and international art camps and symposia including the International Art Symposium in Penza, Russia. Bijay Biswaal is a spontaneous painter with strong foundations and is highly reputed for his series of art works on Indian Railways. He always maintains that his best is yet to come. The artist currently lives and works from Nagpur.

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Born in 1974, Bijay Kumar Panda completed his BFA from Utkal University and MFA from Banaras Hindu University. His works have been exhibited around the country - AIFACS Delhi, Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi and Sanskar Bharati, Bhopal being a few of them. Bijay Panda has been conferred with awards including the Odisha State Lalit Kala Akademi Award, BHU Medal by Banaras Hindu University, Best Art Teacher Award and Prativa Samman by OMAG, Bhubaneswar. He has participated in art camps and festivals around the country.

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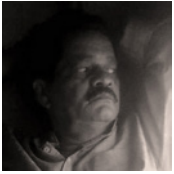
Born in 1957, Bijay Kumar Pradhan completed his art education from College of Art and Craft, Cuttack. He was inspired by artists like late Shri Krupasindhu Rath and worked as an apprentice under late Shri Asit Mukherjee in Shilpa Rupam. Bijay Pradhan soon emerged as a leading watercolour artist with a conscious focus on realism. Recipient of the Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi Award in 1983, the artist is credited with the design of a new Odia font known as 'Bijay Lipi' in the pre-computer era. Currently he works from Cuttack as a freelancer.

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Born in 1951, Chandramani Biswal completed his art education from Govt. College of Art and Crafts, Khallikote and went on to do his Masters in History from Berhampur University. He taught at BK College of Arts and Crafts, Bhubaneswar, and later became Principal of the institution. Chandramani Biswal contributed to development of art in Odisha as Secretary of Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi. Prominent awards include the State Award from Lalit Kala Akademi in 1981 and 1992. His works are part of collections including NGMA, Odisha Bhavan – New Delhi, Odisha State Secretariat, TATA Steel and many art galleries around India.

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chandramani biswal







Known for his style of watercolour painting, artist Dasha Murmu from Mayurbhanj was born in 1967 and completed his BFA from Govt. College of Art and Crafts, Khallikote. He has participated in numerous art camps, exhibitions and workshops and is a recipient of several awards - State Tribal Artist Award, Gold Medal from Kamraj University in All India Cartoon Contest and Silver Medal from Vishwa Bharati University, Santiniketan in East Zone Cartoon Contest. He currently works as an instructor in Applied Arts at the Govt. School of Art and Crafts, Jeypore, Koraput.

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dasha murmu





Dilip Chaudhury's works depict the Bengal countryside and his hometown Kolkata; his black and white works are very popular though of late he has been dabbling in colour. Dilip Chaudhury has been painting various scenes from everyday life of Kolkata and sometimes Banaras, in watercolour. From ancient monuments, streets and ghats, to a rickshaw puller in action, he has captured it all, beautifully. To anyone who has even a remote connection with Kolkata, he manages to bring a wave of nostalgia, as he symbolizes the character of the city of joy in his work.

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Born in 1980, Prabal completed B.Tech from IIT, Kharagpur and worked in the IT industry for over fourteen years, but finally answered his calling to pursue art full time, especially watercolour. Prabal has over 15 shows till date and has won numerous awards including the Odisha State Lalit Kala Akademi Award 2017 and Prafulla Dahanukar Award in 2017 and 2018. His works have been shown in juried annual exhibitions of AIFACS, Bombay Art Society and Art Society of India. He has founded Bhubaneswar Sketching Club for promoting outdoor sketching and has been conducting workshops on watercolour in different parts of the country. Prabal currently lives and works in Bhubaneswar.

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Born in 1972, Pradosh Swain completed his BFA from BK College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar. Though his works are mostly in surrealism genre, and executed in acrylics, he loves to do watercolour sketches in wet process. Notable awards include Odisha State Award from Lalit Kala Akademi in 1996 and Gold Medal from Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi in 1992. A major watercolour show was based on Lucknow and Banaras in the year 2006, where he had made very creative use of candle smoke to give depth to his paintings. Pradosh currently lives in Delhi and works as a freelance artist.

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pradosh swain







Hailing from Kandhamal, Promoda Kumar Mallick was born in 1964 and completed BFA from BU in 1989. Some of the major exhibitions and art fairs he has participated in are Odisha Lalit Kala Annual Exhibition, KalaMela in Bangalore and Kolkata, and Megha Utsav in Bhubaneswar. A participant in many state and national level camps, he has been conferred with Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi State Award in 2011. Currently he works as an art instructor in Govt. College of Art and Crafts, Khallikote.

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promoda kumar mallick





Born in 1976, Raghunath Sahoo completed BFA from BK College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar. Well known for his realism based watercolours, Raghunath has participated in many group shows and has held a special solo show at Orissa Modern Art Gallery, Bhubaneswar. He is a regular at national level artist camps and has several awards to his name including Gold Medal in National Youth Festival, Dr. Muralidhar Tali Memorial Award and Chinta o Chetana National Award. Raghunath works as a freelance artist and lives in Bhubaneswar.

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Ramakanta Samantaray studied painting from BK College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar. He completed masters and doctorate in Odia Literature and Language from Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. With this combination of literature, language and fine art he has been working constantly to create unique visual narratives. He is a recipient of many awards for his short stories and novels and has also received Junior Research Fellowship from UGC and Travel Grant from Sahitya Academi, New Delhi. Ramakanta has published as many as fifteen books with a solo show and numerous group shows in major galleries of India.

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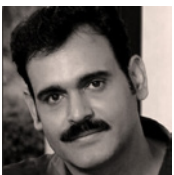
Born in 1984 in Salabani, Keonjhar, Ranjan Maharana completed BFA from BK College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar in 2005 and MFA from Indira Kala Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya, Khairagarh in 2008. His paintings have recently been featured in "INFINITY", a group exhibition of new art from India organized by Volume Visual Art at Lalit Kala Akademi, Bhubaneswar in March 2015. Ranjan Maharana continues to explore the diversity of expressions and symbolisms possible through human, animal and bird images and forms. He currently works as an art teacher in DAV School, Unit VIII, Bhubaneswar.

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Born in 1972 at Sambalpur, Rohit Supakar completed his BFA from BK College of Arts and Crafts in 1997 and MFA in Painting from Indira Kala Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya, Khairagarh in 2002. His work experience includes engagement at regional Lalit Kala Kendra studio in etching and lithography. He has been exhibiting his works in major cities across the country and his works feature in collections in India and abroad. Rohit works in multi-media including installations, sculpture and photography. He is an active member of Creative Artists' Association, Sambalpur which promotes arts and artists in western Odisha.

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Somenath Maity was born in Darua, West Bengal in 1960. He studied fine arts at College of Visual Arts, Kolkata, under the guidance of Shuvaprasanna. He holds a (5-year) diploma in fine arts from Indian College of Arts and Draftmanship, Kolkata. Somenath has over twenty five solo shows in major cities and galleries of India including Jehangir Art Gallery, Birla Akademi of Arts and Culture and Bajaj Art Gallery. His works have been exhibited in Japan, USA, London, Germany, Singapore and Sweden. Somenath Maity has been conferred with honours and awards that include Senior Fellowship from Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, Research Grant from Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and the Birla Akademi Award. The artist lives and works from Kolkata.

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Born in 1973, Subash Chandra Pujahari completed BFA from BK College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar. He holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Culture and Heritage Conservation from Utkal University of Culture. With more than fifteen exhibitions of his works and participation in over ten artists' camps around India, Subash has been conferred the Odisha State Lalit Kala Akademi Award in 2006, Shilpi Guru Bimbadhara Barma Award in 2007, and Odisha Biodiversity Board Award in 2013.

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Born in Kolkata, Subrata Das completed his art education at College of Visual Arts, Kolkata. With more than ten solo shows in India and abroad, his works have been exhibited at AIFACS, Birla Akademi and Akademi of Fine Arts, Kolkata amongst others. Subrata has received Gold and Silver Medals from Avantika International Art Exhibition and his works feature in collections at UNESCO, Tata Steel, ITC Group, Taj Group and RPG Enterprises to name a few. Subrata's works can be best described as ethnic and traditional with a touch of modernity which is executed in a semi realistic and expressive style. The artist lives and practices in Kolkata.

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subrata das







Susanta was born and brought up in Hinjilicut of Ganjam district in Odisha. He completed BFA from Govt. College of Art and Crafts, Khallikote, and Masters in Visual Arts from MS University, Baroda. For three years, Susanta worked as an art director in the Hindi film industry. He has extensively documented the south Odishan tiger dance form over the past decade. Susanta has participated in many workshops, seminars and major group shows in Delhi, Mumbai and other different cities of India.

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## Mangalajodi ~ A Conservation Story

Tucked away in the northeastern fringe of Chilika Lake in Odisha lies Mangalajodi wetlands spread over 10 sq kms, which is visited by more than three lakh migratory birds every winter.. This little hamlet harbouring rich wetlands is comparatively lesser known than its famous parent lagoon. The Chilika area is recognized globally for its great biodiversity. Mangalajodi is one of the largest of the 132 villages located on the banks of Chilika lake and is classified as an Important Bird Area (IBA). The present generation of inhabitants of Mangalajodi village recount that this wetland has been a winter home for migratory birds for as far back as they can remember.

Birds migrate here from as far as Baikal Lake, Aral Sea, Caspian Sea, Mongolia, Central and South-East Asia, and from places closer home like Ladakh. Bar-headed Geese, the highest flying birds in the world, Black-tailed Godwits, four species of Sandpipers, three species of Stints, various species of ducks like Pintails, Shovelers, Greylag Geese, Comb Ducks, Garganeys and Gadwalls, as well as Grey-headed Lapwings, Peregrine Falcons, Marsh Harriers, Pratincoles, Plovers and many other species winter at Mangalajodi every year.

These birds arrive in the region by the middle of October. The marshy wetlands interspersed with reeds and vegetation consisting mostly of *Typha angustata* and *Phragmites karka* and expanses of water running through the channels provide food and shelter to these waterfowls and raptors until they start moving to their breeding grounds by February-March.

Mangalajodi was the quiet and murky bird poacher's den until twenty years ago. Most of the villagers were engaged in poaching by poisoning the birds with Furatin. In 1997, a visionary named Nanda Kishore Bhujabal decided to make an attempt to bring an end to the poaching of birds in Mangalajodi. As a native of the Tangi area, Bhujabal realized early on that the only way a change could be brought about was by taking the villagers into confidence. This effort at changing mindsets was a tough and stormy one. Yet after a lot of cajoling and counselling over years, Bhujabal managed to make them see the senselessness and cruelty in the activity of poaching. While doing so he also had to provide them with ideas for an alternate means of livelihood which was not easy.

After years of constant endeavour and relentless effort, Mangalajodi today stands as an exemplary turnaround story – the poachers are the protectors of the wetlands and the birds. The most feared poachers are the best bird guides; the sharpest and most knowledgeable amongst them being the chubby-faced Madhu Behera who says that they do not sleep night after night during the peak season in order to patrol the wetlands with the forest guards to ensure that their beloved birds are safe.

At Mangalajodi, nature's harmony and abundance beckons us to discover rich nuances of the Chilika ecosystem and the joys of bird-watching in one of the most exquisite natural landscapes in India.





## ONGC & Mangalajodi

As a 'Maharatna' public sector enterprise, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has a long and cherished tradition of commendable initiatives, institutionalized programmes and practices of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which have played a laudable role in the development of several underdeveloped regions of the country. The vision of sustainable growth drives both business decisions as well as Corporate Social Responsibility work. ONGC's CSR activities are essentially guided by a project based approach in line with the guidelines issued by the Department of Public Enterprises and Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India. The CSR initiatives of ONGC are marked by unrelenting commitment to several large scale key projects as well as initiation of several new projects identified under the twelve focus areas of ONGC.

In this context, Hon'ble Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, vide his letter of 19th June 2016 to Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, sought mentorship and guidance of Government of Odisha for initiatives to be undertaken by ONGC and UNESCO contributing to conservation of the Chilika ecosystem and for putting in place several community development programmes in the area.

Subsequently, on 22nd June, 2017 Mr Shigeru Aoyagi, Director-General and Country Head, UNESCO, and Director (HR), ONGC, met with Minister of Forests and Environment,

Government of Odisha, where ONGC, in partnership with UNESCO expressed the desire to be associated in the conservation of ecosystem in and around Chilika.

UNESCO has also proposed to set up a world class climate change observatory at Chilika with state of art data collating and monitoring system.

In the meantime, ONGC has taken up various activities under its CSR programme at Mangalajodi village in the Chilika area, for improving standards of sanitation, availability of drinking water, livelihoods, and promoting use of renewable sources of energy such as Solar Street Lights etc.

ONGC has been actively advocating the cause of conservation of Chilika Lake in various fora, through national level symposiums and photo exhibitions. “Visual Verses from The Mangalajodi Inheritance” is a continuation of this advocacy.

ONGC has written to Government of Odisha, proposing a tripartite Memorandum of Agreement between Government of Odisha, UNESCO, and ONGC, to chalk out an action plan for making a fresh bid for securing UNESCO World Heritage Status for Chilika Lake.





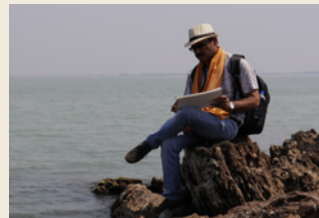



















## in closing ...



From one of our idea discussions on a Sunday afternoon in mid-January, through a six day painting workshop with twenty two master artists in February, to an exclusive exhibition in April, the Visual Verses journey spanning several weeks has been immersive, the experience challenging as well as enriching. For team IPCA, it is a milestone marker in just the second year of programming initiatives towards promotion of art, artists and the immensely rich heritage of Odisha.

That the effort has been substantially successful is evident in the Visual Verses exhibition of watercolour paintings.

Reflecting the natural harmony and abundance of Mangalajodi wetlands and Chilika Lake - loved and celebrated legacies of Odisha's landscape and Odia life in the now rare practice of watercolour art, with the clear intent of promoting conservation and documenting precious natural resources, the Visual Verses programme has been a first of its kind in the state. Given the interaction and outcomes of the exercise, we are hopeful that the goodwill and interest generated in the subject and in the medium will sustain continued advocacy for conservation of the Chilika ecosystem at all levels, with special inputs from the art fraternity.

One couldn't be more thankful for the responsibility of putting together the programme - Visual Verses from the Mangalajodi Inheritance Workshop and Exhibition. As an amateur poet, photographer and birding enthusiast who loves watercolour, to me Visual Verses brought together all aspects of interest in a seamless sequence, urging intense involvement; and now, weeks later, a dream project has borne fruition. It did take some work and one must emphasize that every minute of it has been worthwhile.

In closing, I would like to convey our heartfelt thanks and best wishes to all the participating artists - not just for their valuable time and work but also for the camaraderie of being a team and the experience of togetherness for the cause, the manner of which was quite engaging and joyful.

I wish to place on record our gratitude to our programme partner ONGC, to Mrs. Paramita Mahapatra, IPCA's Founder Trustee, Ms. Panchami Manoo Ukil, Chairperson of IPCA Managing Committee and to esteemed members of IPCA's Advisory Board.

We couldn't have brought this programme to a successful conclusion without cohesive team effort. Our grateful thanks to each associate and service provider who helped us organize and implement this initiative. Last but not least, a very special thank you to comrade team UMSL.

Mangalajodi and Chilika belong in our hearts. This volume is a memoir, an offering and a record of how much this inheritance means to us. I would like to sign off in the belief that Visual Verses from the Mangalajodi Inheritance contributes in a small way to the cause of conservation with art as the bridge for communication and advocacy.

Needless to say, IPCA will continue to endeavour relentlessly in reiterating the value of art in everyday life.

Good luck to you all, see you again next time!



Sukanya Rath  
(Editor)

Executive Director, IPCA



## acknowledgements

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