Bengal Biennale announces second edition taking place in Kolkata and Santiniketan

The Bengal Biennale explores buried histories, subterranean networks, and collective survival

On view

Santiniketan: 25 November 2026 - 2 January 2027

Kolkata: 28 November 2026 – 2 January 2027

- The Bengal Biennale 2026-27 is co-curated by collective **Chander Haat**, and curator **Ritika Biswas**.
- Trustees of Gameplan Foundation **Jeet and Malavika Banerjee** are organizing the second edition of the Bengal Biennale across multiple venues and art spaces.

Kolkata/Santiniketan, October 2026: The Gameplan Foundation is pleased to announce the return of the second edition of the **Bengal Biennale** from **25 November 2026** to **2 January 2027**, bringing art into dialogue with the layered histories, landscapes and cultural geographies of Bengal and beyond.

This edition is co-curated by **Chander Haat**, an artist collective and community space in Sarsuna, Kolkata; and **Ritika Biswas**, an independent curator and researcher. Their collaboration brings together collective and individual approaches to artistic practice, research, and community-building, while foregrounding the specific cultural and ecological contexts of Bengal. The Bengal Biennale is being organised by **Gameplan Foundation**, started by **Jeet and Malavika Banerjee**, and will unfold across multiple venues in **Kolkata** and **Santiniketan**, connecting established cultural institutions, historic sites, artist-led spaces and alternative locations.

This year's curatorial framework and theme ***Banalata*** takes its name from Jibananada Das' 1942 Bangla poem ***Banalata Sen*** and the ecology of wild forest-vines, using subterranean worlds, buried histories, entanglement, resistance and collective survival as starting points. *Banalata* will move through a variety of sites including a former prison, old houses, a wild park among others in Kolkata and Santiniketan. Rather than treating these locations as mere venues, the Bengal Biennale considers them as spaces for ecology, memory, and art practices.

While the modern and contemporary cultural histories of Kolkata and Santiniketan are closely linked, they are still two different ecosystems with their own identities. The Bengal Biennale not only celebrates art from the State but sees itself as a hub for arts across the global stage. The inaugural edition in 2024 was a great success and was widely attended across its 25+ venues in Kolkata and Santiniketan, and featured 100+ artists. The Bengal Biennale unfolds across a number of venues in two centres – Santiniketan and Kolkata - rather than one central exhibition site. This year, the Bengal Biennale takes place across a growing network of historic and non-traditional spaces.

At this time, Bengal Biennale is excited to announce the list of participating venues:

Santiniketan: Nandan Art Museum & Gallery, Tokaroun, Santiniketan Society of Visual Art & Design (SSVAD), Arthshila, Sculpture Park, Somnath Hore Studio and Krittika Arts Space
Kolkata: The Alipore Museum, The Indian Museum, TRI Art & Culture, Lalit Kala Akademi, The Red Bari, The Dockyard Co, and the Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC) that will host the Bengal Biennale's inaugural Emerging Artists Open Call.

Co-Curator Chander Haat says, "আমরা বিশ্বাস করি শিল্পকলা কোনো বিচ্ছিন্ন বস্তু নয়, শিল্প হল সম্পর্ক তৈরি করার একটি উপায়। সেই সম্পর্কের মধ্যেই তৈরি হয় আমাদের ' বনলতা '- একসঙ্গে বেঁচে থাকার জন্য একটি জীবন্ত স্থান। (We believe that art cannot be fragmented but is a medium to build relationships. Our *Banalata* emerges from within the entanglement of these relationships – a living space in which we can coexist.)"

Co-Curator Ritika Biswas says, "I envision the second Bengal Biennale as a slightly strange, slightly dissonant, slightly dark ecology which embraces the full spectrum of being alive in and to a burning world. *Banalata* foregrounds emotion, rest, and poetics, as modes through which we might critically examine the systems and selves within which we are entangled. It endeavours to create new knottings of kinship and solidarity across Bengal and beyond. This Biennale attempts to hold poetics and politics as inherently and generatively entwined forces."

Jeet & Malavika Banerjee, Trustees, Gameplan Foundation say, "The more polarised our world seems, the more urgent is the need to acknowledge the lessons of resilience that nature offers us. If we wish to learn from it. The unseen entanglements that unite us, the neurons that make us feel for each other, and the hope that green shoots hold out to us — Bengal Biennale's *Banalata* was born, and grew from these thoughts"

Participating artists and further programme details will be announced in due course.

For more information on Bengal Biennale, please visit:
Instagram: @bengal_biennale | **Website**: bengalbiennale.com

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Chander Haat



Chander Haat is an artist collective housed in a space that facilitates interdisciplinary artistic practices. Situated in Sarsuna, on the fringes of Kolkata, the artists use the space with a rare sense of freedom. The collective maintains a dynamic relationship with the neighbourhood and its inhabitants. The mosaic-like peri-urban conglomeration, largely composed of people who have migrated from different regions of India or neighbouring Bangladesh, has a distinctive demographic formation. Fed by diverse public cultures, the locality is marked by the residents' earnest attempts to preserve, internalize, and sustain traditional habits, rituals, and cultural practices. Chander Haat collective's engagement with the everyday practices of local people has inspired various artistic inquiries and several community art projects. The uniqueness of Chander Haat as a self-sustaining art collective emerges from deep socio-political and ecological engagement with local communities as well as a long-standing involvement with designing Durga Puja, Chander Haat was awarded the Vivan Sundaram Grant for Installation Art in 2024.

Ritika Biswas



Ritika Biswas (b. India, 1995) is a curator and artistic researcher from Kolkata who lives and works nomadically. She holds a Liberal Arts degree from Yale-NUS College and an MPhil in Film and Screen Studies from the University of Cambridge. Her praxis enmeshes ecological criticism, kinships, necropolitics, and questions of justice.
She was a curator at New Art Exchange Gallery (UK) from 2019-2021 and Artistic Director for the 2021 Sea Art Festival, 'Non-/Human Assemblages' for the Busan Biennale. Selected recent exhibitions include '—scape' (Gallery 88 Mumbai, 2025), 'Spectres of Our Own Making' (Gwangju Biennale, 2024), 'Nine Nodes of Non-Being' (421 Arts Campus Abu Dhabi, 2023-24), the digital research platform 'Littoral Chronicle' with artists Shezad Dawood and ikkibawiKrrr (2023-ongoing), among others. She was the 2024 Curator-in-Residence at Fondation Fiminco Paris and 2022 International Research Fellow at MMCA Seoul.

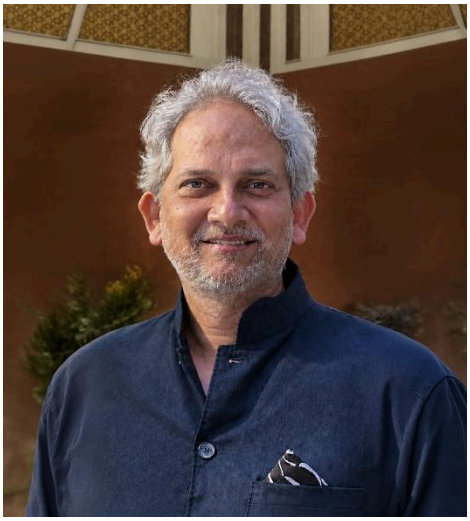
Malavika Banerjee



Malavika Banerjee is the founder-director of the Kolkata Literary Meet, a festival she has curated since 2012. It is now the second longest-running literature festival in the country. In 2024 Gameplan Foundation, a trust founded by her and Jeet Banerjee started the Bengal Biennale that was held in Kolkata and Santiniketan.

Malavika started work life as a journalist and then set up Gameplan Sports along with Jeet in 1998, a company that pioneered several aspects of in-stadia advertising and also managed cricketers, MS Dhoni, Steve Waugh, Imran Khan and Sir Vivian Richards to name a few. It is one of India's oldest sports marketing companies in the region. In 2011, Malavika and Jeet started Byloom in partnership with Bailou. A store that celebrates the handloom traditions of West Bengal, Byloom is now a destination store for those visiting the city.

Jeet Banerjee



Jeet Banerjee is the Founder & Managing Director of Gameplan Sports Pvt. Ltd., with over two decades of experience across sports management, sponsorships, branding, advertising, media syndication, event management, and entertainment.

Under his leadership, Gameplan has worked extensively with BCCI, ICC and Kolkata Knight Riders, handling sponsorship sales, sports marketing, 3D ground signage, team liaison and media syndication. The company has also been involved with major sporting events, including the IPL, ICC World Cups and Tata Steel Chess India.

Beyond sports, Banerjee has built a significant presence in the arts and cultural sector. He has been behind the Kolkata Literary Meet since 2012, which has grown into a major literary and multidisciplinary arts festival, and has also founded the Bengal Biennale, bringing together artists, performers, scholars and cultural practitioners across Santiniketan and Kolkata.

His other ventures include film production under Screenplay Films, which produced three Bengali feature films, including Anuranan, winner of the National Award for Best Feature Film in Bengali. He has also worked with major corporate brands including PepsiCo, Reebok, ITC, Exide Industries, Standard Chartered, Royal Stag and Hero Honda.