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Interview: Dipti Rao

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With the first Arts and Culture Opportunities, Residencies, Workshops, Jobs in India (ACRI) Bangalore Culture Meet taking place at The Courtyard on 24th April, ACRI Bangalore Chapter Host Dipti Rao talks to us about the group's vision, its evolution, and what to expect at the meet:

ACRI is presently a 48,000 member-strong Facebook group, what is the vision for these offline cultural meets?

The vision for ACRI is to build a strong bottom-up online and offline platform for cultural professionals in India. Given the large number of members that have found their way organically to the Facebook group, and also the fact that we see nearly 50% of the 48,000+ members are actively posting, sharing, and tagging people in opportunities, it is a clear indication that this is a strong community that's keen on engaging with their peers. ACRI is interested in helping develop this engagement in the sector through City Chapters. Currently, Mumbai, Pune, and Bangalore are active, and we hope that more will develop over the next several months.

Each City Chapter, led by a Chapter Host, will programme events relevant to the city, so events can be fairly different across Chapters, but the core remains the same – to focus on supporting the administration of arts across India. In our case, India's creative industry is such that the line between artist and arts administrator often blurs and we want to be able to engage all players involved in the process.



There was a Bangalore meet last year at The Courtyard. So what makes this one the first Culture Meet?

The first Culture Meet at The Courtyard was an experiment to understand what the appetite for something like an ACRI might be. We were also keen to meet the people who attended and to understand what they believe is the need of the hour.

On April 24, we're returning to The Courtyard with the first official City Chapter event and we're diving straight into one of the core aspects of arts administration – planning. Our four culture professionals – Menaka Rodriguez, Nikhil Barua, Nimi Ravindran, and Amitabh Kumar – are experienced at creating financial plans, programming calendars, developing partnerships, and crafting marketing strategies, all of which we'll be discussing in a peer-learning environment. They're also just really easy to talk to and are perfect for the sort of conversation and open sharing attitude that should be and is usually encouraged in the creative industries. They each represent a different genre, institution type, or approach and have been brought together to offer the evening's audience a chance to look at things from (these) varied perspectives. ACRI is quite firmly genre-agnostic and this group of speakers reflect that.



Presentation

Planning 365: Cultural Professionals look at 2019

A peer sharing session with culture professionals as they plan for the year

Menaka Rodriguez | Nikhil Barua | Nimi Ravindran | Amitabh Kumar

DESIGN PARTNER



CHAPTER HOST



VENUE PARTNER



In terms of community engagement, what is the format for the session?

As a peer-sharing session instead of a how-to workshop, the idea is to provide opportunities for dialogue between culture professionals. The speakers will be presenting their approach to each of these aspects because we all know that there is no one right way to do things in the sector.

Each speaker will present individually for 15 – 20 minutes. Following this, they will come together for a Q & A session with the audience. In the mix, we'll also have opportunities for ice breakers, a chance to chat with fellow audience members, and coffee.

Who is the target audience for the event?

All culture professionals will likely find something useful in this session. Artists, managers, enthusiasts and volunteers who work and play in the arts are welcome. We're planning our next session to be focused on mentoring and networking so this *Planning 365 Session* is a great way for people to work out their plans to greater detail and then get feedback on it from a mentor or peer.

Attend the *Planning 365: Cultural Professionals look at 2019* on April 24th, 6.30 pm onwards at The Courtyard. Tickets available on Insider.

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