



NEWS

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# New Residency Center to Open Near UNESCO Heritage Site Hampi

BY SHARON LEE



Exterior of Hampi Art Labs, 2023. Courtesy JSW Foundation.

The JSW Foundation, the social-development branch of the Indian mega-conglomerate JSW Group, is set to launch a new contemporary art center, Hampi Art Labs, in the southern Indian state of Karnataka by February 2024. Located near the ruins of the 15th-century city

Hampi, Hampi Art Labs is the latest initiative of the JSW Foundation, founded by billionaire Sangita Jindal and her daughter Tarini Jindal Handa.

With over seven hectares of land surrounding it, the Hampi Art Labs site incorporates exhibition spaces, studios, apartments for artist residencies, gardens, and a cafe. The production facilities includes workshops for printmaking, stone and metal sculpture, ceramics, and other forms of new media. Designed by Mumbai-based architect Sameep Padora and his studio SP+a, the center is inspired by the adjacent Hampi city, today a UNESCO World Heritage Site and once called Vijayanagar after the Hindu empire of which it was the capital. Set against this historic landscape, including stone temples atop rolling hillsides, as well as the Tungabhadra river, the design for Hampi Art Labs seeks to intertwine art, heritage, and nature, paying tribute to its surroundings through the use of locally sourced construction materials.

As the country's largest single-location steel manufacturing unit, JSW Group's Vijayanagar Works has also committed to providing resident artists with large-scale specialized equipment. Educational programs will also be offered at the center, and later, at local schools in the areas, engaging both the local community and international visitors.

Tarini Jindal Handa, the managing director of JSW Realty and founder of Muse, a fashion boutique, as well as æquō, a collectible design gallery, will serve as Hampi Art Labs's creative director under her mother's strategic direction. Handa stated that the center will “encourage a cross-disciplinary approach to art making and driving engagement with the region's heritage and artisanal legacy alongside India's contemporary arts scene,” adding that Sameep Padora's “poetic style of architecture reflects the spiritual energy Hampi is known for.”

The center will open with the group exhibition highlighting pivotal moments in Indian contemporary art over the last 25 years, “Right Foot First,” with works from the Jindal Collection from 1998 and 2023. The exhibition will also feature works by international artists, from pop pioneer Andy Warhol and sculptor Annie Morris, to Chinese artist-activist Ai Weiwei. Meanwhile, local Indian artists have already been selected for the Lab's inaugural residency cycle, including multidisciplinary artist Bhasha Chakrabarti, Delhi-based photographer Sharbendu De, painter and performer Madhavi Gore, Bangladeshi mixed-media artist Promiti Hossain, and sculptor Anirudh Singh Shaktawat.

*Sharon Lee is an editorial intern at ArtAsiaPacific.*

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