

Nick McCaffrey, Deputy High Commissioner of Australia honours Indian, Australian artists (Photo/ANI)

Australia's Yaritji Young, India's Parag Tandel bring indigenous stories together through mural artwork

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New Delhi [India], November 27 (ANI): The vibrant walls of Delhi's iconic Lodhi Art District have become a canvas for a remarkable artistic collaboration between Australian First Nations artist Yaritji Young and Mumbai-based Koli artist Parag Tandel.

Bringing together two artists from distinct geographical and cultural backgrounds, the mural celebrates the shared histories, indigenous knowledge systems, food traditions and deep-rooted connections with nature that link communities across Australia and India.





The collaboration has received appreciation from, who described the artwork as a beautiful example of what India and Australia can achieve through cultural exchange and creative partnerships.



Speaking to ANI about the mural, McCaffrey said, "It's absolutely beautiful... bringing together an Indian and an Australian artist has resulted in such a magnificent mural that will be here for many years to come."





Highlighting the broader significance of the initiative, he noted that the collaboration reflects the growing India-Australia relationship, adding, "It shows what beautiful things can come out of a collaboration between Australia and India, and we are seeing this right across. It's our bilateral relationship between the two governments of New Delhi and Canberra, not just in arts and culture, but right across the board, economic ties, our geostrategic ties, and our people-to-people links which have grown strongly in the last decade."

For Mumbai artist Parag Tandel, the collaboration offered an opportunity to bring the knowledge, traditions and food culture of his community into a shared artistic narrative.



Tandel explained that his practice focuses on documenting the epistemology and cosmologies of the Koli community, a fishing community that he also associates with the broader identity of Adivasi, comparing it to the First Nations people in Australia.

"I'm an artist and auto-ethnographer of the Koli community, which is a fishing community and also Adivasi community, which we can call First Nations people. An important thing about my practice is that I have been documenting Koli epistemology and cosmologies for the past 20 years. I'm archiving their cultural archives and all," he said.

“Yaritji comes from Australia and from the desert, but that desert was millions of years back an ocean. This was kind of inspiring me because I come from the ocean, which is in constant flux," he added.

For Yaritji Young, the experience of working with Tandel was both exciting and personally meaningful.

Expressing her enthusiasm, she said, “I felt so thrilled to be working with Parag, and he's become a friend.”



Young explained that the two artists discovered several common threads in their artistic practices despite coming from different countries and cultural backgrounds

Australian High Commissioner to India Philip Green also shared glimpses of the mural on X and wrote, “A new mural is taking shape in Delhi. Australian First Nations artist Yaritji Young and Mumbai’s Parag Tandel are bringing stories of Country, coast and community together at Lodhi Art District. If you're in Delhi, stop by and watch this remarkable work come to life.”



According to a press release, supported by the Australian government in partnership with St+art, the artwork explores the artists’ distinct cultural identities and relationships with land, water, ancestral knowledge and community memory.

Young’s artistic practice is rooted in Aṉangu Country and Tjala Tjukurpa, the Honey Ant story, while Tandel draws inspiration from his Koli heritage, marine ecologies, community memory and Mumbai’s changing coastline.

At the centre of Before Distance is the idea of the ripple. The artists draw parallels between ripples formed in water gathered after desert rainfall and the movement of water understood by generations of coastal fishing communities.

Through this shared visual language, the mural brings together different perspectives on culture, place and community without compromising their distinct artistic voices. (ANI)

TAGS India-australia | Artistic collaboration | Lodhi art district | First nations artist | Yaritji young | Cultural heritage

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