

NEWSLETTER

Vol 1 Issue 6
Jan to Apr 2025

Dear UNNATI family and Well Wishers ,

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation for the unwavering support you have shown toward UNNATI. Your constant encouragement has not only amplified our message but has also helped broaden our impact on individuals and communities in need. Our newsletter is a way to keep you closely connected and well-informed about the meaningful work we are doing. It reflects our mission and highlights the collective efforts that drive positive change across communities.

We hope each edition brings you closer to the heart of our mission and deepens your bond with our UNNATI family.

CRAFTERS CARNIVAL

Jan 11, 2025



The Crafters' Carnival, a vibrant one-day celebration of Nepali craftsmanship, contemporary art, and sustainability, was organized by Unnati Cultural Village in collaboration with Vivanta Kathmandu to ring in the New Year with purpose and culture. Featuring over **25 diverse stalls**, the event showcased high-quality handicrafts, eco-friendly products, and artworks created by local artisans and entrepreneurs. With an engaging lineup of live music, authentic Nepali food stalls, and interactive spaces encouraging resolutions around sustainability and heritage preservation, the event welcomed approximately **200 visitors** and directly **benefited over 25 artisans** and small business owners. Designed to empower creators and promote conscious living, the carnival fostered meaningful community connections while boosting visibility and sales for local talent.

INDIA ART FAIR 2025

Feb 6 to 9, 2025

For the second time, UNNATI proudly represented Nepal at the India Art Fair 2025 with the thematic exhibition Genesis of Divine. Curated by Roshan Bhandari, the showcase explored how divinity is expressed and experienced through Nepali art—bridging ancient traditions with contemporary interpretations.

Featuring six talented artists—Bijaya Maharjan, Meena Kayastha, Subodh Bhandari, Sambriddhi R. Shakya, Sushila Singh, and Uma Shankar Shah—the exhibition presented a powerful narrative through mediums like bronze sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, junk art, and installation.

The booth drew significant appreciation and captivated audiences with its rich portrayal of Nepal's culture and traditions. Visitors showed genuine interest in the stories, symbols, and spiritual depth woven into each piece—offering a moment of connection between heritage and art. Through their works, the artists celebrated Nepal's sacred legacy and artistic innovation—leaving a lasting impression on an international platform.

Visitor Reach: 100,000+



5-DAYS ARTIST RESIDENCY WITH SHAMPA SIRCAR DAS AT UNNATI

Feb 8 to 13, 2025

UNNATI hosted a 5-day Artist Residency for renowned Indian contemporary artist Ms. Shampa Sircar Das, celebrated for her work inspired by Indian folk and tribal art. Deeply influenced by her extensive travels and engagement with India's rural landscapes, Shampa's art explores cultural symbolism, weaving together philosophy, aesthetics, and technique. Her works are rich in visual language, reflecting a deep connection to India's spiritual and natural heritage.

This residency offered a meaningful exchange of artistic insights and strengthened cultural ties between India and Nepal through shared traditions and creative exploration.



PARTICIPATED IN WOMEN LEADERSHIP SUMMIT BY CNI

Mar 16, 2025

UNNATI participated in the marketplace set up at the Women Leadership Summit 2025, organized by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Supplies in collaboration with the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) on 16th March.

In the exhibition, handcrafted products made by our artisans and supported micro and small enterprises (M/SMEs) were showcased among the distinguished guests and attendees. It was an inspiring event and the love shown by the visitors at our stall reaffirmed our commitment to women empowerment, livelihood development and preserving and reviving Nepali art, crafts and culture.



AGREEMENT SIGNED BETWEEN C.G. FOUNDATION AND VIVANTA KATHMANDU TO EMPOWER WOMEN ARTISANS & MSMEs THROUGH HANDCRAFTED HERITAGE

Mar 30, 2025



Vivanta Kathmandu and C.G. Foundation have undergone an agreement to promote women-led businesses and MSMEs through this initiative for the preservation of Nepal's cultural heritage while fostering sustainable economic empowerment.

The collaboration serves as a market linkage initiative, ensuring visibility and accessibility for the artisans. The Kiosk setup at Vivanta Kathmandu will be used for product display, promotion and sales of various products which reinforces its dedication to social impact, further strengthening the reach and sustainability of Nepal's traditional craftsmanship.

ORGANIC FARMING AND BIO-FERTILIZER PRODUCTION

Mar 30, 2025



Unnati Cultural Village produced 500 liters of EM (Effective Microorganism) fluid, which was used to convert dried leaves into natural fertilizer. This eco-friendly initiative supports Unnati's commitment to sustainable agriculture, as the fertilizer is now being used to enrich the soil on its organic farm.

OUTCOME:

- Produced natural fertilizer from dried leaves, enriching soil quality on the organic farm.
 - Promoting sustainable and eco-friendly farming practices, reducing reliance on chemical fertilizers.
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RETAIL SPACE AT MEGHAULI SERAI:

Tharu Gaam at Meghauli Serai: UNNATI, in collaboration with Meghauli Serai, A Taj Safari Hotel has set up Tharu Gaam - a Tharu Village model where every day Tharu life style can be experienced live. Setup amongst the serene natural environment, the Tharu Gaam comprises of a Tharu Museum, a live craft area, a courtyard and a retail space. The museum showcases the rich cultural heritage of the Tharu community. The live craft area offers live demonstrations of wildlife painting, jewelry making and natural fibre weaving of different items of daily use. The Retail space is a market platform for women entrepreneurs and M/SMES producing handcrafted items in Nepal where they can display and sell their locally made products along with products made at UCV. This initiative has provided a market platform for **over 20 M/SMEs** so far from across Nepal to showcase their products. The Retail space acts as a souvenir shop for the guests visiting the Meghauli Serai while experiencing rich Nepali culture and hospitality and taking memories back home. This platform has also created opportunities for the local artisans and community.



NATURAL WELLNESS PRODUCTS AT UCV

Mar 26 to Apr 4, 2025

Beginning of in-house production of handmade soaps, dhoop (natural incense), and candles, crafted using traditional methods and natural ingredients. These products reflect our initiative to sustainability, wellness, and promoting local craftsmanship, while offering eco-friendly alternatives for everyday living.



HANDMADE HISTORY III- REFINED FIBRE | PULP FUNCTIONAL : ARTIST RESIDENCY AT UNNATI CULTURAL VILLAGE

Mar 20 to 29, 2025



In collaboration with the Raza Foundation, Unnati hosted a 10-day artist residency at Unnati Cultural Village, Gaidakot. Curated by Mr. Manish Pushkale, the residency brought together four eminent Indian artists — Akhilesh, Sheetal Gattani, Dileep, and Vanita Gupta. The residency fostered a cross-cultural dialogue through art, rooted in introspection, experimentation, and expression. Each artist brought a unique voice:

- Akhilesh, a legendary artist and writer, explored conceptual and spiritual dimensions through abstract forms.
- Dileep, a master printmaker, presented bold visual narratives with cultural and personal symbolism.
- Sheetal Gattani engaged deeply with texture, layering, and color to create meditative abstractions.
- Vanita Gupta used form and line to express movement, depth, and inner exploration through contemporary abstraction.

The residency not only enriched the artistic exchange between India and Nepal but also deepened UNNATI's actions to fostering creative collaboration and preserving cultural legacy.

CERAMIC PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Apr 21 to May 5, 2025

The 15-day ceramic training program at Unnati Cultural Village focused on enhancing the skills of community women in creating high-quality, market-ready ceramic products. The training covered a wide range of items including fast-moving souvenirs, cultural figurines, ceramic tiles, planters, vases, tableware, bathroom amenities, candle holders, and decorative items.

Participants were introduced to important ceramic techniques such as glazing, terracotta, shading, and raku firing. The program aimed to foster creativity, technical proficiency, and entrepreneurial capacity among women artisans.

Trainer: Saugat Shrestha

Beneficiary: 1 Man & 4 Women From Local Community



CASE STUDY: SUBODH BHANDARI & SAMRIDDHI RATNA SHAKYA



BRIDGING HERITAGE AND INNOVATION: THE GLOBAL DEBUT OF SAMBRIDHI RATNA SHAKYA AND SUBODH BHANDARI

In Feb 2025, two emerging Nepali artists—Sambridhi Ratna Shakya and Subodh Bhandari—achieved a significant breakthrough by showcasing their work at the prestigious India Art Fair (IAF) 2025. This milestone marked their first international exhibition, made possible through the support and facilitation of the Unnati program.

Unnati identified the duo through its talent-scouting and creative empowerment initiatives, recognizing the strength of their practice, which reimagines Nepal's architectural heritage through contemporary visual art. The platform provided by Unnati not only enabled their debut on a global stage but also positioned Nepali art and culture in a broader international discourse.

ART ROOTED IN CULTURAL MEMORY AND ARCHITECTURAL FORM

Sambridhi and Subodh are graduates of Kathmandu University School of Arts, Department of Art and Design, where their shared interest in the dialogue between past and present first took form. Their collaboration focuses on installations that reinterpret traditional architectural elements—such as khopas (niches), windows, and stone carvings—with a fresh visual language.

Their installation, “Fragments of Faith”, explores the enduring symbolism of niches in Nepali religious and domestic architecture. Coated in red mud and adorned with sacred motifs, the piece captures how spirituality and craftsmanship have evolved while remaining deeply embedded in the fabric of everyday life.

The second work, “Odyssey of a City”, reflects on the urban transformation of Kathmandu through windows collected and studied from around the Kathmandu valley; including Buddhist courtyards—Bahals and Bahils. The piece offers a layered visual narrative of time, community, and resilience.

UNNATI'S ROLE: CREATING PATHWAYS FOR EMERGING TALENT

Unnati's involvement was instrumental in identifying, mentoring, and enabling these young artists to step onto an international platform. The India Art Fair represented their first international showcase, and its outcome exceeded expectations—not only for the artists, but also for the broader Nepali art ecosystem.

Their installation “Fragments of Faith” was acquired by the Fidelity Investments Corporate Art Collection in the United States, a landmark achievement that underscores the global relevance of their work. All exhibited pieces were sold, and they secured new commissions—demonstrating both artistic merit and market viability.

This success story highlights how strategic facilitation and targeted support can help elevate local talent onto world stages, catalyzing long-term impact.

A NEW CHAPTER FOR NEPALI CONTEMPORARY ART

The debut of Sambridhi and Subodh is more than an individual success—it represents a growing recognition of Nepal's artistic voice in global conversations. Their work showcases how traditional cultural forms, when reinterpreted with authenticity and innovation, can resonate far beyond national borders.

“This experience has shaped our practice in new ways, allowing us to see how Nepal's history and identity can be shared and appreciated globally.”

– Sambridhi Ratna Shakya & Subodh Bhandari

Through Unnati's vision and the artists' dedication, Nepalese art has taken a confident step forward—bridging tradition and modernity, and building a new legacy for the next generation of cultural creators.

