

NEW MODELS FOR INDO-US CULTURAL COLLABORATION

PROFESSIONAL INSIGHTS AND FUTURE
RECOMMENDATIONS

Asia Society Special Report
January 2012



India Centre

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Abstract: This paper is based on discussions among sixteen institution leaders from the USA and India and is designed to increase transcultural collaboration between Indian and American artists, arts professionals, and art institutions. It identifies known challenges and barriers, recommends best practices, and suggests specific changes to procedures and policies that would enhance the development of future collaboration. It is written for cultural policy makers, as well as arts professionals and funders in India and the United States of America.

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Report Topics

Introduction: Why Now?/01

Goals and Core Principles/02

The Conference and the Paper/03

Homi K. Bhabha: The Model of Neighborliness/04

Envisioning New Models for Collaboration/05

Barriers/06

Logistical Hurdles/07

Best Practices/08

Audiences/09

Funding and Support Paradigms/10

National Structural Differences for Funding and Support/11

Government Funding versus Private Support/12

Going Forward/13

Conference Participants/14

Additional Resources/15



Asia Society Conference on Indo-US Cultural Collaboration panel discussion, New Delhi. Left to right: Rajeev Sethi, Vishakha Desai, Julián Zugazagoitia, Homi K. Bhabha

INTRODUCTION: WHY NOW?/ 01

During the past twenty years, there has been a seismic shift that intensifies the promise of cultural collaboration between India and the USA. The Asian-American relationship is stronger than ever, and India in particular is often singled out as one of the key players in a new world order. Considering the shared values of democracy and long history of Indian immigration to the USA, it is ironic that the collaborative projects between the two countries are few and far between. Globalization and mobility of world capital, combined with the digital revolution, have ushered in radically altered conditions of communications and financial distribution. On the horizon, it is clear that expanding cultures will be more knowledge-based than object-based, as the internet has engendered new proximities of awareness that are both jarring and full of potential. Within the past five years, technology has improved such that most younger and middle-aged cultural professionals in both countries enjoy steady access to the internet, and employ digital tools as a normal part of their daily routines. India's growing strength in both the financial and political arenas will

impact future projects in terms of parity, equity, and compromise. Whereas India enjoys a favorable economic forecast overall, the USA's economic slowdown has had a detrimental effect on arts funding. The time is ripe for new cultural partnerships. There is heightened desire and curiosity on both sides to engage with one another's cultures, to generate new project models that encourage relationships of parity, to develop models for collaboration that promise the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts.

GOALS AND CORE PRINCIPLES/ 02

The primary goal of the Asia Society report is to generate guidelines for vibrant arts collaborations between India and the USA. The aim is to catalyze cultural projects between artists, and between institutions, both in the visual and performing arts. We identify the opportunities and challenges of cross-cultural work—in other words, we analyze the best practices to promote, and assess the most common barriers, seeking ways they can be overcome. Following this, we address audiences and constituencies, as well as funding models, all of which are critical to the strength and impact of international cultural projects.

Three core principles and strategies that weave throughout the paper are summarized as follows:

1. Cross-cultural collaborations should be formulated in a way that creates parity and equity between and among collaborators. Collaborators want to approach and maintain their relationship with a sense of equality, with respect and trust for each other. Participants need to figure out ways to ensure that power in the relationship is not one-sided.

Strategy: Build programs from the ground up, rather than the top down, with frequent consultation, sharing of information, and consensus building about tactics and procedures.

2. Cross-cultural collaboration depends on assurances and achievement of reciprocity.

Each participant must be confident that the project involves mutual exchange. Areas of benefit may not be the same, timelines for the rewards of reciprocity may differ. It may mean trading programming, sharing expertise, or providing professional training.

Strategy: Participants should identify their expectations at the outset, and articulate them with their collaborators. Throughout the collaboration process, these expectations should be revisited periodically, discussed, and amended.

3. Successful transcultural initiatives need sustained investment over a long duration.

Strategy: Invest in building relationships with a minimum three- to five-year time frame, focusing on support for creative work as well as organizational capacity building.

THE CONFERENCE AND THE PAPER/ 03

These goals and principles were amply clear during a conference in June 2011, when a distinguished group of sixteen arts professionals met in New Delhi for three days of intensive closed-door presentations and discussions, culminating in a public event. The conference was organized by the Asia Society in New York and Mumbai, with support from the State Department of the United States government. The proceedings began with an inspiring keynote address by Professor Homi K. Bhabha, who encouraged participants to approach collaboration in the spirit of neighborliness, to build

mutually respectful side-by-side relationships. Roundtable discussions followed, with prepared lectures on five different topics delivered by each of the sixteen professionals, spurring intense dialogue and exchange. For the conference participants, collaboration meant different scenarios, always involving more than one individual or institution. Topics focused on the aforementioned goals of opportunities, obstacles, and best practices, allowing ample time to share candid insights about the logistical, political, and fundraising hurdles. Each individual's discussion of their professional experience, in vastly differing institutional, urban, and national contexts, helped lay fertile groundwork for future work together. Shared interests were identified, and new alliances have begun to coalesce.

This report condenses the findings of the group and puts forth recommendations to key stakeholders in the visual and performing arts who wish to pursue cultural collaborations between India and the USA. More importantly, it is intended as a case study, providing observations that can be applied to cross-cultural collaborations among Asian and western institutions more broadly. This paper is meant not only for artists and art professionals, but also is addressed to those who support, enable, and facilitate such projects—the philanthropists, funders and cultural policy makers who are essential to any collaboration. It is written with a conviction, shared by the conference participants, that successful future partnerships will depend upon deep understanding of the significant risks and rewards inherent to



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these particular cultural contexts, and to international cultural collaboration in general.

In the hope of sharing insights and influencing policy and funding decisions, this report will be disseminated as widely as possible. It is being sent to websites throughout the USA and India, with requests for public posting. It is being released to newspapers and journals, and shared with appropriate government officials. These recommendations are intended to spur change, to suggest constructive steps needed to develop meaningful future Indo-US cultural collaborations. A full range of pertinent topics is covered, from the most humanist and aspirational to the extremely practical, including cultural idiosyncrasies, government policies and regulations, and logistical barriers.

The expected results of the paper will be the development of measurable change, perhaps even alterations of government policy and law. If in the next five years, arts partnerships between India and the US are formed that glean assistance from these recommendations, leading to long-lasting bonds and the production of compelling visual or per-

forming arts projects, this paper will have served its purpose. Above all, this paper is a call to action.

HOMI K. BHABHA: THE MODEL OF NEIGHBORLI-NESS/ 04

"Neighborliness is a continual labor of going back and forth in order to create the warp and the woof of intercultural conversation. To start with what is 'alien' and yet 'proximate' is to emphasize that interculturalism ought not to be based on an identitarian agenda. . . How do I learn to read and understand what is unfamiliar to me, while at the same time revising my expectations and experiences and acquiring new frameworks of value and new frames of thought?... A neighborly perspective demands that we undertake a difficult task. By initiating our intercultural identification through a deep immersion in what we may not understand, what may not immediately belong to our normative traditions, we enter into a process of transformation and revision whose end result may not be clear to us and whose *telos* may be tentative or tendentious. And yet, for better and for worse, collaboration depends upon our commitment to learn to work together in the face of such open-endedness."

-Homi K. Bhabha

As Homi Bhabha emphasized in his keynote address (available below), globalization has produced new proximities, a compression of space and time. Through worldwide travel and digital technologies, people find themselves side by side, yet with asymmetrical relationships in terms of power and position. Globalization has brought large swathes of the world's population closer together in overlapping communities of fate. These newly networked societies are capable of beneficial exchanges and collaborations, yet their proximity does not necessarily ensure shared understandings or interpretations of complex cultural forces. We have not arrived here from the same place or at the same time. Will the dissemination of new technologies of communication and representation provide a way of resolving cultural conflict? Will the spreading internet provide its users with a new humanism, a developing universalism? Globalization begins at home, with the way people treat those who are alien, yet close by.

In collaboration, the challenge is to create an "ethic of neighborliness" that allows us to work together across the diverse and disjunctive terrains of a world that is in some ways synchronized and simultaneous, though in other ways dramatically out of sync. The challenge is to take up the side-by-side perspective, to experience ourselves and others as both strangers and neighbors. We need to put imagination and empathy first, as both parties are in dynamic transformation, in order to be truly open to the risk of discourse. Collaboration results

from the desire among two or more parties to work on something together—it requires understanding and humility as each party immediately takes on the complexity of the alien collaborator, embraces the unfamiliar situation. Collaboration involves a lot of give and take. It entails the mutual engagement of participants to work to solve a problem, or create something new, together. India and the USA are two distinct countries with unfathomable differences, yet they share an anticolonial past and a postcolonial view of the future.

ENVISIONING NEW MODELS FOR COLLABORATION/ 05

Before delving further into discussion of collaborative hindrances and best practices, it may be helpful to define what exactly we mean by the term "collaboration," and to identify what kinds of collaboration we are addressing. Collaboration is the act of working jointly with others, or together, especially in an intellectual endeavor. This report focusses on the visual and performing arts, sometimes speaking generally and at other times, differentiating between these two disciplines when detailed issues need mention. Further, we are talking about collaborative creation of work in two differing contexts: 1) among artists to produce new works of art, such as performances, musical compositions, videos, installations, or other forms; and 2) among institutions such as museums, theater companies, and performing arts organiza-

tions to produce projects that may include public programming, exhibitions, concerts, or performances.

There is no single method for initiating new collaborative projects. But there are a few practical pointers: 1) that artists and institutions should first identify their own needs, then seek an interested partner; 2) in the case of institutions, it is advisable to consider an institution of the same size; 3) early in discussions, it is beneficial to identify one another's skill sets and constraints and review them periodically as the project moves forward; 4) next step is to develop a long-term plan that takes into account infrastructure considerations (staffing needs, changes to government bodies and regimes, funding cycles) and allows for vastly different expectations in terms of timing and pacing.

Despite tight schedules, collaborating is a process that takes longer than individual creation. Partners need to be ready to make significant commitments, schedule-wise, to working together. Significant time is needed to allow for projects to develop and emerge, for professional and creative exchange, for experimentation and failure along the way, and in the USA, for fundraising. Once a collaborative project is assured of going forward, there will be more productive results in the long term if ample time is built in that may not even be product-related, that has nothing to do with measuring deliverables. This is particularly true in collaborations among individual artists. Production residencies, where artists spend significant time living together,

working towards common goals, can be excellent models to afford qualitative depth of exchange. In terms of institutional collaboration, projects with plenty of time allowed for initial meetings and open discussions and working processes allow for a flexibility and creativity that ends up generating multiple new spin-off projects rather than just one.

In discussing different kinds of collaborations, conference participants agreed that one-off programs—that is, single events—have limited impact. Shallow projects, which are not even truly collaborative, are the projects that follow an import/export model, landing far short of the deep cultural exchange that is possible. Given the professional expertise and ability to judge success, institutions and artists may want to build in their own standards and criteria of excellence, their own internal systems of quality control in order to self-assess their projects.

Do we need to go to a third space? For successful collaboration, it may be beneficial to convene in a third space, off-site from each collaborator's soil. Sometimes parties cannot come together on their own turf, sometimes a foreign place is more conducive to open exchange. Location can be critical to what transpires. There are private supporters who have created artists' camps, and it would be worthwhile to approach them to see if they are willing to support the costs of bringing artists from different cultures together for initial collaborative planning and development. For institutional and artistic projects, retreats such as the Bellagio Center in

northern Italy, the Mahindra Center for the Humanities at Harvard University, Carl Djerassi's Resident Artist Program in Woodside, California, or White Oak in Florida were all mentioned as potential spaces and organizations to consider approaching.

BARRIERS/ 06

Cultural exchange between India and the USA seems to be a one-way street at present. There is some exposure to Indian visual and performing arts in the US, but very little exposure to American culture in India, except through commercial and mass-media channels. In marked contrast, two-way cultural exchange between India and the European Union is far more visible, and has increased in recent years. But broadly speaking, cultural exchange between India and foreign countries has not been extensive, with the exception of the Festivals of India of the 1980s, which traveled to the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden and France. New projects involving American professionals, artists, exhibitions and other projects coming to India are needed, to build knowledge about American cultural programs, heritage and arts management.

There is a risk of traditional Indian cultures being subsumed by contemporary western traditions. The indigenous assets of India are under recognized and devalued within Indian society. If one views Indian cultural production as a pyramid scheme, the base of the pyramid is eroding faster than one can speak. Older indigenous traditions and skills are seen as sentimental, a luxury that a

society hurtling toward an IT future cannot stop to nurture or protect. Skills are rapidly being lost. Is it possible to work with the Indian diaspora on projects to push this angle of cultural programming?

In the USA, hindrances to transnational cultural collaboration with India are identifiable in larger cultural institutions. There are apprehensions from American staff at all levels about timeliness, budgeting uncertainties, and too many unknowns. In terms of American performing and visual artists coming to work in India, it seems that there is a desire to collaborate, but very few professional opportunities or invitations coming from India, or from American partners who could facilitate such projects in India. While there is greater parity between India and the US in terms of economic and political power than ever before, cultural knowledge has lagged far behind.¹

In partnerships that do develop, there is a risk of a lopsided power relationships or shallow results if there is no in-depth exchange. In strictly individual terms, inequitable partnerships are often accompanied on both sides by a lack of mutual trust, and the all-too-human behavior of not putting all the cards on the table—that is, not communicating fully, openly, and honestly. Indian museum professionals are accustomed to being invited by foreign colleagues to collaborate, only to find that the actual intention is to simply ask for

¹ "Making a Difference Through the Arts: Strengthening America's Links with Asian Muslim Communities," *Asia Society Special Report*, August 2010

the loan of artworks, and nothing more.

LOGISTICAL HURDLES/ 07

One specific hurdle relates to a very different sense of timing for Indian and American art professionals. In the USA, long-term schedules and prompt communications are the norm. In India, working schedules and procedures are less structured, and timing is less defined, more relaxed. If either collaborator is unfamiliar with the other country's norms in this particular regard, adaptation and patience will be an ongoing challenge to be expected.

Visas and taxes can get in the way of successful international collaborations throughout the world, but they can be particularly vexing when it comes to the USA and India. For Indians traveling to the USA, applications should be made early, and follow-ups should be frequent, because the procedure can easily take many months of time and involve multiple visits to the local US Consulate. In the performing arts, the artist's prominence needs to be proven, often with successive supporting documents and letters. Visa policy for travel to the US is particularly difficult, especially for first time visitors. Obtaining a visa for travel to India is a fairly straightforward, though time-consuming process. Tourist visas for multiple visits are the simplest for American visitors to obtain, although they require two months' hiatus between each visit to India, and do not allow the visitor to conduct business. Business visas are technically

the appropriate visas for transcultural collaborators. Business visa applications require additional supporting documentation, and allow for multiple entries over a longer period. A minimum of three weeks should be allowed for obtaining a visa for travel to India.

There are particular hurdles specific to the visual arts and museum collaborations, involving staffing expertise and expectations, loan review procedures, climate control policies, and insurance coverage. Both Indian and American conference participants expressed frustration with the lack of

climate control policies. Any art object or artifact that is highly sensitive to humidity or temperature fluctuation or light exposure may be declined as a potential loan to India if the borrowing institution does not have adequate control over its environment. In recent years, these climate issues have become a bit more nuanced and flexible, but they are still a frequent hindrance to collaboration.

Loans of all art works or artifacts from India need to be reviewed, physically and for valuation purposes, by a screening committee appointed by the government. This is

and photography are exempt from this category), they may be assigned new valuations that are significantly higher than their market value, thereby impacting insurance coverage. In limited cases, they may even be prevented from leaving the country.

In India, most, if not all projects involving artworks coming in or going out of the country require nationalized insurance, which has less policy coverage than commercial insurance policies that US collaborators are accustomed to, and thus US collaborators will sometimes take out additional insurance with underwriters for the extra desired coverage. It was surmised that the Indian insurance requirements for artworks leaving the country may have been the result of alleged damage and loss to Indian cultural artifacts and art objects that traveled in the 1980s outside the country for Indian festivals abroad. In the US, when extremely highly valued exhibitions are being planned, they sometimes require insurance, or "indemnification," from the US government, which can be a time consuming, complex and extremely competitive process.



Audience view, left to right: Ashok Vajpeyi, former Director of Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, and O.P. Jain, founder of Sanskriti Foundation, New Delhi

trained professionals in museum work in India, and agreed there is a need to nurture new training and expertise. Procedural differences between the two country's working methods are extensive. For Indian institutions and art museums, there are barriers in getting the loan of art objects from the USA due to institutional loan policies, often involving prohibitively strict cli-

scheduled once the loans are assembled, which most often occurs during the final stages in the organization of an exhibition by which time the organizing institution in the US might have spent a good deal of money and invested in the conservation and preparation of the loan objects and the publishing of a catalogue. If works are considered national treasures (contemporary art

In the context of artistic collaboration, conference participants expressed a lack of knowledge or awareness of what was happening in each other's countries. According to one American performing arts specialist, India is a huge challenge for performing arts professionals. There is little to no awareness in the USA of what is happening in the contemporary performing arts in India, though there is certainly curiosity. Conversely, few Indian

performing artists are traveling to the USA at this time.

In terms of payment for performing artists visiting the US, the federal tax department (Internal Revenue Service) requires that roughly 30% of performers' fees is garnered as a tax to the USA. The Indian government requires payment up front as well, and so most institutions build additional money into their budgets to cover these taxes.

BEST PRACTICES/ 08

Transnational collaborations are most often motivated by the desire to explore another culture's or another individual's or another artist's practice, while at the same time examining one's own activities. There is a need for curiosity, respect, and empathy, always keeping parity in mind. There is also the very real requirement that collaborators are prepared to tolerate the tension and risk that come with this kind of creative practice. There must be a willingness to work with open-ended and unknown conditions, to mutually engage in the work together. Collaborators need to figure out ways to ensure that power in the relationship is not one-sided; in this regard, process matters a great deal to ensure the success of the project. In institutional settings, directors are the ones who can most effectively take the lead in generating collaborations, as they are best able to galvanize their staff members in showing commitment and serving by example, and to guarantee results.

Among the productive long-term projects discussed at the conference was one that allowed six years for planning and development. Beginning with two days of discussions among forty individuals, followed by several years of meetings in various locations, that particular collaborative project evolved and spawned ancillary projects along the way. The working process was open-ended, yet with the ambitious expectation that the road map would be made by the project team as the process developed. Despite frustrations and getting bogged down at times, this long-term model was considered to be extremely productive.

Institutional collaboration entails different working methods between large and small institutions, but also between Indian and American institutions. If tactical and logistical issues can be articulated and explained early on in the collaboration period, this will aid in preparing collaborators for unfamiliar steps they will be required to take. In India, despite the temptation to go around rather than confront what may seem like difficult procedures and parameters, it was emphasized that one should work with the expected procedural structures, work within the parameters, in order to achieve one's goals.

India does not have a cultural exchange program with the USA, because the USA does not have a ministry of culture, which will be discussed in greater detail below. It is advisable to generate a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the collaborating parties in institutional situa-

tions; these MOUs work. If there are no readily available templates, other countries' cultural projects with India can serve as yardsticks and parameters to be emulated. For Indian institutions to work with foreign institutions this way, it is not legally required that they have Indian governmental approval, but with large and historic projects it is advisable to involve the Indian Ministry of Culture, and discuss plans at an early stage, to ensure that projects are recorded in documentation of joint working group meetings, to begin a chain of processes that can be easily traced back. On the contrary, in collaborations involving contemporary or avant-garde cultural programming or individual contemporary artists, approval from the Indian government is unnecessary. US collaborators are advised to work from existing structures and vetted models that have been successful for other countries, including France, Germany, and the UK. There is plenty of knowledge in India about operating procedures within European institutions, but there is not the same degree of familiarity with the inner workings of US institutions. Orientation is needed to discuss these differences for Indo-US institutional projects once they are under way.

AUDIENCES/ 09

Two other considerations to bear in mind in the performing arts, in both countries, is to make extensive plans to build expectations, to prepare audiences, and to arrange for community and professional colleague outreach, in order to expand impact, and to make traveling performers feel

entirely welcome. This will necessarily entail advance contact and orientation with local audiences, plans for gatherings with local hosts and local professional colleagues that go beyond the particular project. When such significant financial and staff resources are expended to bring people immense distances, maximum impact and comfortable orientation need to be planned for, by laying advance groundwork.

"At the risk of stirring up the pot, the easy place [to focus on is] the diaspora, because there are links between India and the United States. To my mind, perhaps the more challenging, but the more important area to go is beyond that . . . to look at the links between the issue of caste in India and color in America, going back 100 years . . . How do we connect India to America outside of that already won-over diaspora?"

- Michael P. Pelletier

It would be beneficial for American artists and arts professionals to work with the Indian diaspora in the USA, and to engage additional diverse audiences in India as well. One of the barriers to this ambitious goal is to recognize the profound stratification issues and social constraints within India. The complexities of regional diversity and caste intersect with cultural programming priorities in ways that can be difficult to prevent but easy to gauge.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT PARADIGMS/ 10

"For arts and culture to be seen as the glue between and among cultures, both to create new production but also better understanding, how do we make a case for them? When push comes to shove, why is it that the arts always get cut? Why is it that we are not able to say why the arts are important to society? Is there a way that we can make a stronger case for the arts in the international arena that will not be subjected to the vagaries of political priorities?"

-Vishakha N. Desai

On a governmental policy level, the arts function as a form of international relations. Hence, when they are not seen as an instrument of power, they are often not supported. Understanding the basics of funding and support is critical to transnational collaboration. Artists and arts professionals need to consider the broader context from the supporter's vantage point, be able to articulate why a project should be supported, know how to get it funded, and know whom they can approach to get the resources they need. As in so many of the topics that have been addressed, the situations in India and the US will likely be unfamiliar to first time collaborators.

NATIONAL STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES FOR FUNDING AND SUPPORT/ 11

There are profound differences between the way that the

American and Indian governments support international cultural collaboration. During the Cold War, American support of international arts programs was at an all-time high; the arts were instrumentalized. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, cultural diplomacy was pared back, and in 1999, the government body responsible for much foreign cultural advocacy, the United States Information Agency (USIA), was abolished, and the agency's functions were absorbed into the State Department under the direction of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Other organizations linked to the US government are: the National Endowment for the Arts, an independent agency founded in 1965, which currently contributes to the expansion of knowledge about American arts and culture in foreign countries, and about foreign arts and culture in the US,² as well as the Institute of Museums and Libraries and the National Endowment for the Humanities. However, cultural support from all US federal government sources is chiefly dedicated to projects that are internal to the nation rather than extending beyond the borders. Present US cultural diplomacy is a part of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's idea of "smart power," which entails using the full range of tools at a nation's disposal to develop a stronger relationship with another country. That said, American cultural programming is primarily generated by individuals and arts institutions, with the government

² National Endowment for the Arts Strategic Plan for 2012-2016, <http://www.nea.gov/about/index.html>



Conference participants and observers, New Delhi, June 2011

playing a supporting background role rather than a leading one.

In India, most non-profit cultural programming is state-controlled, with institutions communicating beyond national borders through their government ministries. There are two chief government departments that deal with arts programming and funding. The first is the Indian Council on Cultural Relations (ICCR). Founded in 1950 in order to establish, revive and strengthen cultural relations between India and other countries, it is linked to the Ministry of External Affairs. ICCR has many functions, including sponsoring visits by foreign performing artists to India, travel of Indian artists abroad, and supporting exhibitions, publications, and conferences. The other department is the

Ministry of Culture, the mission of which is to preserve, promote and disseminate all forms of Indian art and culture. The Ministry of Culture oversees numerous autonomous and subordinate cultural institutions including historic sites, monuments and libraries, within India. Among its many functions, the Ministry of Culture is able to enter into cultural agreements with foreign countries, and engage in cultural exchange.

There are pros and cons to having cultural ministries in any country, as arts professionals from Central Asia, China, or Europe, for that matter, have expressed to their American colleagues. While it may be a huge relief not to devote significant staff time searching for funds, and to have such strong federal advocacy, there may be times when an artist or art

professional's unique and individual voice is muffled, subsumed under the cultural umbrella, or upstaged by a nationalist agenda. When the governmental departments of the arts are bifurcated, as they are in India between the Ministry of Culture and the India Council on Cultural Relations, or the State Department and the National Endowment for the Arts, navigation requires additional preparation and research.

Are there ways to broaden and deepen the channels between the institutions in the USA, and the Indian Ministry of Culture and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations? How can Indo-US cultural collaboration best move forward without an equivalent US government body on the other side of the table?

GOVERNMENT FUNDING VERSUS PRIVATE SUPPORT/ 12

"How do you translate what you are saying...how am I going to justify funding that? How do you make it real without losing that spark of magic and creativity which is the arts? How would you make that sing on a different soil? . . . You have to bring the funder in early, find a bureaucrat early, and bring them in so it makes sense in both languages."

-Michael P. Pelletier

"There is a fine provocative edge to the joining of the two words, culture and industry. And while it gives renewed space for economic activity, industry cannot shake culture."

-Rajeev Sethi

In the USA, financial resources to support visual and performing arts and institutions are being drastically cut back, in some cases threatening livelihoods and viability. What little government funding there is for the arts is largely dedicated to projects taking place within the nation's borders; there is very little money available for foreign and transnational cultural collaboration. Most institutional professionals in the US need to work with their boards of trustees, comprised of individuals, and with their development (fundraising) staff in order to secure money for all projects, in advance of proceeding to work on them. Private individual support from enlightened wealthy philanthropists, corporate and foundation support,

and government funding are combined in the US to pay for large projects. In fiscal year 2008-2009, the budget for the US government agency, the National Endowment for the Arts, was \$155M, according to a recent BBC article, whereas the Indian government spent more than \$217M on arts funding for fiscal year 2009-2010.³ In India, most cultural programming is funded by the government, under the auspices of the federal Ministry of Culture or the ICCR; sometimes by the cultural agencies of foreign governments (British Council, Pro Helvetia, Goethe Institute, Japan Foundation, for example); and far less frequently, with the assistance of individual philanthropists. Public/private partnerships, in terms of funding structures, are on the rise, but they are not well developed. New museums founded by private collectors, and new funding streams from individuals and corporations, have appeared in the last ten years in India. The advisory board model that is used in many non-profit institutions in the USA, where board members are expected to contribute financially but are not allowed to influence programming decisions, was suggested as a good model to be explored by Indian institutions looking for additional private/public funding structures to pursue.

Arts funding in both countries needs to significantly increase, and it is the leading arts pro-

³"How the arts are funded outside the UK," October 20, 2010, <http://bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-11569883>. Caveats: The US figure does not include other federal government arts funding, nor does it take into account the financial value of the tax-exempt status of arts organizations.

professionals who can push this issue forward by articulating why the arts are important. There are massive private accumulations of wealth in both countries, and while individual and private foundation philanthropic activity certainly exists, it is not as common in India. In the US, recent statistics show that foundation giving has increased very little over the past five years (according to the 2011 *Foundation Growth and Giving Estimates: Current Outlook*, available on the Foundation Center's website). Surprisingly, India's economic liberalization in 1991 has led to high economic growth, but nowhere near as rapid increases in the pursuit and support of the arts and humanities. It is the responsibility of all arts professionals to articulate to all funding bodies and individuals why funding for the arts is critical to civil society, and why all who can should help rebuild a pool of resources for creation.

Funding tends to work in cycles. The financial environment generates a tyranny of production and deliverables that needs to be expanded to allow for not only product, but also process. Foundations are open to redefining working procedures, whereas government funders perhaps are less flexible on the subject, but it is up to arts professionals to change the parameters, the descriptive language, and the expectations of the funders. Arts professionals need to make their requests more interesting, make it clear in funding applications why time is needed, and to build in accountability and standards of quality. Schedules and proposals need to be expanded to include recognition of the importance of

creating a safe space, be it virtual or actual, and enough time, to allow for creative exchange between collaborators. There was a general consensus among the conference participants, that people working in international embassies, who have access to broad networks of potential funders, do have a strong desire to support intercultural work, but need their cultural partners to help formulate and strengthen the case.

For projects involving US institutions, the nature of many initial discussions of transnational projects will by necessity be transactional because of the way funding works in cycles; by "transactional" we mean that agreements will have to be confirmed, and goals will need to be met according to schedules, in order for funding to be secured and for projects to proceed. Funding applications for US institutions and artists are often complex, requiring significant time and planning before knowing whether funding is granted, allowing a project to go forward. This aspect of collaboration does not necessarily make sense to Indian collaborators, because they are accustomed to having funding come from the government, and working with more elastic schedules. It is extremely useful for each side to understand this significant difference, and try to overcome these logistical and cultural gaps.

Within the USA, the vast Indian diaspora is a major potential source to be engaged, both for audience outreach, as already discussed, but also for private funding for collaborative projects. Throughout the world,

Indian expatriates have been thriving for decades, and their purview is international; in the UK, second generation Indians have become philanthropically active in the arts far more than in the USA. Creating interest among the Indian diaspora in the US, and nurturing advocates within local expatriate communities, would be wise for American institutional professionals to consider. Board make-up is a corollary factor too. If arts professionals in the USA could identify people who are representatives, catalysts, and excite them with collaboration prospects, and invite them onto boards of institutions, there would be more effective outreach. They are not only a bridge back to India from the US, but they also connect to a broader world view.

In both countries, a promising direction for future funding is to develop new public/private funding streams. There is a need to encourage renewed civic-mindedness, an ethics of citizenry that entails responsibility for supporting public causes. Arts professionals need to find advocates, bigger voices who are celebrities, people who can infect others with their passion. American arts institutions have extensive experience in fundraising (which is the purview of the development department), and can share this knowledge with Indian colleagues. Existing funding sources that may be approached for transnational collaboration possibilities in India include the India Foundation for the Arts, National Cultural Fund, Confederation of Indian Industry, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the US-India Business Council, in addition to

the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Ministry of Culture. Within the USA, government funding is available from the State Department, National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities, and from foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, J. Paul Getty Trust, Asian Cultural Council, and American Institute of Indian Studies. One participant recommended using the term "South Asia" when applying for funding pertaining to India, as it is more attractive to many funders.

GOING FORWARD/ 13

Potential collaborators are encouraged to be thinking at least ten years ahead, taking a longer view of the development of projects and their impact. Radical shifts in demographics and technology need to be considered when planning for collaborative projects.⁴ Diaspora audiences in the US should be borne in mind, too, as has already been discussed. Within India, the importance of the arts needs to be articulated to a country that is widely predicted to become the most populous in the world by 2050, surpassing China. Ages and ethnicities of the public should affect programming decisions. In terms of technology, the internet allows for comparison and contextualization of visual and performing arts online, which makes room for a vastly expanded narrative, and avoidance of art

⁴ For information on American museums, the Center for the Future of Museums, an initiative of the American Association of Museums, posts a number of useful documents on www.futureofmuseums.org.

repatriation issues that can hinder historic museum exhibitions. Cultural programming is becoming ever more knowledge-based, and less object-based, freeing up the possibilities for exchange, for collaboration from afar, and for project platforms that are virtual and interactive rather than physical and static.

In terms of new visual arts initiatives, Indian institutions and individuals want real collaboration, not just loan requests. Indian professionals' opinions were that India needs to have the self-confidence to find new paths between disciplines, new ways to bring the East and West together. Private museums in India are a nascent form of institution, still gaining traction. The future of Indo-US collaboration will need to engage the private sector, because it is highly probable that the USA will not be pursuing government-supported projects alone, but will likely work with private institutions as well.

Among the specific changes recommended by the 16 participants of the conference were the following:

- Indian government can dramatically promote transcultural collaboration by creating an atmosphere for change, implementing reforms, and then leaving artists and arts professionals to play more prominent roles in cultural programming
- In order for India to be a "global player" in the arts, tax benefits for philanthropy needs reassessment, including the areas of financial donations and donations of art collections

to public institutions.⁵ Indian donors currently receive varying tax deduction rates on charitable donations. In terms of support for institutions, unless an organization has a particular tax status (FCRA) in India, which is quite difficult to secure, it cannot accept funds from foreign sources. If people can have NRI accounts and take money away from the country, why are there such deep restrictions in this area? Is it benign neglect?

- The Indian loan review and evaluation process involving cultural heritage objects should be assessed and modified, and most importantly, moved to an earlier point in the exhibition development process.
- In the absence of a US Ministry of Culture, American and Indian arts professionals need to generate templates for Memoranda of Understanding that are widely shared in public arenas.
- American institutions need to reconsider their climate control policies to find areas of flexibility rather than apply prohibitive blanket requirements.
- American institutions working with Indian counterparts

⁵ In a report produced by FICCI last year, related discussion included the recommendation that a full expense deduction for the amount of donation made to the art sector by corporate establishments should be considered. Mr. Roopen Roy, Managing Director of Deloitte and Touche Consulting India Pvt. Ltd stated, "While art is basically a knowledge industry, people have also created a lot of wealth from it. We need to come up with smoother tax systems. Corporate philanthropy in art also needs to be incentivized in India like it is overseas." FICCI -- Release of Report on Art Industry in India: Policy Recommendations, April 2, 2010, Kolkata.

need to relax their procedural requirements and adapt, committing time and resources for the sake of the collaboration at hand.

- All parties need to generate new forms of transcultural collaboration through the internet; it is not adequately employed in most cultural programming.
- Institutions should consider implementing internal criteria for quality control and excellence for collaborative projects.

India and the USA are closer neighbors now than ever before. Even with the digital revolution in full force, and the shifting economic and political relationship between these two countries, there is still a discernible lag in knowledge of and deep awareness about one another's cultures. There is a strong desire among artists, arts professionals, and cultural institutions to change this situation, to work together across our respective borders, to generate new forms of cultural exchange, to create ongoing collaborations according to principles of parity and reciprocity. In order for new models to succeed, specific knowledge and orientation will facilitate the activities of the people who are initiating, implementing, creating, supporting, and funding these intensive and hopefully long lasting collaborations. With the insights provided, including sobering and detailed assessments of the barriers and logistical hurdles of differing cultural expectations, work timelines, funding requirements, institutional procedures, and audience outreach, this report has set forth best practices and recommendations for a broad constituency of indi-

viduals and institutions. Asia Society aims to play a key role in instigating, assembling data on, and facilitating future collaborative projects involving Indian and American visual and performing arts.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS/ 14

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES/ 15

Biographical information on conference participants

Homi K. Bhabha, "On Collaboration," keynote address, Asia Society Conference on Indo-US Cultural Exchange, New Delhi, June 25, 2011