



Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
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Vocal for Local

Empowering Artisans and Preserving Traditions at Divya Kala Mela 2024

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Local art is the heartbeat of communities, a reflection of their **identity, history, and shared experiences**. From intricate handicrafts to traditional textiles and vibrant paintings, it embodies the unique spirit of its region, carrying forward the skills and stories passed down through generations. At the **Divya Kala Mela**, this essence takes center stage, offering a vibrant platform where creativity meets purpose. Beyond showcasing artistic brilliance, the Mela celebrates the indomitable spirit of artisans who preserve these traditions while paving the way for empowerment and inclusion. These narratives reflect the transformative impact of the event, celebrating resilience and creativity while reinforcing the importance of inclusion and economic independence.



Neelam Makwana at Divya Kala Mela

Hailing from Gujarat, **Neelam Nareshbhai Makwana** is a shining example of perseverance and empowerment. Despite studying only until class 7, Neelam's innate talent and entrepreneurial vision paved the way for her journey as a creator of exquisite brass-oxidized jewellery. What sets Neelam apart is her dedication to creating opportunities for others. She trains many people including a group

of **transgender individuals in Gujarat**—to make and sell similar jewellery, helping them achieve financial independence. For Neelam, **empowerment knows no barriers; it is an opportunity everyone deserves!** Her work not only preserves the traditional art of handmade-jewellery but also uplifts marginalized groups, reinforcing the true spirit of inclusion.



Mohd Saleem's Stall at Divya Kala Mela

In **Uttar Pradesh**, **Mohammed Saleem** has dedicated the past six to seven years to preserving the traditional craft of metal lantern-making. Leading a team of **10-15 Divyang workers**, Saleem creates intricate metal products that light up homes and lives. His efforts go beyond artistry; they provide employment opportunities to persons with disabilities and train the younger generation in this timeless craft. Saleem's work ensures the survival of local metalwork traditions while building sustainable livelihoods for Divyang artisans.



Pranay Dev's Stall at Divya Kala Mela

From Assam, **Pranay Chandra Dev** combines eco-consciousness with cultural preservation through his handmade bamboo bags. With a team of **50 artisans**, Pranay creates sustainable and stylish products that reflect the rich cultural heritage of Assam. The Divya Kala Mela provides him with a platform to reach a national audience, showcasing the artistry and dedication of his team. By promoting traditional bamboo crafts, Pranay not only preserves Assam's cultural identity but also empowers artisans with employment and recognition.

The **22nd Divya Kala Mela, held from December 12 to December 22, 2024**, at India Gate in New Delhi, stands as a vibrant celebration of perseverance, determination, and cultural heritage. Featuring around **100 Divyang entrepreneurs and artisans from 20 states and Union Territories**, the event highlights the remarkable synergy between creativity and empowerment. Embodying the spirit of "**Vocal for Local**," the Divya Kala Mela champions the preservation of cultural traditions and local art while fostering economic opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). By connecting local artisans with national audiences, the Mela plays a crucial role in safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage. It not only showcases India's diverse artistic traditions but also ensures they are cherished and shared with a wider audience.

References

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