

Celebrating INDIA@70
UTSAV
Glimpses of India

A Cultural Festival organized by
Indian Cultural Centre, High Commission of India, Colombo

17-19 November 2017
at Vihara Mahadevi Open Air Theatre

Friday, 17th November
6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.
Punjabi Folk Dance and Music performance by North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala, Punjab, India

Activities:
Yoga, Ayurveda, Homeopathy
Bollywood Movie Magic
Indian Cookery demo and Food Stalls
Handicraft, Handloom, Maheshwari Stalls
Bollywood Dance & Music
Foli & Garri Mash

For details about the programme and timings do follow us in facebook: fb.com/indianculturalcentre and twitter: twitter.com/CultureColombo
For more info: call on tel #2684698 / email: icc Colombo2@gmail.com

Cultural Calendar - November 2017

11
Saturday
9.00 a.m.-1.00 p.m.

Celebrating Children's Day **Shankar's International Children's Competition 2018**

Painting, Drawing and Essay Competition
Venue: ICC Auditorium

For registration contact: Indian Cultural Centre
phone no 2684698 or by email: icc Colombo2@gmail.com

UTSAV – glimpses of India

A cultural festival

Venue: Viharamahadevi Open-air Theatre, Free entry

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17-19

Friday - Sunday
6.00 a.m. - 9.00 p.m.

20

Monday
2.00 p.m.

Workshop on Spoken Hindi through e-learning

by Dr. Vijay Malhotra, expert from India

Venue: ICC Auditorium

Baktha Vathsalam – Bharatanatyam recital

by Nrithya Kala Rathna Shri Krishna Kumar

from India

Venue: ICC Auditorium

24

Friday
6.00 p.m.

Screening of Internationally renowned film on wellness "HEAL"

Directed by Kelly Noonan

In collaboration with the Theva Residency & A.A.Y.U.S.H, Sri Lanka

Venue: ICC Auditorium

Prior registration is required due to limited seats. Please contact Dheeshana – 0777575632 / Shobana - 0777393999

25

Saturday
4.00 p.m.

Programmes subject to change

Admission to all programmes are on first come first serve basis.

All are cordially invited

UNIE ARTS, 2330195



Indian Council for Cultural Relations
भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध आयोग

Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo November 2017



Ushering auspiciousness with Kolam

Performed as a sacred ritual, kolams are drawn by women at places considered holy and sacrosanct

Elaborate geometrical patterns embodying auspiciousness and cosmic continuity are crafted on the threshold of most South Indian homes. A widely practiced custom, especially in Tamil Nadu, these symmetrical designs, known as kolams, are created with finely powdered rice flour or chalk to usher in Goddess Lakshmi, the deity of abundance and prosperity, into the household. Representing the rhythmic patterns of everyday existence, adorning the entrances with kolam has a sacramental aura surrounding it. Performed as a sacred ritual by the women, kolam is drawn at places considered holy and sacrosanct like temples, prayer rooms, altars of various Hindu Gods and goddesses and commercial offices in the hope of fostering good luck in all possible business ventures.

Aesthetic representation of harmonious co-existence

References to Tamil literary texts, which elaborately describes the proper method of kolam application, the practice of drawing kolams can be traced back to the 16th

century. The prescribed directive of accurately creating a kolam requires the process to commence with a thorough cleansing and smoothing of the surface. Traditionally, rice flour, limestone powder, flowers and petals were used to create designs but the fineness of rice flour and the lightness of petals cause the kolam to wear off with the progression of the day, requiring most households to recreate the patterns regularly.

The advent of modern technology and the necessity of convenience now facilitates the inclusion of chalk sticks and bright synthetic dyes which adhere to the surface longer and prevent it from fading away. The reason for using powdered rice as a dye is that naturally transforms into a source of nourishment for lesser life forms like insects, birds and mice. Welcoming these creatures and providing them with a form of sustenance is believed to please Goddess Lakshmi whose satisfaction is paramount for ushering in prosperity into a household.

Kolam and life cycles

An increase in the detail and dimension of these kolam patterns represent the



A kolam prepared during Pongal celebrations

arrival of auspicious occasions such as a birth in the family or a matrimonial alliance where as the absence of kolam from the entrance of the home is considered ominous because it symbolises inauspiciousness in the form of misfortunes in the family.



A kolam during Pongal festival in Tamil Nadu

The presence or absence of kolam, therefore, serves as an indicator of the well-being of the family and this, in turn, influences the collective mood of the entire community. In this way, the sacred geometrical folds of kolam appear to have succeeded in seamlessly merging with everyday life in these South Indian communities.

Merging mathematics with folklore

Two varieties of kolams have been documented - one, the Line kolam which is a freehand sketch done by rubbing rice powder between the thumb and index finger over the chosen surface area, and the other, Pulli kolam, done by drawing dots

INTERESTING FACT

Kolam is a prayer to mother Earth. It may include a tough geometrical design which is repeated several times and is created with lines, points and equal squares as also rounds, triangles, conch, plants and flowers that are united in complex ways.

If a break in a line appears, it is claimed that evil spirits get a chance to enter the house. The art form is drawn with rice flour to invite spiritual deities to the residence. Mathematical properties of kolam are being used in the field of computer science. Algorithms for drawing kolams are used in development of picture drawing computer software. kolams are used for research in the computational anthropology. Also, kolams are also used to simplify the representation of complex protein structures for easy understanding



Above, Women make kolam at kapaleeswarar Temple and right : An artist gives final touches to a kolam

on the ground and joining them with straight lines, loops and curves, thereby creating a chain like pattern.

Folklore instructs the lines of kolams to be closed at the end to prevent negative energies from entering the pattern. Motifs are inspired from supernatural elements, philosophy, religious beliefs, astrology, natural formations and abstract thoughts. Images of birds and animals make regular appearances on kolams, suggesting universal harmony and peaceful coexistence between man and beasts.

The process of kolams formation has fascinated innumerable computer scientists and mathematicians around the globe and its practice of building patterns around a matrix of lines and points has spurred various researches leading to the identification of three formations known as the Finite Matrix, the Regular matrix and the Context Free Regular Array Kolam.

Preservation of tradition

Passing on the art of mastering a kolam, from one generation to

other, is entrusted with the women of the household who have been recognised as the custodians of this tradition. A skill which requires concentration, discipline, elegance, poise and dexterity, kolam has often been used as a yardstick for measuring feminine grace.

To foster this ancient art and prevent it from fading into oblivion, various organisations join hands to conduct kolam drawing competitions in the month of Margazhi which falls between December and January. Women partaking in these competitions prepare themselves by practising their motifs on paper before beginning their drawing on the chosen floor. Contestants take immense pride in being able to sketch vast intricate designs, which often span an entire street, without having to lift their hands off the ground or even take a break to stand up before the patterns have been accurately accomplished. Arranging such healthy competitions and providing attractive prizes as incentives are highly encouraged within the South Indian communities as they ensure the sustenance of these age-old customs and counter the forces of rapid urbanisation which threaten to eliminate these ancient cultural traditions.