

language is migrant
भाषाएँ अन्तर्देशिक
भाषाएँ एक पराम्परा

FESTIVAL REPORT

20 - 30 January 2022

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1. Festival Outline

The seventh edition of the interdisciplinary art festival Colomboscope titled Language is Migrant was held after two postponements despite challenges arising from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic from 20 - 30 January 2022. The largest edition to date, this time Colomboscope brought together over 70 Sri Lankan and international artists, filmmakers, writers and musicians especially fostering South Asian dialogue and encounters with cultural practitioners from the Sri Lankan diaspora with exhibitions and events spread over 6 venues across Colombo. Colomboscope 2022 was curated by Anushka Rajendran with artistic director Natasha Ginwala.

Embarking from the words of poet-artist Cecilia Vicuña: Language is Migrant – artistic and literary contributions map hybrid belonging, diasporic lineages, linguistic inheritances, and displacement. Across six chapters, this edition explored how language relations form our selfhood and affinities that outweigh the bind of nationhood and citizenship.



Visit www.colomboscope.lk/festival-report or scan the QR code to download the Language is Migrant festival publication.

1.2. Video Documentation



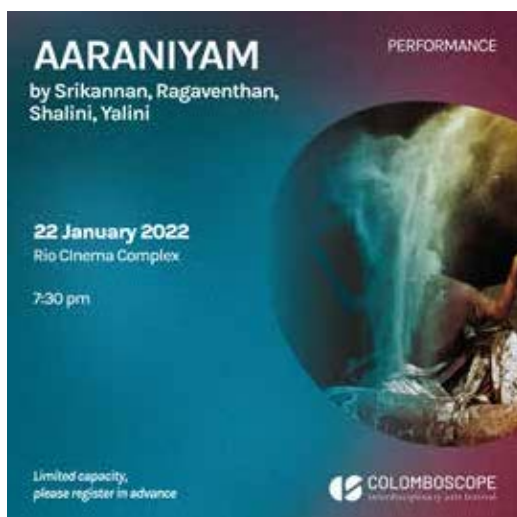
Visit www.colomboscope.lk/festival-report
or scan the QR code to view the Language is
Migrant festival video.

2. Programme Highlights

2.1. Events

Aaraniyam

Performance / Rio Cinema Complex

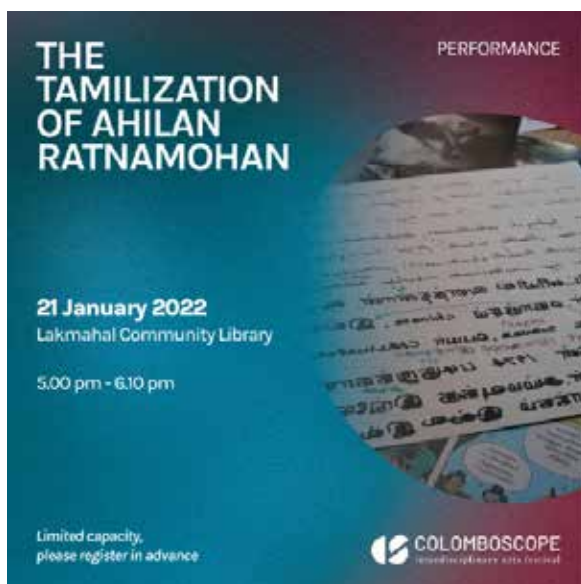


Aaraniyam is a collective of four contemporary performers and dancers Srikanth, Ragaventhana, Shalini, Yalini, who use improvised choreography combining Bharatham with theatre and narrative elements, responding to poems by Packiyannathan Ahilan. In collaboration with Lalindra Amarasekara, the collective plotted visualization elements focusing on light and shadow as well as literary fields of loss and injustice.

Supported by Kālam – A Space for Cultural Encounters and Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka

The Tamilization of Ahilan Ratnamohan

Performance / Lakmahal Community Library



Ahilan Ratnamohan, a performance-maker from the Sri Lankan diaspora, has been learning Tamil for the first time in his life over skype conversations with his mother, communicating in their natal tongue for the first time. The resulting performance was an intimate exploration of his diasporic identity and second generation amnesia.

Supported by Australian High Commission and Warehouse421 Revival Fund.

Fragile Inheritance

Artist Tour / Rio Cinema Complex



A walk-through and critical discussion with Megara Tegal and Aamina Nizar on the disappearance of Gundul (the Malay script), familial stories, and the evolution of the pockets of Sri Lankan Malay communities around the island.

Supported by the Ibn Battuta Foundation.

Migrant Fabulations

Reading and Discussion / Lakmahal Community Library



A reading by cultural anthropologist Omar Kasmani, a hopscotch across languages, geography and beliefs that asked "What transpires when the strange pervades the familiar, dispossession becomes ordinary, or when home, to quote an artwork, is a foreign place?"

Supported by Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka, ifa, and Ishara Art Foundation

Neighbourhood Movements

Walking Tour / Wellawatte



This walking tour led by Phusathi Liyanaarachchi and Zul Luthufi around Wellawatte narrated a history of labour unrest, feminist engagement through The Polytechnic, as well as memorializing the Black July 1983 pogrom, traversing neighbourhood stories from residents' perspectives and migratory histories from the colonial period into the present day.

Supported by Foundation for Arts Initiatives

KACHA KACHA

Performance / Government Service Sports Club



KACHA KACHA returned to the Government Service Sports Club in Narahenpita for a long awaited night of uncensored, original, trilingual expression. Supported by Colomscope, the evening brought together rappers, poets, and singer-songwriters, performing in Sinhala, Tamil and English. Expect trip-hop and neo-soul, Tamil poetry, Sinhala remixes and audio-visual jamming. Featuring Owl Tree-O, GaaPiNk, The Packet X Bo Sedkid, Anar and Tashyana Handy.

Kacha Kacha is founded and curated by Imaad Majeed.

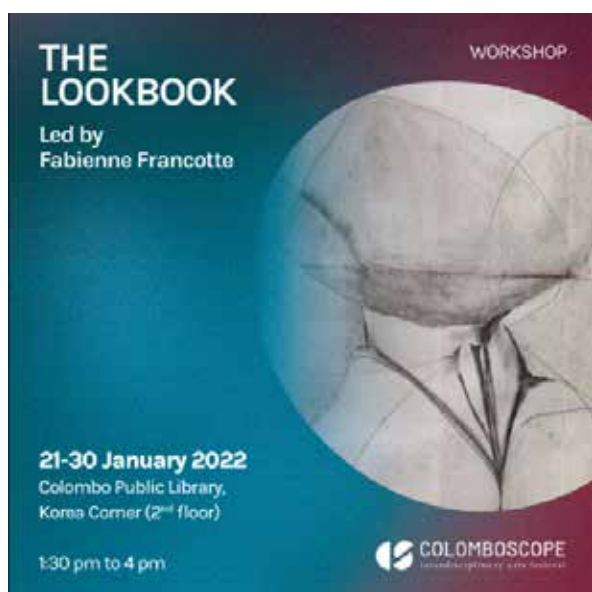
[View event coverage by Roar Media](#)



2.2. Festival Workshops

The Lookbook

Workshop / Colombo Public Library

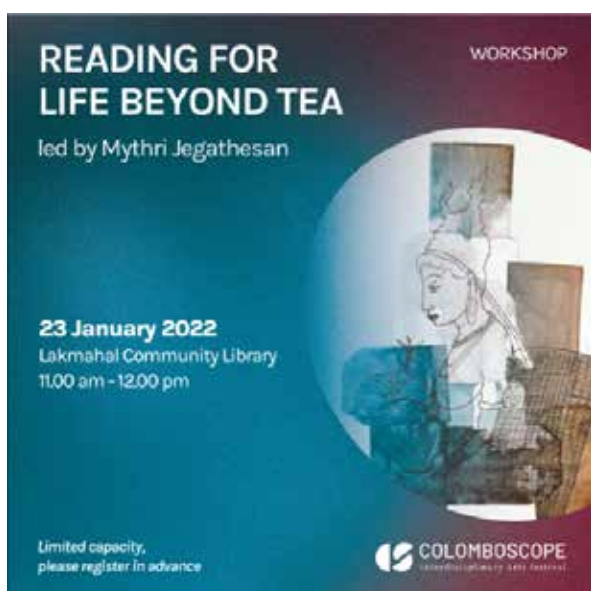


This workshop led by Fabienne Francotte called for approaches to drawing as thinking, exploring its capacity for articulating the self, relating to fluid identities, itinerant existence, and forced displacement, continuing her practice of engaging with communities to share the transformative possibilities of artmaking. Participants were invited to draw something unusual, building on portraiture and identity, shaping maps of our spaces visited while being on the move. The lookbook is an open diary that explores drawing as a method to articulate our collective experiences and emotions that compel creative expression.

Supported by Foundation for Arts Initiatives

Reading For Life Beyond Tea

Workshop / Lakmahal Community Library



Led by cultural anthropologist Mythri Jegathesan, this workshop asked participants to think about the language, labor and Malaiyaka Tamil estate workers that make Ceylon tea possible. It featured readings from Jegathesan's seminal book *Tea and Solidarity: Tamil Women and Work in Postwar Sri Lanka*, photographs from her research, and an open discussion about the politics of writing beyond the story of Ceylon tea and workers' desires for justice in Sri Lanka.

Supported by Foundation for Arts Initiatives

2.3. The Hearing Voices Café



Ten days of voices being heard / 21 - 30.01.2022

Lak Cafe, Viharamahadevi Park

A project initiated by Dora García in collaboration with Jayampathi Guruge and many others

The Hearing Voices Café revolves primarily around exchange, community, experiment, memory, research, struggle and destigmatization. A Hearing Voices Café in Sri Lanka had the extra layer of exploring experimental modes of live performance, literary affinities weaving enduring trauma and healing, as well as feminist legacies, and sacred knowledge practices such as Sufism, with 10 episodes, one on each day of the festival.

[View Hearing Voices Programme](#)

[Download the Hearing Voices Cafe Newspaper](#)

3. Festival Venues

3.1. Colombo Public Library



At the Colombo Public Library, over fifteen artistic projects brought together local and international creative collaborators. These have evolved through dialogue and sociality to foreground collective pedagogies, body movement, and choreography in everyday life, as well as community archives. Artistic works treated translation as a vehicle that takes different routes in the long journey toward understanding. Knowledge, encompassed by anecdotal narrations, marginalia, hand illustrated scrolls, and diagrams, add to the official memory of Sri Lanka's largest library. Special tours were held at this venue by visitor educations of MMCA, Sri Lanka and festival volunteers.

Exhibiting Artists: Vijitharan Maryathevathas / Jagath Weerasinghe / Rupaneethan Pakkiyarajah Hanusha Somasundaram / Lavkant Chaudhary / Shailesh BR / We Are From Here / Mariah Lookman Cecilia Vicuña / Mounira Al Solh / Pangrok Sulap / Liz Fernando / Marinella Senatore A Thousand Channels / Packiyathan Ahilan / Slavs and Tatars / Rajni Perera



Rupaneethan Pakkiyarajah
Root, Seed and Land, 2021
Mixed media, 14.5 x 4.5 x 5 in
Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Rupaneethan Pakkiyarajah
Divided Land, 2021
Mixed media, 6 x 10 x 7.5 in
Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



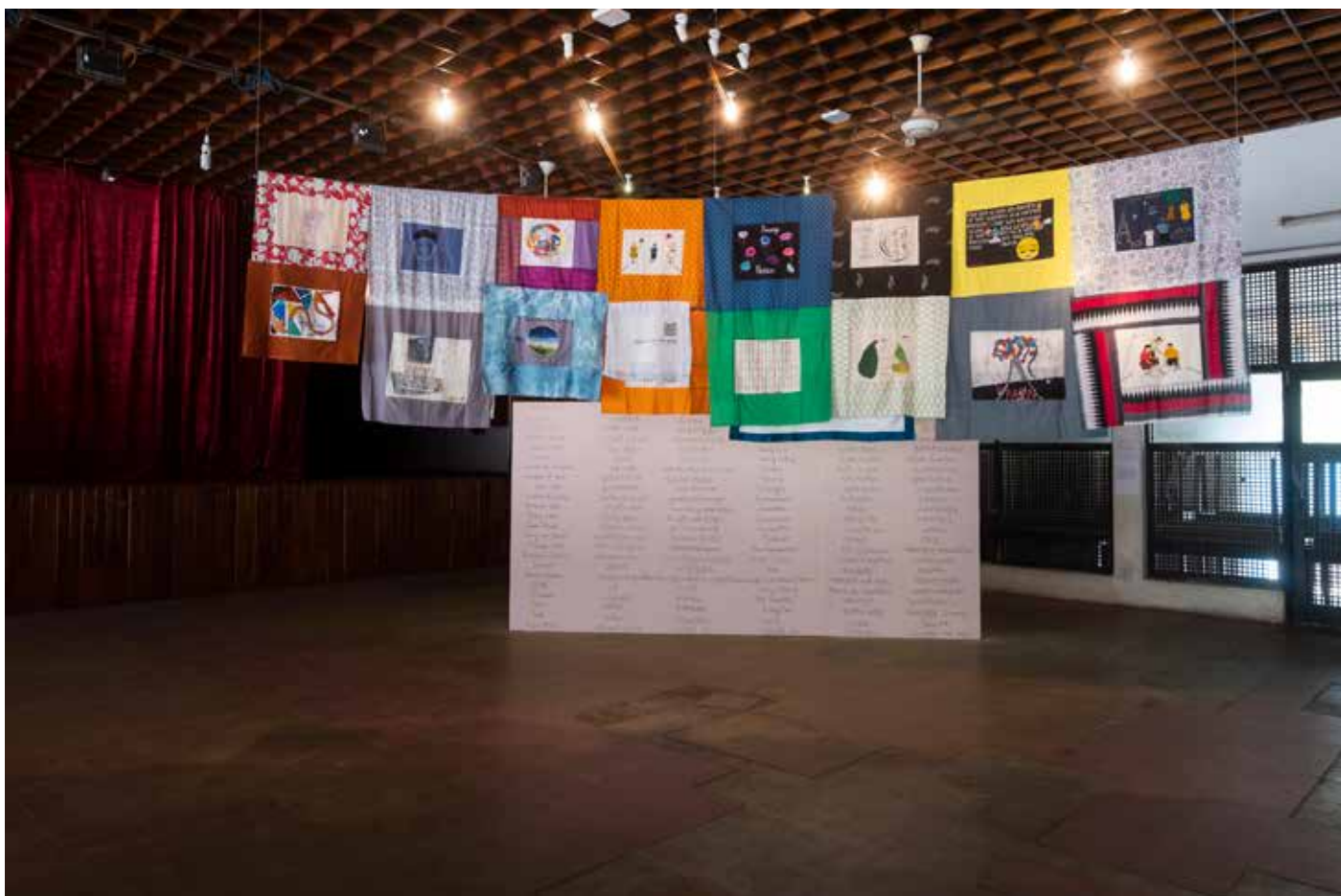
Lavkant Chaudhary
Maasinya Dastoor series, 2021
Stipling drawing on Lokta paper, terracotta sculptures (Tharu pitri- gods), reed matt,
Supported by Experimenter Generator Cooperative Art Production Fund and Artree Nepal
Photography: Lojithan Ram



We Are From Here
 Ashray, 2020-21
 Sound recordings, drawings, maps, photographs and objects
 Supported by EUNIC
 Photography: Lojithan Ram



Pangrok Sulap
 All nations are created special, 2021
 Woodcut print on fabric
 Supported by A+ Works of Art
 Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Mounira al Solh

In Love, In Blood, 2021-22

Charcoal on wall and embroidery on fabric

Supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Photography: Shehan Obeysekera



Mariah Lookman
Hayy in Serendip, 2021
Video, with colour and sound, 29 min 47 sec
Supported by National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts
Photography: Shehan Obeysekera



Slavs and Tatars
Hamdani, 2016
Video with colour and sound, 5 min 48 sec
Supported by Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka, ifa, and Ishara Art Foundation
Photography: Shehan Obeysekera



Rajni Perera
Hattimutti, 2022
Terracotta, slip, rope, paint
Produced in the studio of Sarath Chandrajeewa
Supported by Warehouse421 Project Revival Fund
Photography: Lojithan Ram



Marinella Senatore
Make it shine 1-6, 2021
Collage and mixed media on Epson Hot Press Paper
Photography: Tharmapalan Tilaxan

3.2. Lak Café



Lak Café in Colombo hosted The Hearing Voices Café, with a series of activities that explored contiguities between the personal and the collective experiences, incidental encounters, and the modalities by which language operates in the processes of sharing testimonies and responsive witnessing. The Hearing Voices Cafe was a collective project that was presented by Dora García in collaboration with performance artist Jayampathi Guruge among several guest artists and writers

21.01.22 – Episode 1: *The history we remember.*

A group of guests is invited to narrate the Sri Lankan historical/community moment that has most influenced their lives. Different modes of oral history and storytelling will emerge over the evening. With Harshana Rambukwella, Sahlah Anees, Vraie Balthazaar (curated by Everystory), Nipuni Sharada Pathirage

22.01.22 – Episode 2: *The Book People.*

A group of guests with different backgrounds presented themselves as books, manifesting as characters and taking up trails of fiction to draw accounts from their life story. With Pemanthi Fernando and young artists..



23.01.22 – උරුමයින් සාප්පාඩ නම 1 ඇසු කන් වලට

Kumari Kumaragamage brought poetic inspiration and readings of her short stories in dialogue with Ruhanie Perera. This exchange laid focus on friendship as a form of voice hearing and counsel, feminist wisdoms and intergenerational love. Reading and listening appear as spiritual gift, as form of consciousness, as expression of trauma, as acknowledgement of the plurality of the subject, as a form of thought, as connection to foremothers, asserting voice hearing as a complex experience as varied as dreams, losses, and beyond human lives.

24.01.22 – Episode 4: Spirituality: what is exceptional, what is common.

We invited guests with different relations to spirituality and healing to address their relationship with these aspects as part of everyday life. Moderated by Natasha Ginwala, what is common and what is different in the connections made between sacred architecture, human faith, recovery, and the role of divine beings was addressed. With Omar Kasmani, Iffath Neetha Uthumalebbe and psychiatrist Saman Hettige.

25.01.22 – Episode 5: Because they were, we are.

It is a common perception in civil rights movements that those fighting today, in our contemporaneity, are always supported and accompanied by those who fought yesterday, in our past. There is this wonderful expression: "Because they were, we are, because we are, they will be." In this event, our guests told us about the history of human rights activism in Sri Lanka. Curated by Everystory Sri Lanka with Nethmini Medawala and Kanchana Malshani (performance).

26.01.22 – Episode 6: Chats with the Dead.

Shehan Karunatilaka was invited to converse with Harshana Rambukwella around Shehan's book *Chats with the Dead*. They brought alive the characters who inhabit this literary cosmos while engaging with notions of how we continue to feel the presence of the dead. In absurd and gripping ways, the author engaged how adventure, bureaucracy and corruption pervade not only landscapes of the living but also, the afterlife.

27.01.22 – Episode 7: Play It Back, Theatre, or: The Social Mind: Uncovering Fields of Consciousness.

We think in a language that is innate to our souls. Our minds are constantly sifting through new vocabularies that are trendy and accepted as the norm of the times. This session was led by Jayampathi Guruge with Kasun Chathuranga. They used live performance to engage with the public and inquire into ways that mainstream media sources pressurise collective consciousness, using rumour and political rhetoric to distort and exhaust information-receiving bodies. Next to that, Loganathan Suman conducted an interactive session titled Tea Party, addressing life experiences of tea plantation worker communities and the forms of literature that have long surrounded the hill country. Loganathan provided critical perspectives around questions of labour, social struggles, and housing. With performances by Kasun Chathuranga, Jayampathi Guruge, Rasaiah Loganathan, M. Ajanthan Shantha Kumar, Ronika Chamalee, Selvaraj Leelawathy and S. Seedevi.

28.01.22 – Episode 8: Poetic Justice.

Even in the worst of times, there is always poetry. Poetry pulls us together, encouraging forms of collective survival and shared belonging. As Octavio Paz writes, "words are acts." We welcomed poets and readers of all kinds for an "open mic".

29.01.22 – Episode 9:

She has many names. This evening was devoted to the voices of women as survivors of war and colonial trauma, as accepting or rejecting the traditional role of caretakers, but above all, as self-organisers to build a better future in relation to issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality. With Veenadari Lakshika (performance), Sahlah Anees (performance), Neloufer de Mel and ARKA INITIATIVE founder & director Manisha Dissanayake

30.01.22 – Episode 10:

Hearing Voices Party and Colomboscope Festival finissage. With live music acts, and Palitha Abeyaratne.

Press

[Colomboscope 2022: The Hearing Voices Cafe - Roar Media](#)



Photography by Tropicalbursts

3.3. Rio Complex



Returning to the Rio Complex, the festival brought to this legendary building several artists' propositions that treated its scarred architecture as a sonic chamber where a multitude of voices, accents, chants, confessions, and whispers flowed together like a river. Each room invited forms of recording, bearing witness, time travel, and interventions to mark collective belonging amidst anguish and joy. Projects delved into botanical memory, culinary legacies, aesthetics of sacred life as well as enduring resonances of warfare and incarceration. Language is Migrant engaged ways of listening for gaps and crossings between fearless expression and regimes of power enforcing silence.

Exhibiting Artists: Mano Prashath / Sundharam Anojan / Thisath Thoradeniya / Danushka Marasinghe / Sharika Navamani / M. T. F. Rukshana / Palash Bhattacharjee / Aziz Hazara / Baaraan Ijlal / Omer Wasim / Pallavi Paul / Elin Már Øyen Vister / Pınar Öğrenci / Aaraniyam Lawrence Abu Hamdan / Ahilan Ratnamohan



Mano Prashath
 (L-R) *Tale of a Migrant City I*, 2020
 Collage on art board

Distressed Wall I, 2021
 Collage on art board

Tale of a Migrant City III, 2021
 Collage on art board

Distressed Wall, 2021
 Mixed media

Photography: Lojithan Ram



Suntharam Anojan
Hidden Path, 2021
 Acrylic on canvas
 Supported by Foundation for Arts Initiatives
 Photography: Shehan Obeysekera



Thisath Thoradeniya
Below the Salt, 2022
Temperature controlled glass cabinet, sea salt, leaves
Supported by EUNIC and Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka
Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Danushka Marasinghe
Lucent Monologues, 2021-2022
Video, colour, sound, rear projection on transparent fibreglass, silhouette target stand
Supported by Foundation for Arts Initiatives
Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



M. T. F. Rukshana
The Black Dress, 2019
The Black Dress, 2017
Mixed Media on Paper
Supported by Foundation for Arts Initiatives
Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Aziz Hazara
Takbir, 2021
Single channel video with sound and colour,
7 min 24 sec
Produced and commissioned by Between Art
and Film Foundation with generous support
from Künstlerhaus Bethanien, KFW Stiftung,
EUNIC, Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka, and Kālam
Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Baaraan Ijlal
Change Room, 2018-22
 Sound installation
 Supported by Shrine Empire
 Transcriptions by Salomi Christie. Sound editing by Mir Ijlal Shaani.
 Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Omer Wasim
Spectral Remains, 2020-22
 Periwinkle, soil, bricks, sound
 Sound composed by: Mudassir Sheikh
 Vocals: Arunthakaran
 Supported by EUNIC and Goethe-Institut
 Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Pinar Öğrenci
Turkish Delight, 2021-22
Single channel video with colour and sound
Co-commissioned by Colomboscope with support from Locus Athens, individual donors
from Syros and Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka
Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



T. Vinoja
Scars, 2021
Stitching on bandage
Supported by Warehouse421 Project Revival Fund and Foundation for Arts Initiatives
Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Suntharam Anojan
Hidden Path, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
Supported by Foundation for Arts Initiatives
Photography by Ushan Tharupathi

3.4. W A Silva Museum and Printing Press



The W A Silva Museum and Printing Press led by the Akuru Collective in the former home of best-selling author of Sinhalese literature, W A Silva, showcased a complete traditional letterpress and a collection of wood and metal types. Here, artistic presentations included site-responsive works that are in dialogue with the transforming role of print culture and its relation across virtual and analogue systems of staging literature. Contemporary practices challenged the universalism that majoritarian tongues pronounce as the only possible truth. Instead, they assembled statements that are playful, subversive, and investigative acts of reportage.

Exhibiting Artists: Shailesh BR / T. Krishnapriya / Imaad Majeed / Saskia Pintelon / Jason Dodge



T. Krishnapriya
 Series I, TREASURE BOX II, 2021
 Wooden box with archival letterpress prints
 COLLECTING IMPRESSION II, 2021
 Letterpress print on paper
 Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Imaad Majeed
 Testimony of the Disappeared, 2021
 Digital print on uncoated paper. Edition of 3
 148 x 210 mm

(L-R) Her evidence aged, 2022
 are living else-, 2022
 but she had no news of __, 2022
 Digital print on uncoated paper
 297 x 420 mm

Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Jason Dodge
They lifted me into the sun again and packed my skull with cinnamon, 2022
 Mixed media
 Installed at the W.A. Silva Museum and Printing Press by artist and writer Imaad Majeed
 Supported by Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka
 Photography: Shehan Obeysekera



Saskia Pintelon
The Beginning of The End, 2010
 Mixed media on fabric
 WA Silva Museum and Printing Press.
 Photography: Lojithan Ram

3.5. Barefoot Gallery



Biographical experiences are vivid forms of history telling. Joan Didion reminds us, "We tell ourselves stories in order to live." At Barefoot Gallery, artists used textile and collage as mediums to release visual chronicles. The thread and pixel replaced the pen in composing storylines, evoking fields of aspirational movement, desire, disability, and displacement. Where language falters in the blurring of memory—intergenerational accounts, heritage objects, and sites that have been the grounds of losing and making homes—rekindle ways of remembering.

Exhibiting Artists: Areez Katki / T. Vinoja / Hema Shironi / Abdul Halik Azeez



T.Vinoja
Widow I, 2019
Acrylic and stitching on fabric, 57 x 30cm

Differently-able III, 2019
Stitching on fabric, 36 x 47cm

Differently-able VI, 2020
Stitching on fabric, 25 x 18cm

Differently-able VIII, 2021
Stitching on fabric, 96 x 75cm

Differently-able VI, VII, 2020
Stitching on fabric, 25 x 18cm

Supported by Warehouse421 Project Revival
Fund and Foundation for Arts Initiatives
Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Hema Shironi
The Walking House, 2020
Stitching on fabric, 5 ft x 2.4 ft x 3 ft
Supported by Foundation for Arts Initiatives
Photography: Shehan Obeysekara



Abdul Halik Azeez
Desert Dreaming, 2021
Inkjet prints on paper
Single channel video with colour and sound, 65 min 14 sec
Supported by Foundation for Arts Initiatives
Photography: Lojithan Ram

3.6. Lakmahal Community Library



The Lakmahal Community Library was envisioned as a space of rest and refuge for autonomous learning, the activation of feminist vocabularies, and artist-led publishing that challenges the linear codes of reading and hierarchical dissemination in the publishing industry. This specially conceived reading room was titled *Reading in Tongues*, borrowing from queer Chicana poet, writer, and feminist theorist, Gloria Anzaldúa's text 'Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to 3rd World Women Writers.' The spatial design has been composed by ADM Architects, keeping in view the generous ambience of a historic household and garden. It also acted as a counterpoint to the Colombo Public Library by bringing oral cultures on par with the published word; making room for sharing literature in privacy and in kinship; immersing in multilingual poetry and Zine making, which reorient our relationship with the book as a multifold body. Addressing the intimacy and hardship of writing as a 'Third World Woman', Anzaldúa encourages us in this cataclysmic present to remain open and courageous in using our languages as an embrace of the world: May 'we continue to swim fearless with the length of our own bodies, in a sea of words'.

Reading Room Contributors: Packiyathan Ahilan / Indran Amirthanayagam / Kadak Collective / Jason Dodge / Dora García / Mythri Jegathesan / kal / Kumari Kumaragamage Mantiq of the Mantis / Yoshinori Niwa / Christian Nyampeta / The Packet / SCROLL: Projects on Paper / Mounira Al Solh and Nada Ghosn / Slavs and Tatars / T. Thajendran / A Thousand Channels / Bombay Underground / Cecilia Vicuña / Belinda Zhawi



Cecilia Vicuña
Palabramas, 2021
 Cloth Hangings recreated from photos of lost works
 Supported by Ishara Art Foundation
 Photography: Shehan Obeysekera



T. Thajendran
Mounavaakkiya Maalai (The garland of silent utter-ance), First edition, September 2020
 Supported by Ishara Art Foundation
 Photography: Shehan Obeysekera



Aqui Thami
Bombay Underground zines
Supported by Ishara Art Foundation
Photography: Shehan Obeysekera

['Reading in Tongues' interview and video coverage - TNL NOW](#)

4. Traveling Exhibition

4.1. Exhibition at Warehouse421, Abu Dhabi



A traveling iteration of Colomboscope's seventh edition [Language is Migrant](#) was presented in a collaboration between Warehouse421 and COLOMBOSCOPE in Abu Dhabi from 27 February to 8 May 2022; bringing together over ten cultural practices primarily from across Sri Lanka and South Asia in the pursuit to foster global dialogue. Several commissioned projects mobilize acts of transmission that embrace collective synergies and refuse parochial attitudes that are on the rise while dwelling in place. Instead, we find the channeling of sonic frequencies, cinematic and live acts that sustain the traffic of creative processes, biographical timekeeping, engaged listening and diasporic belonging. As part of the public programme 'Unfinished Circuits' the festival director and curator led a conversation with UAE-based writers Deepak Unnikrishnan and Rahel Aima, and screened a specially produced segment of Abdul Halik Azeez's video *Desert Dreaming* commissioned by Colomboscope as well as a live reading of Deepak Unnikrishnan's *Pravasis* to music composed by Sarathy Korwar. Special tours are held throughout the exhibition for arts professionals, students, and the general public. An educational activities booklet has been created by the Warehouse421 team for young audiences as well as an audio tour and sensory kit for audiences with special needs.



Visit www.colomboscope.lk/festival-report or scan the QR code to Language is Migrant video tour at Warehouse421 in Abu Dhabi.



5. Overview of Activity Timeline

5.1. Tandem Residencies

This initiative focused on artistic research, site-responsive production, and durational approaches within contemporary cultural practice through monthlong residencies for artistic producers hosted in different coastal and rural regions of Sri Lanka. Invited local and international artists worked closely with community mediators and practitioners, exploring aspects of social memory, oral histories, informal pedagogy, sonic archives, and traditional arts. Each residency included an Open House as part of contextualizing cultural processes for local audience groups as well as highlighting the process-led and migratory iterations of the Colomboscope Festival.

Colomboscope carried out tandem residencies with local and international artists through April - May 2021 extending process-led encounters and inviting artistic exchange in different regions of the island after over a year of travel restrictions. Language is Migrant foregrounds the spirit of movement-based inquiry and new modes of on-site production and collaborative listening that echo our interdependence with living ecologies.

Pakistani artist Omer Wasim and Sri Lankan artist Thisath Thoradeniya travelled across the Jaffna peninsula researching botanical species associated with memory, the afterlife of conflict, as well as colonial legacy and social histories of salt in Kandy. They met with environmentalists, horticulturists, artists and writers, eventually making their way to Hiriketiya on the South coast where the residency culminated with an open house.

For the second residency in the North, Berlin-based Afghan artist Aziz Hazara together with Batticaloa-based artist Rupaneethan Pakkiyarajah developed their production process by documenting sonic traditions and rituals, and journeying through coastal areas. Their research focused on landscapes as testimonial sites, internal displacement, and terrestrial conflicts in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. They maintained a temporary studio space in the historic village of Vaddukoddai, while working closely with cultural organizer and founder of Kālam, Kirutharshan Nicholas throughout their stay.

Supported by Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka and EUNIC Global

Videos

[Tandem Residency w/ Aziz Hazara and Rupaneethan Pakkiyarajah](#)

[Tandem Residency w/ Omer Wasim and Thisath Thoradeniya](#)

Press

[Witnessing Conflict and Migration Via 'More-Than-Human' Life Forms: A Conversation With artist Omer Wasim - Roar Media](#)

[A Symbiotic Approach To Understanding Migration: A Conversation With Artists Aziz Harara And Rupaneethan Pakkiyarajah - Roar Media](#)

5.2. Ashray - A memorialization project with community arts initiative We Are From Here

We Are From Here (Firi Rahman, Parilojithan Ramanathan and Manash Badurdeen) have been assembling oral testimonies, objects and memoirs from the multi-ethnic neighborhood Slave island (Kompannaveediya) over two years, mapping the densely interconnected social histories, community narratives and architecture of this area. These records are a form of chronicling unwritten encounters and collective experiences in memory-keeping especially during a time of rampant transformation, commercialisation and corresponding to displacement in this neighborhood.

For the weekend programme #Ashray held in April, the collective invited different community representatives to discuss and annotate their archival finds and recordings.

Supported by EUNIC Global.

Video

[Ashray | Community Dialogues and Archive | We Are From Here](#)



5.3. Production Residency: Rajni Perera with pottery artist Sarath Chandrajeewa

Rajni Perera’s work at Colomboscope emerged from a residency under the wings of celebrated pottery artist Sarath Chandrajeewa. Rajni spent time experimenting with studio pottery, gaining inspiration from utilitarian clay vessels found across the island, as well as dynamic forms such as cones and spheres that have long been associated with cosmographic tableaux and Yantras –sacred energy diagrams related to Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. Similar to explorations in her series *Dancers* (2018), she outlines fluid contours as colourful beings in rhythm and animated shapeshifters. The artist considers these abstract figures as sign systems indicative of matrilineal relationality and rebellious futurity, while also observing science fiction’s form-giving capacity in dialogue with traditional craftsmanship.

Supported by Warehouse421 Project Revival Fund

Press

[Colomboscope 2022: A Residency In Studio Pottery With Rajni Perera - Roar Media](#)



5.4. Workshops

Through a range of workshops with emerging arts professionals, performers and writers Colomboscope organizes intimate and horizontal learning environments as part of developing cultural inquiry at a grassroots level. These modules are practice-oriented and involve skills development, strengthening attitudes of curiosity, debate and collaboration, as well as furthering dialogue with visiting creative producers from South Asia and beyond.

Politics of Listening Workshop with Lawrence Abu Hamdan

In June and July 2020, Colomboscope organized the workshop 'Politics of Listening' led by Lawrence Abu Hamdan for a small group of artists and collaborators in Sri Lanka invested in learning from forensic approaches to the visual arts and extending inquiries at the cross-section of media, investigative tools and sonic practices as well as documenting histories of repression and dissent through aurality and acts of witnessing. Between physical and virtual interactions, the sessions turned out to be considered exercises in sharing ideas traversing political geographies, ongoing research processes, and cross-disciplinary learning. Supported by EUNIC Global

Online Workshop on Language and Memory with Belinda Zhawi

Colomboscope hosted a trilingual workshop with UK based Zimbabwean spoken word artist, poet and educator Belinda Zhawi. She is also the co-founder of literary arts platform BORN::FREE, one of London's leading platforms for experimental African and Afro-diasporic poetry and new writing. Zhawi led the workshop participants on a writing journey exploring the personal poetics of language, memory and ancestry, drawing from broader themes in her own writing. Supported by EUNIC and the British Council.

Time Documents: The processes of building collective memory through exhibition and live-art photography with Raisa Galofre

The online workshop with the Berlin-based Colombian-Caribbean artist, photographer and researcher Raisa Galofre engaged a small group of professional and emerging photographers in what documenting art exhibitions and performances - especially in the context of a pandemic - means. Raisa Galofre, who currently works as a curatorial assistant and photographer at SAVVY Contemporary in Berlin, reflected on the role of the photographer as the image maker, storyteller, documentarist, archivist and zeitzeuge (witness) and the responsibilities that come with that. Her reflections focused on both the technical and conceptual aspects of photography, from the essential engagement between the photographer and curator, and the relationship between the exhibition photographer and the visitor's body to practical approaches and helpful insights about image composition, visual storytelling and photographic technique.

Supported by DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program with funds from the Federal Foreign Office in the framework of the International Relief Fund for Organizations in Culture and Education

5.5. Artist Encounters

Artist Encounters is a series of dialogues among artists and cultural organizers who are part of Language is Migrant elaborating on their artistic processes, material research, and infrastructures that have sustained their imaginative substance through these relentless times. Held on two Saturdays per month, international and Sri Lankan artists convened over Zoom gatherings and formed associations around their research, production challenges, and new modalities of remote culture work.

At the festival, two Artist Encounters sessions were hosted at Barefoot Gallery: Part I included artists Areez Katki, Hema Shironi, T. Vinoja and Omer Wasim who remain preoccupied with inter-generational and personal experiences of migration, botanical ecologies, post-war memory and complex ideas of home. In conversation with Anushka Rajendran, the artists conversed around the role of textile and writing in their work as well as the role of art in collective healing and testimonial storytelling. Part II with Palash Bhattacharjee, Lavkant Chaudhary, Natasha Ginwala and Kirubalini Stephen stemmed from the platform Translocal Solidarity Networks set up to develop alliances between socially committed artists and arts initiatives across South Asia engaging in cultural advocacy, collaborative production, and experimental arts models in the region.

Supported by EUNIC Global and Translocal Solidarity Networks

Supported by DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program with funds from the Federal Foreign Office in the framework of the International Relief Fund for Organizations in Culture and Education

Press

["A Rare Luxury": How Colomboscope's Artists Stayed Connected Despite Months of Lockdown - Roar Media](#)
[Nodes of Listening: Reflections on Artist Encounters at Colomboscope - ASAP | art](#)



6. Digital Initiatives

6.1. Held Apart, Together



With the online series #HeldApartTogether Colomboscope turned to several visual artists, musicians and filmmakers who have been associated with the festival's network with the wish to sustain primary acts of reading, listening and viewing together. These online productions also opened a window into the artistic community's struggles and endeavours in communal resilience.

Supported by EUNIC Global



Visit www.colomboscope.lk/held-apart-together or scan the QR code to view the Held Apart, Together digital programme content

6.2. A Thousand Channels

Taking its title from Édouard Glissant's Poetics of Relation ("one way ashore, a thousand channels"), this four-part online radio programme features conversation, poetry, music, specially commissioned sound works and guest radio projects in the lead-up to Colomboscope 2022, and will also form part of the festival's listening space in Colombo. The works, reports and compositions presented here coalesce around the festival theme 'Language is Migrant', encompassing various aural modes and listening practices across multiple Indian Ocean territories and beyond, sounding out their diasporic fringes and linguistic and musical enclaves.

A project by Syma Tariq

Sound design by Francesca Savoldi

Collaborators Natasha Ginwala, Anushka Rajendran

Participants include:

Episode 1:

Samia Khatun / Lee Ingleton / Miyah Poets / Khalid Hussain / Baba Betar / DJ Manara

Episode 2:

Ather Zia / Wajid Yaseen / Belinda Zhawi / Christian Nyampeta / Ostinato Records / SAVVYZAAR radio

Episode 3:

Isabel Huacuja Alonso / Zahra Malkani / Siyabonga Mthembu / Yoshinori Niwa Kani Kamil / Radio alHara

Supported by the British Council Sri Lanka and EUNIC.

Syma Tariq's research is supported by TECHNE AHRC UK

Additional Support by: Netherlands Embassy in Sri Lanka, DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program and OCA Norway

Press

[Colomboscope: 'A Thousand Channels' With Syma Tariq - Roar Media](#)

[Radio Colomboscope: Connecting the Aural Histories of the South - ASAP](#)



Visit www.colomboscope.lk/athousandchannels or scan the QR code to view A Thousand Channels digital programme content

6.3. SCROLL: Projects on Paper



[SCROLL: Projects on Paper](#) is a publishing-based practice initiated by curator Aziz Sohail since 2017 in Karachi. The third issue conceived in collaboration with Colomboscope includes contributions by Naila Mahmood, Sonal Jain, Lucas Odahara, Mythri Jegathesan, Anthony George Koothanady Sajan Mani, Nikita Dawan, Rajyashi Goody, Angela Wittwer and Arham Rahman, Areez Katki, Sarah Burney, T. Thajendran, Hardeep Pandhal, and is co-edited with Syma Tariq. In the lead up to the festival amidst pandemic time, SCROLL experimented with new formats, expanding from its print-based publishing into digital under 'SCROLL Thru'.

For its first manifestation SCROLL Thru presented a set of four contributions by Lucas Odahara with Indrakanthi Perera, Naila Mahmood, Angela Wittwer & Rahmat Arham and Hardeep Pandhal that oscillate together in concert and traverse the archipelagic and expanded landscapes of South Asia, Indonesia, Brazil, shifting between intertwined pasts, presents and futures to interrogate ways in which language travels as a shared colonial history, as rupture, resistance and repair and as identity.

Supported by EUNIC Global and the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program with funds from the Federal Foreign Office in the framework of the International Relief Fund for Organizations in Culture and Education.



Visit www.colomboscope.lk/scroll
or scan the QR code to view SCROLL:
Projects on Paper digital programme content

6.4. Pangrok Sulap x The Soul



Pangrok Sulap, a collective of artists, musicians, and activists based in Sabah, Malaysia, works with woodcut printing as a slow, performative, and process-based form of resistance to the rapidity of digital methods and circulation of information in the present-day. The word Pangrok is derived from the local slang for 'punk rock', embracing the DIY politics of the movement, and energetic live musical performances with a political message as part of their practice. Sulap refers to resting places for farmers in Sabah, also associating the collective with agrarian movements, and the politics of labour locally. Their works usually emerge from immersed engagement with the context they are responding to, especially when their practice takes them outside of Malaysia, and extensive conversations with local communities.

Their project for Colomboscope involved dialogue for several months leading up to the festival and collaborative research with the Sri Lankan music group The Soul, exchanging thoughts on the movement of people from the Malay archipelago to Sri Lanka since 200 BC, and simultaneities between the 1983 riots in Sri Lanka based on ethnic differences and the politics of Malay supremacy entrenched in the Malaysian constitution. The work also remains self-aware of the virtual exchanges between Pangrok Sulap and The Soul during the pandemic, and the limitations of such forms of communication, by foregrounding telepathy, intuition, empathy, love, and care as sensorial and embodied forms of language. The woodcut print produced and sent by Pangrok Sulap to Colombo based on these exchanges will be presented with a concert performance by The Soul at the Colombo Public Library.



Visit www.colomboscope.lk/pangrok-sulap-soul or scan the QR code to listen to "Dancer Awake" by The Soul in collaboration with Pangrok Sulap.

7. Press Highlights & Communications

7.1. Press Coverage

[Colomboscope: Sri Lankan biennial to explore the intersection of language and migration](#)

The National

[Artists speak the language of identity at Colomboscope](#)

Mint Lounge

[Colomboscope: Language is Migrant](#)

Critical Collective

[Colomboscope Festival 2022 Unpacks the Cecilia Vicuña Line 'Language is Migrant'](#)

Ocula

[Hema Shironi explores identity as a transitional idea at Colomboscope 2021](#)

[Palash Bhattacharjee's 'Link Road' connects dialect and time at Colomboscope 2021](#)

[Pinar Öğrenci's 'Turkish Delight' at Colomboscope muses food history and war](#)

[Designing creative futures with Sri Lanka's Fold Media Collective](#)

[Areez Katki discusses craft, heritage and memory in his text and textile](#)

[Ahilan Ratnamohan examines reclamation of culture through language as instruction](#)

[Curated walkthrough at the seventh edition of Colomboscope in Colombo, Sri Lanka](#)

Stir

[Colomboscope 2022: In Conversation with Anushka Rajendran](#)

[Language is Migrant: Natasha Ginwala on Hybrid Conditions of Belonging](#)

[Nodes of Listening: Reflections on Artist Encounters at Colomboscope](#)

[Radio Colomboscope: Connecting the Aural Histories of the South](#)

[Reverberations and Reading in Residence: In Conversation with Omer Wasim and Thisath Thoradeniya](#)

[As Light as a Husk: Pallavi Paul's Walking as Alibi: The Dreams of Cynthia](#)

[The Changing Face of Slave Island: In Conversation with We Are From Here](#)

[Imagined Memory: In Conversation with Liz Fernando](#)

ASAP | art

7.2. Social Media and Website Statistics

All data is based on organic growth of audience, without any sponsored posts.

The figures below reflect the immediate festival period, three weeks prior to the opening and two weeks after the closing: 28 December 2021 - 13 February 2022

a) Social Media Reach Data

42,835	21,930	*
Facebook Page Reach	Instagram Reach	

*Average Instagram Engagement: 139 reactions

b) Post Reach on Instagram (April 2020 - February 2022)

685	753	1332
November 2020	April 2021	February 2022

c) Growth (compared to April 2020)

Facebook
3385 page likes
943 new page likes
Up 39% from to April 2020

Instagram
5024 followers
3010 new followers
Up 150% from April 2020

Newsletter
834 subscribers
Up 4,3 % compared to Nov 2020

7.3. Website Visitors: 28 Dec 2021 - 13 Feb 2022

5899

Total Site Sessions

Up by +441 percent*

3402

Unique Visitors

Up by +432 percent*

8.27 min

Average Session Duration

Up by +26 percent*

*compared to previous period: Nov 10 - Dec 27, 2021

Top Traffic Sources

1. Google (2057)
2. Direct (1579)
3. Unknown (757)
4. Linktree / Instagram (593)
5. Facebook (367)

Top pages by sessions

1. Homepage (2893)
2. Programmes (1822)
3. Language Is Migrant (1437)
4. Activities (667)
5. Digital Programmes (511)

8. Messages of Support and Testimonials

8.1. Festival Participants

"Almost two years later—after countless deferments due to the pandemic—I found myself landing in Colombo (my first time in Sri Lanka!) marvelling simply at the fact that we all made it there. Colomboscope had landed—along with it came complex and engaging works, languages, theories, histories and gorgeous pluralities. The festival was an empathetically led and generously formatted event that spanned six venues across the city. My experience of participating in the festival's community-driven events, and exploring all those pluralities, was a restorative, educational and memorable one to say the least."

- **Areez Katki** / Artist & Colomboscope 2022 Participant

"It was an honour and privilege to attend Colomboscope: Language is Migrant after many months of working remotely and collaboratively with the festival organisers on the adjacent online radio project A Thousand Channels. The professionalism of the small team to execute such expansive and illuminating exhibitions across the city - not even including the incredible public programmes, workshops, online presentations, talks and other activities that led up to the postponed event during a difficult pandemic year - has been really impressive and inspiring. The experience has been valuable for my research thinking, as the festival has clearly broken new ground in terms of sonic-centred and multilingual methodologies that speak to complex and difficult historical-geographies. The care taken in fostering interdisciplinary approaches in practice as well as on paper is very evident. The experience has also been invaluable in terms of the new friendships, alliances and intellectual and artistic connections that I have forged in and through the city of Colombo; relationships that I feel will last a very long time. Thank you again for having me."

- **Syma Tariq** / Artist, Founder of A Thousand Channels

"I think this festival doesn't just allow prominent artists to showcase their work; it gives emerging artists an opportunity to gain inspiration. It breaks power hierarchies and allows everyone to learn and benefit together. I think this is important because it helps create a space that allows for more conversation about emotions and our interpretations of the issues surrounding us. Colomboscope has provided a wonderful opportunity for artists to engage with one another. I think this programme encourages artists to explore their own practice whilst navigating new visual experiences. Tandem residencies such as these are a useful way for artists to learn together and engage better with their work. I think the theme allows us to further explore the visual language with our inner emotions and sensation. In an abstract manner, it can be a challenge to take this to our audiences, but I believe this residency has allowed us to focus on having more conversation based on visual experience with different audiences."

- **Rupaneethan Pakkiyarajah** / Artist & Tandem Residency Participant



"Rarely ever does one encounter festivals, biennales, and triennales that embody care in ways that Colomboscope does. Centring and building community, fostering and facilitating connections, and enabling artists to realise their vision with integrity and honesty is Colomboscope's ethos. It has been nothing short of a pleasure to have been invited to participate in the festival and in the tandem residency program as an artist.

By inviting me to participate in the residency program with Thisath Thoradeniya last year in March, Colomboscope has changed how I think about and make work. My project was nurtured and developed over two years through insightful and critical feedback, leading to many meaningful encounters, conversations, and continued learning. I have not worked on this kind of scale, and that alone has opened new possibilities within my practice and vision. It has been a life altering and career expanding experience. Colomboscope provides us with a roadmap, a sense of direction, to be in the world at the moment. A world embroiled in much conflict, climate catastrophe, and myriad other problems, but a world worth saving nonetheless. Because it is here alone that we can gather to witness, repair, and think of equitable futures."

- **Omer Wasim** / Artist & Colomboscope 2022 Participant



"I would like to acknowledge Colomboscope, Colomboscope team, Generator Co-Operative art production fund, Experimenter and Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka. My gratitude to Anushka Rajendran and Natasha Ginwala for your kindness and always loving support.

It helped me in my research process and in the production of the final artwork. It gave a platform for me to get interaction and creative discourse through talk series about my artistic practice with the public and helped me to get connected with the people there and the people working with different creative genres.

It is an important festival for artists like us in the same region willing to show and have interaction about the artistic practice with different audiences sharing the similar climate, land, water, food and at the same timeline we carry the similar pain and joy in different land. This festival meant as a collective SOLIDARITY to me."

- **Lavkant Chaudhary** / Artist & Colomboscope 2022 Participant



"The seventh edition of Colomboscope was particularly significant to the artistic community of Sri Lanka as it took place two whole years into the pandemic. I had felt its absence in this time, as Colombo was lacking a place for artists and their work to come together and engage with an audience. The pandemic reminded us of the importance of physical spaces and in-person gatherings, something that the online just cannot replace. However, throughout this period, the festival made good use of the online space to keep artists in conversation with each other and their audiences. I am particularly grateful for the Artist Encounters series, in which I was put in conversation with fellow Muslim artists featured in this edition.

My own artwork, Testimony of the Disappeared, came into being through conversation with Colomboscope Curator Anushka Rajendran and Artistic Director Natasha Ginwala. Over the course of two years, the work evolved, showing first at Chobi Mela: Shunno through its collaboration with Colomboscope, and then at the W.A. Silva Museum venue during Language Is Migrant. The thought and care that was invested in the process, from concept to production to installation, allowed for it to be presented in an uncompromised form.

The event series KACHA KACHA hosted its ninth edition at Colomboscope. We took every measure we could to conduct it in as safe and responsible a manner as possible, and were probably the only event in Sri Lanka where every attendee, from event crew, to venue staff, and audience members, were tested for COVID-19 using Rapid Antigen Tests. This was facilitated by Colomboscope.

I am always humbled to be a part of this festival, and look forward to future editions of this vital confluence of the Sri Lankan art scene and its connections to South Asia and the world at large."

- **Imaad Majeed** / Artist & Colomboscope 2022 Participant

"Being invited for the second time to the multidisciplinary arts festival 'Colomboscope', it was a sense fully and enriching time which process concluded for us with the festival but progressed in us for a timespan that non of us actually wished for.

Due to the circumstances finding ourselves amidst a worsening pandemic, it was in fact the prolonged period of the festival preparations we as practitioners responded in a way, that in retrospective turned out to be a dedicated development process, that will remain truthfully unique in its appearance and also approach to all collaborators. The bonds remained strong and so the care for the binding glue - the festival and everyone involved.

Language is Migrant and we gathered finally in January 2022 to find ourselves, our stories our movements and our futures being all of migratory dimensions."

- **Liz Fernando** / Artist & Colomboscope 2022 Participant

"Thanks to Natasha Ginwala and the whole team that organized Colomboscope 2022 which included my work, and took it's theme from my text Language is Migrant. I have admired it from afar!"

- **Cecilia Vicuña** / Artist & Colomboscope 2022 Participant

"I greatly appreciated your warm welcome, as well as the kindness and availability of Colombo scope seventh edition- Language is Migrant /2022. The festival brings together over 50 Srilankan and international artists. Colombo scope space has always been very professional and attentive to artists. You provide us with a wonderful tool in a wonderful place like this beautiful city Colombo. I am very proud to work with you. The opening reception was buzzing, and it made for a great evening. In addition, I received mail from people who saw the exhibit while passing by and were attracted by the arrangement of the artwork. It is all space that is so accessible to the general public, and with the beautiful arrangement of the artworks, all the colors made it a magnet for the passersby. I want to sincerely thank curator Natasha Ginwala and Anuska Rajendran and team for putting up the work and making our exhibiting experience so welcoming, so exciting and promising. You have worked closely with me since the first day of me becoming represented artist and have put up a lot of work. Wishing a lot of luck to all the artists of Colomboscope 2022, current and future, and to all the Colomboscope Team."

- **T. Krishnapriya** / Artist & Colomboscope 2022 Participant



"10 days of uninterrupted expression of emotions, putting drawing, tracing, writing and shaping clay into a collective experience. Questioning the visible, feeling a connection to other individuals, underlining how memory and art work together. Building an inventory of unusual drawings and marks of unexpected incidents focussing on portraiture and identity. 94 lookbooks came out showing the need and the energy to say, to dare and share while on the move in a more and more dehumanized world. Drawing is thinking."

- **Fabienne Francotte, The Lookbook Workshop / Artist**

"I like to describe this collaboration as an attempt to see your The Hearing Voice Café concept in the Sri Lankan context. Throughout this journey I have experienced and realized something about our Sri Lankan community; our artists, activists, and art festivals seem to miss out on a clear understanding of the purpose of their work. This led me to question myself - What is my role or representation in this current context? How do I challenge and push myself as an artist, as a human being? Only a few artists always explore themselves, experiment and do alternative art works for contemporary society as a lifestyle. While most try out their art works only at art festivals, rather than in their day to day life or lifestyle. I believe we need to be honest with ourselves and try to understand deeply what we are doing as artists or human beings. And what is our existence in this journey or life? As artists and humans we have a great responsibility towards society. The Hearing Voices Café concept gave us some kind of experience in different ways to explore ourselves as a human being. Thank you very much for that. And I'm giving my thanks to the Colomboscope team and Goethe institut - Sri Lanka. It was a great experience for me in many different ways."

- **Jayampathi Guruge / Artist & Hearing Voices Café Collaborator**

8.2. Festival Partners



"The seventh edition of the Colomboscope festival in January 2022, was akin to a stroke of lightning, striking but too short. Through the language of art, the conversation flowed on key social and cultural issues. While Colomboscope showcases Sri Lanka's own diversity, it also embodies successful regional cooperation, a concept that is central to the European Union. South Asia, although culturally deeply interconnected is also one of the least integrated regions in the world. Colomboscope once again highlighted Sri Lanka's ideal position as a hub for South Asian artists to exchange ideas, including in the run up to the festival, and explore the many commonalities of their cultural heritage despite the physical divisions created by political borders."

- **Anne Vaugier Chatterjee** / Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka and the Maldives

"The 2022 Colomboscope Festival was a place where I was able to share and learn different perspectives from visitors, artists, and colleagues on artworks. It was a positive experience for me."

- **Visitor Educator from the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka**

"Colomboscope had a wide variety of art and it allowed me as a Visitor Educator to speak on different topics. It allowed visitor engagement to be more flexible. The location of the artworks allowed for more conversation, which helped in engaging the visitors with the artworks.

- **Visitor Educator from the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka**

8.3. Festival Patrons

Colomboscope has continued to break exciting new ground with each edition and this year it was a real privilege to lend our support. Most importantly for us is how Colomboscope uses art to activate many sites in the city to create an opportunity for all who are curious about art, to engage with not just Sri Lankan contemporary art but also art and cultural practices from elsewhere. The experience of participating in making the edition behind the scenes through workshops and discussions with artists and curators was a particularly interesting and unexpected upside, made more so at a time when it was challenging to encounter art or have a range of art experiences. We would like to congratulate the team for not only creating but skilfully adapting the edition to reflect and engage with the opportunities of this unique moment in time.

- Anojie Amerasinghe and Hugues Marchand / Art Collectors



Children's Workshop, Our Land, Inner Land with Malki Jayakody. Supported by Foundation for Arts Initiatives.

8.4. Visitors



"In these perilous times, to have had a truth-seeking festival invite Colombo to gather in different areas, to experience layers of work that ask one to enquire, discuss and hold space, both through silent individual observation and through collective practice, was truly special. A lot of important work was happening whilst we were looking at collective wounds and histories..grieving and celebrating together.. To witness around me artists synergize and dream possibilities together, made me feel great hope."

- **Hania Luthufi** / Artist & Hearing Voices Café Collaborator

"After two years of stay and several lockdowns, I travelled to Colombo, for the first time and mingled with the exhibition and the events for 10 days. 'Language is migrant' was the recent episode of Colomboscope arts festival. As a Platform of multidisciplinary art, 'Language is migrant' interestingly showcased diversity of works and those conveyed the idea of language, as a weapon and a barrier, let people to travel through the up and downs. Which included unlimited thoughts and visual creations by many intelligent and emerging artists from Sri Lanka and all over the world. It was really nice time to me for healing and enjoy my days with art."

- **Jasmine Nilani Joseph** / Artist & Hearing Voices Café Collaborator

Transcripts from audio interviews recorded at the Rio Complex on 28.01.2022



Mario D'Souza

Director of Programmes, Kochi-Muziris Biennale Foundation, Resident Curator, HH Art Spaces)

What did you most like about the festival?

Just the character of the venues and how the works speak to that, or don't speak to that. That's what makes it really interesting. Also, all of the venues consistently have, Sri Lanka (and) the city of Colombo as it's backdrop. So, it's very interesting because it brings all these artists from all these diverse histories to Colombo, set against this dense, thick history of the island itself. So yeah, it's a really fascinating way of looking at art and also experiencing it from these multiple registers.

What would you like to see more of in future editions of the festival?

I think what I really like about festivals, particularly in South Asia, is the fact that they kind of go up against all odds. And I think that character of thinking on your feet, of being agile, of being nimble, of being easy to adapt and taking different kinds of limitations in your stride is really quite special. So, I don't think there's anything that needs to change structurally or even conceptually. But, maybe the festival should go on for a bit longer is what I feel. The kind of works that one is encountering with this edition, for example, requires you to come back. A lot of the works are the kinds that linger on, so it requires a longer period of engagement perhaps. Or a kind of revisitation or something. So, just the duration maybe. And maybe after hours, like more evening hours.



Jitha Karthikeyan

Writer and Artist

What did you most like about the festival?

I have never been to Colombo. The Colombo that the media has been projecting [] was totally different from what I see now. [] Through this exhibition, I see voices that have never come out in the media, which either portrayed a lot of horror when the war was going on, or this it's all beautiful, it's all paradise. The in-betweens were never there, which I see through the (festival). When I see works by artists from all over the world, from places which have similar histories, I realize it doesn't matter what the war is about or which place you're in – there is a shared history among so many countries that are scarred by war. What the war is about is not the problem – it's violence. That's what I saw, which I would never have known had I not come and seen it.

What would you like to see more of in future editions of the festival?

I think the local history is something only you can bring out. [] Here, you are standing in the (Rio Complex), which has witnessed it and you are talking about it. There is something else to it – you feel for it. So, I think you should focus a lot on that. I think you can focus on your history and weave in stories, instead of just bringing in international artists without connecting it to your local history. Don't go in that direction, because the connect you have with your local history is beautiful. That's what really struck me. Because otherwise you would just be walking past a lot of very famous artists, but at the end of it, the way you connect from deep inside won't be there. That's there in this because everything fits in so well, and nothing is out of place. [] Even the Public Library, it's still thriving, there are people coming there and reading. You're connecting it, you're not disturbing the local thing to create some international thing.

Godwin Constantine

Artist, Co-founder and Chairman, Theertha

What did you most like about the festival?

It gives an opportunity for all the young artists, especially artists from outstation and people from other places. In that way, it gives exposure. [] One problem I see is that (the festival) is catering to a narrow audience. All the advertisements are in English, all the press conferences are in English. Even the talks are held in English where even the speakers can't properly speak in English. So, we should promote participation of the general public. So, in places like India, they have schoolchildren being brought for exhibitions and given explanations in their own mother tongue. Those type of things are important because the whole thing has to be rooted in this culture. Majority can't speak English, so they don't have access. [] They don't get to know that these kinds of things happen. So, it shouldn't be restricted. We'll have to have some mechanism to bring in school children and bring in other people.

What would you like to see more of in future editions of the festival?

It gives artists an opportunity, because a lot of artists don't have opportunities - especially those who are outstation. Exhibiting in Colombo is not easy - they have to find the means, they have to find the place, they have to find people to support them, transport. All those things are difficult issues. When we plan these events, the main focus should be on artists and the viewing public. Expenses should mostly concentrate on encouraging artists to be involved fully. I have heard a lot of artists saying that the grant they receive is not sufficient even for the work. When an artist visualizes a work, it usually evolves and evolves. Most of the time, it goes beyond the budget. In that way, I think allocation of funds for artists and accommodations [] needs to be looked into very carefully. Because you can't take artists for granted and run a show. Even in foreign countries this happens, where when big names come from abroad, they get five-star hotels and other people get normal accommodations. [] In Sri Lanka, we should try to avoid that.

Also, the artworks should be more grounded in the cultural context. I can remember at the last Colomscope there was a Thai artist who came. It was just a fantasy - fitting for Thailand, but in the Sri Lankan context it doesn't make sense, except for viewing something exotic. [] Anyway, we should encourage these types of activities, but it has to be very broad-based and try to include normal people. The people who just walk in from the road should also be encouraged to come and interact.



Bose Krishnamachari

Founder Director, Kochi-Muziris Biennale Foundation

What did you most like about the festival?

"I am really excited because this is my first time in Sri Lanka and at Colomboscope. It is very nice, even if it is organized in a smaller scale. But the festival is really put together in a wonderful manner. Also the curated walkthrough was fantastic, when you go with the curator, you have much more to learn. This gives so many possibilities. Some of the works I am seeing for the first time, I met new faces and contemporary creative practitioners which is definitely something people like us are looking for. It has been really fantastic. Especially in this period of time, at the pandemic, making a festival happen, is very important. Art gives cure, art gives a certain kind of solace to people."



Gigi Scaria

Artist

What did you most like about the festival?

It was fantastic! I was just in fact talking to the curators, Colombscope is not a massive event, but it is very meaningful. It actually has a large impact, as the festival has built up a society over a period of time that actually connects with a certain kind of art. So that, rather than a massive biennale - a mega event that in the end fades away - will have a larger impact. Because this is actually very meticulously building a community over a period of time that is engaged and interested. This platform has created a meaningful dialogue within the community.

9. Audience Engagement

Venues

Colombo Public Library: 1097

Rio Cinema Complex: 429

Barefoot: 480

Lakmahal Community Library: 128

WA Silva Museum: 142

Hearing Voices Café: 272

All Events: 849

Festival Opening: 180

TOTAL: 3577

10. Patrons and Friends

Friends of Colomscope

Appapillai Navaratnam

C.E.H. (Garry) de Saram

Luca & Iromie Poloni (Ellerton Bungalow)

Thamby Navaratnam

S. Dharmavasan (15LMD)

Chemould Prescott Road

Taut Seni Foundation

Gavin Ramsay

Festival Patrons

Anojie Amerasinghe & Hugues Marchand

Feroze & Mohit Gujral

11. Festival Partners

This edition of Colomboscope has greatly expanded the base of international and regional cultural partners which led to persevering to generate an inventive and multifarious model. Our longstanding partner organization in India, The Gujral Foundation, has been seminal in furthering South Asian dialogues and supporting young creative practitioners. In recent years, we have also initiated collaboration with the Ishara Art Foundation to pursue the special initiative Reading in Tongues – Colomboscope’s Reading Room – tying together various artistic and literary threads. Close engagement with the pioneering Dhaka-based platform Chobi Mela led to intensive exchanges around working methods, alliance building, and cultural autonomy. Their inventive approaches resulted in a collaboration at the height of lockdowns in Sri Lanka in the shape of the exhibition segment Anatomies of Tongues at Chobi Mela ‘Shunno’, curated by Anushka Rajendran. With Goethe-Institut Bangladesh’s Translocal Solidarity Networks candid digital and on-site conversations were held between the festival teams together with cultural researchers and artists from across South Asia.

Arts Councils from Norway to New Zealand have recognised Colomboscope as a distinctive cultural platform for showcasing artistic commissions, cultural exchange, and hosting socially engaged conversations. New local partnerships have been forged with cultural organisations and venues that sought to create an atmosphere of mutual support, active learning, and creative resilience.

Ongoing Partners

Goethe-Institut
British Council
Alliance Française
EUNIC Sri Lanka
The Gujral Foundation
Australian High Commission Sri Lanka
French Embassy in Colombo
Delegation of the EU to Sri Lanka and the Maldives
Embassy of Switzerland in Sri Lanka and Maldives
Embassy of Spain in Delhi
SCROLL Projects on Paper
Barefoot Gallery Colombo
Wijeya (Sunday Times, Daily FT, Daily Mirror)
Anim8
Embassy of Italy in Colombo
Municipal Council Colombo
Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
Netherlands Embassy in Sri Lanka

New Partners

Foundation for Arts Initiatives
Chobi Mela
Warehouse421
Ishara Art Foundation
DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program
ifa
Oslo National Academy of the Arts
OCA Norway
Creative NZ (Art Council New Zealand)
National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts
A+ Works of Art
Shrine Empire
Vadehra Art Gallery
Kālam
Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka
Mooniak
Lakmahal Community Library
STIRworld
roar media
TNL NOW / Lite89

12. Festival Team

Festival Curator: Anushka Rajendran

Artistic Director: Natasha Ginwala

Project Manager: Shanika Perera

Festival Manager: Nicola Grigson

Festival Advisor and Coordination: Jan Ramesh de Saram

Visual Communications: Asvajit Boyle and Nigel Perera

Press and Communication: Marie Waarlo

Festival Assistance and Volunteer Management: Maleeza Nicholas

Production and Logistics: Thushara Nandanlal

Technical Support: Unique Sounds (Kishan Perera and Tariq Mohinudeen)

Installation Team: Kamal Sanjiwa, K. Balasingham, Nishantha Hettiarachchi, Sonya Rajendran

Exhibition Design: Minal Wickrematunge (Barefoot), ADM Architects (Lakmahal Community Library), Seni Studios (Colombo Public Library)

Translators: Gaya Nagahawatta, Lohan Gunaweera (Sinhala); Shiyalni Janarthanan, Jananthan Thavarajah (Tamil)

Proofreaders: Sharni Jayawardena (English), Anjalika Herath (Sinhala), Vimala Velthas (Tamil)

Video Documentation: Yashodha Suriyapperuma

Photography: Shehan Obeysekara, Lojithan Ram, Tharmapalan Tilaxan, Ushan Tharupathy

13. Our Partners

