Kathmandu Triennale is Nepal’s premier international platform for global contemporary art. It is the latest iteration of the pioneering Kathmandu International Art Festival (KIAF), which nurtured several historical outcomes for Nepali arts and the city of Kathmandu. Like the precursory Festivals (2009, 2012), the Triennale is thematically engaged with particular social issues and seeks to advance a nuanced approach that encapsulates the pedagogical potential of contemporary arts.

The mission of the platform is to promote Nepali arts and culture and to establish Kathmandu as a cultural hub for socially aware art practices.

Through the facilitation of the platform, organizer Siddhartha Arts Foundation (SAF) employs the arts to present multiple perspectives on contemporary themes in order to educate audiences and engage society in critical dialogue.
History

Both editions of Kathmandu International Art Festival were the largest non-profit art exhibitions held in South Asia. The 2009 edition was widely received as a landmark event for Nepali arts. It featured 111 artists from 25 countries who exhibited for 12 days at 6 different venues. This inaugural edition was organized by Siddhartha Art Gallery (SAG) and focused on the theme of “Status of Women.” The event was inaugurated by Rashmila Shakya, former Kumari, who embodied the concerned theme. A 3-day symposium was organized by SAG to complement the visual component of the event. Mondriaan Foundation, a patron of the Festival, hailed the Festival as their highlight for the 2009 funding cycle.

In 2011, SAF was registered to become the official organizing body of the Festival. The 2012 edition was much larger in scope and scale than its predecessor. It featured works by 97 artists exhibited at over 16 venues over the course of a month. The works were sourced from an open call and selected by an international jury. Eminent artist Richard Long (UK) was recognized as the Artist Patron of the event.

Moon Ride by Assocreation (Austria) was a happening (27 November, 2012) held in the historic courtyard of Naag Bahal, where audiences were invited to pedal cycles to simulate the rise of the moon.
Change in Format: Festival to Triennale

The change from Festival to Triennale reaffirms SAF's commitment to engendering a distinguished Nepali voice in global arts through consistent and critical programs.

Our re-articulated logo (the gajur) is a fitting embodiment of our vision. The instrument is believed to facilitate the ascension of gods from earthly temples to the heavens. Kathmandu Triennale, too, hopes to be the stepping stone for Nepali arts to reach its pinnacle.

The new format is built on the strengths of the past Festivals with revisions to prioritize impact. SAF has adapted the accepted pavilion format of biennale events to create a synergetic approach. By inviting other curatorial projects to the event, SAF is able to extend event scale without putting strain on its financial goals. This means more exhibitions and programming, more perspectives and more engagement with the event’s thematic reflections.
KT 2017 will be the first curated iteration of the platform. Artists and experts will come together in Kathmandu in the month of March, 2017, to present multiple perspectives on critical issues of urbanizing cities.

KT 2017 will feature several distinct as well as overlapping categories of exhibitions, outreach and dialogue.

A student from Bal Mandir (Nepal’s central organization for orphans) experiences Forest Walk—a sound-based installation—by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller (Canada). Viewers were invited to a walk into nature for this participatory art work. To accentuate the experience, the artists provided the viewers with portable music players loaded with a soundscape created using binaural audio technology, in order to create the impression of 3-dimensional sphere of sound.
Global urbanization presents a challenge to various nations and communities. Cities, worldwide, tell tales of struggle and a search for a better life. They are melting pots where backgrounds clash, where common grounds are formed. They are focal points of intellectual and cultural activities, yet even with their abundance of opportunities, The City still embodies human achievement and its vice.

Kathmandu—also home to diverse international communities—is regarded as one of the fastest urbanizing cities in one of the least developed countries of the world. The Valley has become unrecognizable in a short period of global influence. A fact that presents rare opportunity to reflect changes gripping the city and hopes of preserving its natural and historical identity, as the city evolves and embraces change.

Since antiquity, Kathmandu has been at crossroads of travel and commerce affording it unrivaled diversity nurtured by communal harmony. More recently, its residents have provided sanctuary to refugees from different countries. At the same time, refugees representing diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, have embraced local society and adjusted to Nepalese way of life. During this transition, they have brought artistic skills and many other talents, contributing to the social, economic and cultural fabric of the city.

As various communities find their way in the urban landscape—their new home—artists reflect on the changes brought by the processes of displacement, migration and urbanization and to contemplate what it means to denizens of man-made structures as well as ecology. Through KT 2017, artists will use Kathmandu as a catalyst to outline issues of assimilation, social pressures, the fragility of normative existence and, ultimately, solidarity and the triumph of the human spirit. Major issues as those of refugee communities, of migration, human rights, environmental degradation, pollution, socio-economic disparity, vernacular culture, gender and politics will be addressed.

For his exceptional work in cities across the world, eminent artist Francis Alÿs has been chosen as the Artist Patron of KT 2017.
KT 2017 Patron Artist

Eminent artist Francis Alÿs has accepted to be the KT 2017 Patron Artist.

Throughout his practice, Francis Alÿs consistently directs his distinct poetic and imaginative sensibility toward anthropological and geopolitical concerns centered around observations of, and engagements with, everyday life, which the artist himself has described as “a sort of discursive argument composed of episodes, metaphors, or parables.” His multifaceted projects including public actions, installations, video, paintings, and drawings have involved traveling the longest possible route between locations in Mexico and the United States; pushing a melting block of ice through city streets; commissioning sign painters to copy his paintings; filming his efforts to enter the center of a tornado; carrying a leaking can of paint along the contested Israel/Palestine border; and equipping hundreds of volunteers to move a colossal sand dune ten centimeters.

SOURCE: www.davidzwirner.com
Exhibitions will be held between 24 March and 9 April, 2017, at multiple venues across the Valley. The central exhibition The City, My Studio / The City, My Life, directed by curator Philippe Van Cauteren, will feature a Historic Perspective showcasing Nepali art history and a Children-Specific section.

Exhibitions will feature over 50 artists presenting new as well as existing works. Taragaon Museum, Hyatt Regency, Boudha; Patan Museum Complex, Managalbazar; Nepal Art Council and Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal; Francaise Allaince, Jwalakhel have been confirmed as some of the official venues of the event.

Additional Curated Showcases will be held alongside the central exhibition to present multiple world-perspectives on the theme of the city. These showcases are being organized by institutional partners and curators independently with support from KT 2017 as a local partner.

Neelkanth: Poison/Nectar, a multimedia installation by Sheba Chhachhi (India), exhibited in Patan Museum during KIAF 2012.
KT 2017 will take the city as a starting point. Art, contemporary art to be specific, has mostly developed and prospered in urban surroundings worldwide. The city as a dense microcosm, which embraces all aspects of life is a source of inspiration, or a context influencing processes for many generations of artists. New York, London, Lagos, Rio De Janeiro, Beijing, Johannesburg, Delhi and Moscow are just a number of cities where art prospered and art history has been written. Kathmandu belongs to this list of cities where art has thrived for countless years.

The title of the exhibition “The City, My Studio / The City, My Life” clearly articulates the two functions that the city can have for an artist. Kathmandu (or any other city) as a working place, as the mold for artistic thinking and process. At the same time, it is a place where artists (and everyone else) try to organize their lives. The city is an arena where daily life is ‘performed’ in its richness and complexity. The city is a complex of neural connections, as a set of never lowering and superposition of synchronous interactions.

Invited artists are not to illustrate this definition of the city or urban life, but instead to take the city as a catalyst—as a laboratory to generate artistic forms, gestures, acts, ideas; art works. The city has to be considered as a place to work from, a context which motivates and inspires the art work.

The city is much like a container in which, through random ways, direct and indirect, history, habits and traditions are preserved. The socio-cultural texture of the place; colors and odors; the past, the present and the future; stories’ facts and fiction—all of it activated in the same. The artist thus will aim to be an urban archaeologist who digs from the city these elements, which can serve as core threads in their artistic practice.

In the exhibition “The City, My Studio / The City, My Life” Kathmandu serves as a unique and marvelous hub where encounters are generated between artists from Nepal and around the world. At the same time the exhibition serves as a meeting point between artists and the audiences.

An exhibition is namely a tool (for transformation) and an instrument, which generates meaning, and that which serves, in its spatial articulation, to make the predefined artwork to become ‘elastic.’ “The City, My Studio / The City, My Life” is an invitation to embrace differences and to embrace idiosyncratic artistic practices of the highest qualities that will enter in a dialogue and generate a ‘composition’ which will be a tribute to art and its vital role in society. Artists are the compass as they show these directions that no one else reflects.

“The City, My Studio / The City, My Life” is dedicated to the victims of the earthquake of April 25 and May 12, 2015.
The Curator: Philippe Van Cauteren

Philippe Van Cauteren is the Artistic Director of Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.) in Ghent, Belgium. Under his guidance, the exhibition program of S.M.A.K. primarily concentrates on major monographic exhibitions.

Cauteren has also been working as a freelance curator and publicist in Germany, Mexico, Chile, and Brazil. He has represented the nation of Belgium (2013) and Iraq (2015) at the 55th and 56th edition of the Venice Biennale. He was appointed by the RUYA Foundation to curate the Iraqi Pavilion for the latter. Prior to this, his major curatorial project was the first Biennal ‘Ceara America’ (2002), Fortaleza, Brazil.

Apart from being involved in curatorial projects, Cauteren also writes and lectures on contemporary art. Through S.M.A.K, he runs extensive public art projects and education programs in collaboration with local academies.

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K) is a contemporary art museum primarily focused on artists and their practice. It functions as an art laboratory, a place for experimentation, research and innovation. The museum poses questions, stimulates reflection and celebrates doubt. It houses works by prominent 20th century artists and runs extensive educational programs for children, schools and art students in association with academic and other institutional partners.
Artists

The City: My Studio / The City: My Life will include over 50 artists, with a considerable percentage representing Nepal. The roster has been selected by curator Van Cauteren to represent an inclusive list of established and younger artists covering different media actively used by artists today. International selections have been made on artists’ capacity to develop their work in Kathmandu within a timeframe of about 10 days prior to the exhibition, and also on their commitment to engage in capacity building for Nepal’s art scene. Although not decisive, these two elements—through the dialogue and exchange between the Nepali art community and visiting artists—will contribute to the dynamicity of the exhibition.

An important element in the selection of the artists is that they have the capacity to “transform almost nothing” into a valid artistic proposition. The selected artists have the capacity to create and realize with almost nothing poetical (sometimes political) propositions that embrace their identity and the place they work in. Nepali selections were made through a semi-open call held in June, 2016. Portfolios of more than 50 artists were collected and presented by the respective artists to the curator in Kathmandu. Through the Historic Perspective and Children’s Section, more artists will become a part of the central exhibition. Few Nepali Diaspora artists will also be represented.
After receiving a grant from UNESCO, KT 2017 has been able to award a Research Fellowship to investigate artists’ archival of the changing Kathmandu Valley through their creations. The main aim of this section is to bring needed attention to the historical context of the theme within the purview of the arts and culture. Independent researcher and lecturer at the Kathmandu University’s Center for Art and Design, Promina Shrestha, was awarded the Fellowship in September, 2016. She will be looking into works created between 1900s till 2000 AD to make provisions for inter-content dialogue between the contemporary art of The City: My Studio / The City: My Life and Nepal’s own history.

The research is not intended as an exhaustive overview but SAF is confident that there may be longer-term considerations that will be brought to light by the effort. Regardless, the presentation of the research and sourced material will offer a glimpse of a history shaped by artists. *Detailed proposal for this component can be made available on request.*

Historical Perspective

Artist Birendra Pratap Singh has been depicting Kathmandu since the 80s. Through his drawings, viewers are confronted with an exaggerated visual record complimented by the artists personal observation. There is conviction that is purely activist, as well as celebration of the time he intended to capture.
Promina Shrestha is a researcher, educator and illustrator. She is an Assistant Professor at the Kathmandu University Centre of Art and Design, and is also engaged in a research on “Children’s Illustration in Nepal: an imagined identity”. Shrestha designs book covers for Fine Print Publication and the weekly M&S art and lifestyle magazine.

Shrestha has been exploring the relationship between the artists and the city since 2010. She successfully coordinated ‘Artists in the City - Urbanization and Urban Culture’ (October 2010 – March 2011 and May 2012 - July 2012) where a platform for dialogue between the artist community and other urban disciplines was established. The event demonstrated the importance and utility of public spaces and more than 50,000 visitors took part in the event over a weeklong exhibition.
Recent years has seen many new institutional efforts take up children as their primary target group. Given the lack of multidisciplinary thought processes and its exploration in schools, such creative engagement is mostly perceived as being extracurricular. Today, many alternative and art education platforms are in constant engagement with relevant stakeholders to revise the conservative perspectives perpetrated by private and public schooling. It has been through these novel platforms that contemporary artists and creative individuals have been able to engage younger minds.

During KT 2017, SAF will be curating a child-friendly section to engage kids through the motif of architecture. Working with Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust, Patan Museum, Srijanalaya and a host of partners, KT 2017 will explore the natural and ethnic diversity of Nepal through its architectural heritage. Visitors of the section will also be connected with on-going renovation work to address issues brought to light after the earthquakes. Additionally, content will be sourced from partners who have been proactively engaging children in the arts and education in recent years.

SAF wants to insure that all exhibiting venues of the event will have one or more child-friendly or/and children-specific component. The content could be in the form of interactive graphical material, a physically separated section within the venue or an artwork created specifically for children to interact with.

SAF intends to publish a community/child-friendly map of Patan Durbar Square, to enable the Museum to continuously engage children and other uninitiated communities even after the conclusion of the event.

Children’s Section Curator

Sharareh Bajracharya is an arts educator. Her academic background involves a Bachelor’s in Early Childhood Development from Tufts University, a Master’s in Education, Culture, and Society from University of Pennsylvania, and a Bachelor’s in Fine Arts in Studio Art (Painting) & Art Education from Kathmandu University Centre for Art & Design. Sharareh is one of the founders and the current Chairperson of Srijanalaya, a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that is dedicated to creating safe spaces of learning through the arts in Nepal.
Besides the central exhibition, KT 2017, as a platform, has invited curators and artists from Finland, Poland, South Korea, Australia, India and Qatar to host independent exhibitions for the event. Through this effort, KT 2017 is employing the accepted pavilion format of Biennale events to present multiple perspectives on the theme.

KT 2017 is only prioritizing easily transportable artworks (films, digital prints, performance artist) and or the facilitation of community based art intervention projects through this section.

The following exhibitions are currently seeking grants on behalf of KT 2017:

**Curated Showcase**

**Treasure of Nepal**
Gary Wornell (Finland)
Replication of the namesake exhibition in Finland, which was inspired by photographer/curator Wornell’s visit to Kathmandu in 2012 through the Kathmandu International Art Festival.

A book archiving artisanal and craft practices of the Valley will be launched during the opening week of the Triennale. This exhibition will be hosted at the Nepal Tourism Board, Exhibition Road.

**The Art of Journey**
Team.Work (Poland)
Polish curator and PhD-lecturer Kris Lukomski and his collective Team.Work will be travelling—along with his students—to Kathmandu to set up a community interaction station. Creating a base in an area within the city, the team’s goal is to interact with the local community and create close relationship with its people so that sharing of ideas and addressing of issues through art and media can be made possible. The idea is to organize workshops, discussions, meetings, tours and screenings wherein the team will share stories from Poland and the local community will be sharing their stories with the Polish artists and designers. Lukomski will also be screening films—selected from the Short Waves film festival that he curates—aligning with our theme during the Triennale.
Unbuilt / Rebuilt: City / Home
Dr Dina Bangdel (Qatar)
An exploration of transcultural experiences responding to the theme of the "City" — where space and place respond and generate multiple narratives of identity, memory and connection. This curated showcase is a collaborative dialogue between Nepal and the Gulf through artistic interventions where Nepali and Qatar-based artists respond to the cities of Doha and Kathmandu. The experience is mediated through the voices/lenses of the diaspora Nepalis living in Doha to understand the ways in which these spaces of liminality with city can create spaces of artistic expression/entanglements that were meaningful.

Trans Millenia Consort
Michael Candy (Australia)
Trans Millenia Consort is a new video work by Michael Candy (Australia). The film follows the path of several robotic creatures through a myriad of environments and situations about Kathmandu and lends aspects of the plot to spiritualism and religious philosophies so relevant in the area. These cybernetic interventions intend to explore humanity’s synergy with technology and environment.
Upheavals
Bengal Foundation
Upheavals examines the polar notions of change and perennity through the lens of 3 generations of artists from Bangladesh. Today one of the fastest paced economies of the Asian continent and indeed of the world, the country is also the repository of millineries of cultural and religious traditions. “Upheavals” uses this paradox of universal consequences as a starting point. It further delves into the specific layers of complexity that form Bangladesh’s current, unfinished identity through the voice of various artists. Upheavals is an invitation to think. A suggestion. The exhibition does not pretend to give definitive answers to the questions it raises. By bringing original perspectives on local problems to the fore, it merely hopes to demonstrate the universality of what is at stake today in this part of the world.

KT 2017 is currently in touch with other institutions, curators, artists for this section. Curated Showcases will be confirmed on the official time, as updates are sent to us by the concerned partners. Please visit kt.artmandu.org to see all the confirmed exhibitions happening in March.
Encounters

The second half of KT 2017, comprises of all educational programming intended to realize long-term impact nationally. The foremost vision of this component is to establish direct ‘encounters’ with artists and art events that can also embrace a wider community participation and exhibition visitations.

Integral to this component will be the inclusion of non-exhibiting Nepali artists as ‘Hosts’ of the traveling artists and the mobilization of art institutions as co-organizers and co-hosts of artist-led educational outreach. An orientation will also be held through informal presentations—on Nepali art and culture—for traveling artists before the start of the production phase (see Event Calendar). These direct and daily encounters are hoped to generate informal exchanges. Structured ‘encounters’ will include Capacity Building, the KT 2017 Symposium and Outreach Programs.
Capacity Building

All traveling artists of KT 2017 are expected to create at least one capacity building exercise for the benefit of the national art scene. Based on each artist’s portfolio, curator Philippe Van Cauteren and the KT 2017 Team are developing courses, mini-lectures, presentations, portfolio review sessions and masterclasses for art students, recent art graduates, practicing and established artists as well as other relevant beneficiaries. As mentioned earlier, these events will be co-organized with institutional partners during the Production and Exhibition Phase (see Timeline/Calendar for more details).

KIAF 2012 artist Gary Wornell teaching the art of portraiture to photography enthusiasts at Artudio, the documentation partner of the edition. Other artists, Priscilla De Carvalho (Brazil), Tarshito (Italy), Gaynor O’Flynn (UK) too have created newer connections with Kathmandu and Nepal with support from Siddhartha Arts Foundation.
Symposium

The Symposium has been a mainstay of the precursory Festivals and is being further refined for the forthcoming KT 2017. For this iteration, the Symposium will be curated by Veeranganakumari Solanki (India) on the theme of Propositions. It will look into the question of how artists and other creatives propose changes to their surrounding through their processes and creations. Symposium will take place between 25 and 28 March, during the opening week, with support of national and international artists, art professional and other experts. It will feature 9 individual sessions that will range from roundtables to presentations, panels to lectures. One day of the Symposium will be dedicated to Performance Art, in recognition of KT 2017’s Patron Artist Francis Alÿs. This day will feature performances by KT 2017 and other artists in particular exhibition and public venues.

Symposium Curator

Veeranganakumari Solanki is an independent curator and art-writer, based in Mumbai, India. Her curatorial experience has involved research, writing and curating for several art publications and journals on emerging Indian, Asian and international artists and art practices in India as well as internationally.

Solanki was a part of the first Gwangju Biennale International Curators’ course. She was appointed to the jury of the 8th Arte Laguna Prize and is a recipient of the first illy SustainArt Curator’s Prize (2011) and the 1st Annual Artistic Landmark in Contemporary Experience Public’s Voice Award 2012 for best Emerging Curator.
Outreach

Visitor engagement with the expected content of KT 2017 will begin months ahead of the opening. KT 2017 is working with a core group of ‘Encounter Leaders’ and ‘Student Ambassadors’ who will be trained to research featured artists and their past works. In time, these Encounter Leaders will be trained to lead production of individual international works and implement subsequent exhibition engagement. In-venue programming such as production encounters, passive/guided tours and community/school/children’s workshops will be held.

Alongside these in-house efforts, Education Partner Srijanalaya is creating a custom framework to engage schools, spaces and communities around exhibition/program/project sites leading up to the event opening.

Public Events will be held during the opening week to reach potential visitors. KT 2017 is working with relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Lalitpur Metropolitan City and Nepal Tourism Board to secure public spaces for these events.

Finally, Collateral Events befitting KT 2017’s theme of The City will be incorporated into the main program and promoted through official channels in an effort to encourage synergy.

Collateral Events are independent events, KT 2017 will only provide limited support for such activities.

Education Partner: Srijanalaya

Srijanalaya is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization with a vision for every child in Nepal to have access to safe spaces to express themselves and be heard.

Our mission is to create such safe spaces of learning through the arts.

The organization is a growing community of artists and educators who offer creative mediums as an alternative approach to rote-learning and static textbooks.

Srijanalaya engages children and their communities in visual, performing, and language arts in the form of workshops, exhibitions, and performances.
## Calendar (March - April)

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- **Production phase**
- **Public Events**
- **Exhibition**
- **Uninstallation**
Goals and Objectives

Given the mission of the Foundation, the primary objective of the event is to promote Nepali arts and culture, and Kathmandu as a cultural hub in South Asia. Within this vision, SAF hopes to develop a stronger audience base for contemporary cultural expressions and the recognition of art as a tool for social betterment.

Some key objectives, expected outputs are detailed below:

- Create in-depth exchanges between international artists and Nepal by creating artist-led programming and initiatives during the production phase. Reposition the arts as a tool contributing to social betterment through research and critical conversation

- Use the arts to create engagement with social issues by providing accessible and multiple perspectives through immersive visual and sensorial experiences.

- Court international media attention for cultural activities thriving in Kathmandu by inviting international writers, reporters and curators to the event.

- Create audience-specific content to target certain segments with strategic goals in place

- Help tourism recovery by creating engaging cultural programming during the Spring tourist season when such efforts are rare

- Create networking opportunities for national art scene

- Provide a collaborative platform for art institutions and artists active in Nepal

- Work with corporate and private industries to bring art events into scope of CSR and Marketing funding

- Create opportunities for the youth to be involved in artistic and cultural production

- Instigate conversations with relevant governmental agencies to promote the creation of contemporary cultural capital for public spaces of Kathmandu

- Cultivate an ownership of national heritage amongst the youth as a post-disaster effort

- Reach out to uninitiated communities with special outreach efforts such as public screenings, community based art projects etc.

- Build capacity of associated managers, curators under the guidance of S.M.A.K.
Ambassador Program for Students

KT 2017 has created a novel initiative to train Student Ambassadors in Nepal and abroad to mobilize resources and awareness on behalf of the event. As a KT 2017 Student Ambassador you can represent your associated institution of study by becoming a liaison between our efforts and your school management/student body.

Students in Nepal can help us spread information on their campus and those abroad can help us raise resources to reach more people/children and communities through our outreach with Education Partner, Srijanalaya.

Click HERE for more details

Art collective Pasapi and volunteers from Lalitkala Campus flaunt signage plates created during a project by SAF.
Performance artist Salil Subedi plays the didgeridoo at Metro Park during the 10th day of KIAF 2012. The work was based on the theme of the festival itself: Earth/Body/Mind. Many individuals and institutions were invited to create their own events and programs around the theme of the Festival.

Get in Touch

This proposal is prepared by KT 2017 Team and contains the overall vision of the event. If you would like to know more about particular components or have any questions/queries, please email info@artmandu.org for information. You can request elaborated overview of each component or portfolio of individual artist mentioned in this document.

After reviewing this documentation, please contact our team to draft a partnership proposal and agreement.

We look forward to working with you!

-KT 2017 Team

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Performance artist Salil Subedi plays the didgeridoo at Metro Park during the 10th day of KIAF 2012. The work was based on the theme of the festival itself: Earth/Body/Mind. Many individuals and institutions were invited to create their own events and programs around the theme of the Festival.
All images—except for ones with source mentioned—are credited to Respective artists, KIAF 2017 Documentation Partner Artudio, KIAF 2012 Media Coordinator Nischal Oli and the Siddhartha Arts Foundation’s Education Initiative.