

Monk, Scholar and Statesman: Celebrating 100 Years of the 19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche



Hundred years of the 19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche was celebrated throughout Ladakh in many ways. LAMO contributed by organising a photo exhibition and bringing out a catalogue on Kushok Bakula's life and work. The photo exhibition opened at Spituk Monastery in June, it then travelled to CIBS, Choglamsar where it was opened by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

KHIMSA - Ladakh's First Trash Festival

Tashi Morup

It all started with a cycling trip. Skaldan and his friends had gone to the river bank and the popular picnic places there. "Let's clear up the mess," one of them said, and so they did their first, of many, cleaning drives in Ladakh.

Their efforts grew and soon they were working under the banner of their travel company 'Unexplored Ladakh'. Geared with garbage bags they picked and removed filth including plastic, old rags, metal scraps amongst other trash trapped in channels, streams, alongside roads, and passageways. Cycling their way forward with high hope and spirit.



Artists performing a street play on 'Khimsa' (trash) in the main market.

Skaldan happened to mention these trips during one of his regular visits to LAMO. In the ensuing discussion an idea emerged to organize a festival around trash, and to coincide this with World Environment Day on June 5th. The idea was to raise awareness through trash art workshops and exhibitions, a conference to discuss the issue, street play, mass cleaning drives, film screening and photo exhibition. Three venues were chosen including the main bazaar, the LAMO Centre and the Women Alliance office.

LAMO organized an exhibition based around Trash Art, installations by Rigzin Paljor, Rigzin Kalon, Kunzang, Mahabodhi and JNV students were placed in Leh bazaar; the exhibition with many more artists continued at the LAMO Centre. PAGIR set up a stall with recycled products, Snow Leopard Conservancy put up information on the Environment, and Unexplored Ladakh initiated Trash Talks. Angchuk Sabu's (Agu Stanba) stand up comedy acts pulled large crowds and his comic satire focused on the growing garbage menace and lack of public facilities such as toilets. Street theatre 'Sa Chu Mai Lung' was performed by the Ladakh Film Society, led by Sonam Sopari, looking at the alarming state of mother earth due to increasing pollution. Along with main student artists from Degree college, SECMOL students also took part in the play on the first day. And Ama Tsogspar served local foods.

The conference at Women Alliance's centre led to the participants, including school students, making the following resolutions with the intention that they be taken up with different communities and the Hill Council.

- The 'Tsogs' offerings should use local produce instead of packaged eatables from the market such as biscuits, toffees, bread and so on, as this practice will not only generate less garbage, but will also help improve the local economy apart from the health benefits from homegrown items such as apricots and walnuts amongst other local foods.
- Disposable glasses should be banned. Ishey Angmo, a college student said, "these glasses are cheaply available in the market, they become a major source of garbage and are found strewn around everywhere, especially public places. The traditional practice of people carrying their own cups at marriages or other functions should be revived at community level and encouraged. Likir clay pottery cups can be an alternative to the disposable ones. This will help generate employment also." She also said that in social functions or official meetings it has become a practice to have mineral water bottles for the guests, which is unnecessary.
- An efficient public transport system needs to be put in place to decrease pollution caused by increasing traffic.
- Strict garbage and toilet regulations for hotels, guest houses, restaurants and picnic spots needs to be implemented.

- Plastic or other non-biodegradable materials must be reused. This can be encouraged through films on different practices such as in road constructions, recycled art and products.

- Grocery stores should stop giving chewing gum or toffees when they do not have small change. They mainly do this with children, and this has a serious health impact on them and creates more garbage.

- Hill Council should also involve local experts from different fields in developmental planning rather than relying too much on consultants who are not from Ladakh as they are not familiar with local practices.

- Schools should educate children on garbage and inculcate the value of keeping the surroundings clean.

The festival was supported by LAHDC, NAC Leh, PAGIR, Snow Leopard Conservancy and Ladakh Film Society, J&K Police Department Leh and RIMO Expeditions. Lower Leh Councilor, Geylong Lobzang Nyantak promised to give 50,000 rupees towards this creative and collaborative effort to raise the much needed awareness on garbage menace in Leh.

Tashi Morup is Projects Director at LAMO.

ARCAM - The Essence



An exhibition by three Russian artists - Oleg Kuptsov, Daria Pravda, Denis Patrakev - opened at LAMO in August. The artists use creativity as a tool to further their spiritual practice, building on the notion of a sacred space for the viewer to experience. Their art reflects on the profound essence of life through the play of various elements - water, air and fire. Creating installations in various spaces at LAMO, the artists attempt to explore the elements and relate a message that life is constantly changing, moving forward and taking new forms, adapting to the environment.

Earth Art Project

In a unique project led by the Japanese artist Yusuke Asai, a group of artists from Japan and Ladakh created a mural on the inner wall of LAMO's courtyard. The mural used pigments made from soil collected from three sites: Matho, Bodhgaya and Ganjad (Maharashtra). Once completed, the dancer Kae Minami performed with the mural as a backdrop, paying homage to the work and the artists. Her fluid movements intertwined with the natural elements used to paint the mural, acknowledging the diversity and robustness of the work.

The project showed how natural materials can be used to create different colours and textures. It also reflected on the impermanent nature of materials and the ability of artists across cultures to collaborate and work together.



Local artists engaging in the mural artwork along with interns and visitors at LAMO during the Earth Art Project.



Participants from Japan, other parts of India along with local Artists and LAMO staff come together for a group picture after the completion of the mural.



Dosmoche

Dosmoche was vibrantly celebrated as part of LAMO's public collaboration. A wide range of people took part in the photography exhibition and wishing tree.



Exhibition

In April, LAMO showed artists Chemat Dorje, Tashi Namgail and Tsering Mutup at 'The Inner Path - Festival of Buddhist Film, Art & Philosophy' in New Delhi.



Editorial Note

2017 has been a full year at LAMO, with events and programs that engaged us at many different levels in various fields. It was an honour and a privilege to work on the photo exhibition and catalogue of the 19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche during his centenary celebrations. Looking through hundreds of photographs of his life and conversations with people who worked closely with him, we learnt how important and crucial a role he played in the building and development of modern-day Ladakh.

But modernization and rapid development in Ladakh have also had their pitfalls, from increasing consumerism and waste to escalating pollution levels. It's heartening however, to see a growing number of individuals are getting involved with causes focusing on these issues and suggesting ways to resolve them. The Khimsa Festival brought many organisations and people together on a common platform, to deliberate over these concerns and present them to a wider audience. That, combined with a workshop on disaster risk reduction in the wake of floods demonstrated the need for more scientific research in these areas, as well as active participation from civil society and local government.

Reflecting on past practices and learning from them were other important lessons we took away with us this year. A workshop with Japanese artists on making pigments with soil showed us the importance of natural materials. As did the recycling of waste materials into remarkable works of art. Another significant workshop explored the role of women in Ladakh and their empowerment. This year we hope to continue with more discussions on gender issues in Ladakh.

Each year we see footfall to the LAMO Centre increasing, as more and more people get involved with the space. Visitor numbers have grown, as has a demand for the Heritage walks we take, with some even staying back and contributing. It is encouraging to see an increasing demand from students, and their parents, for workshops on arts as the importance of this to their learning and overall development is gradually being recognised in Ladakh. This year we plan to take our arts program to places beyond the Leh area, to Changthang and Sham.

Some wonderful interns joined us this year and we thank them for working with us. As well as the many artists, musicians, photographers and everyone who interacted with us and contributed to the year. It has been an incredible experience working with such an amazing spectrum of artists and cultural practitioners and welcoming an enthusiastic audience.

We will continue with some of the themes we have explored this year and initiate new programs focusing on arts and education, media and music. We plan to have a festival later in the year that will look at the myriad birds of Ladakh, raising awareness and mobilising support for bird and wildlife conservation.

We hope you have all enjoyed being a part of LAMO and look forward to seeing you again. Thank you for your continued support.

The LAMO Team
Kharyog, Leh
31st December 2017

Glory of the Past
Tsering Chonzom reminisces on her two favourite images from LAMO's visual archive



A group of local people in their traditional attire.



Two people with their cattle during threshing season.

Among LAMO's collection of visual archives two images stand out for me. The first is from the Moravian Mission Collection given to us by the Moravian Church House in London and shows a group of people wearing Ladakhi local dress. What strikes me is that there is no differentiation in the dress worn between the elders and the children, or even between the different communities of Muslims and Buddhists. They are all wearing a *gos* (woollen robe), *lok-pa* (cape made from goat skin), *kantop tibi* (hat) and *perak* (a turquoise-studded headdress). But nowadays we hardly see people dressed like this. Before, elders and children wore this type of dress in everyday life. But these days we only wear this type of dress on some particular occasion or celebration. But usually it is the elders, not the children. Also some types of clothing are just not worn anymore – the *lok-pa* for instance, maybe worn by very few elders in remote villages, but the youth in Ladakh they do not even know what the *lok-pa* means or looks like. I remember, when I was eight or nine years old, some of the older people in my village of Umla wearing a

lok-pa like this. As we forget our dress, we are also gradually losing our traditional way of life.

Another photo I selected from the Moravian Mission collection is the photo that shows two men with their cattle on the field during the *Khuyus*. After seeing this photo I remembered my childhood days and how we would thresh (*khuyus*) the grain. This happened in the months of October and first week of November. During that time all the children would go to collect the cow or *dzo* for threshing. During threshing we would sing some songs, songs such as *Halo Baldur* (A song sung during the process of threshing). We were told to sing because it was said that if we do the threshing in silence then the animal would get dizzy or faint. I remember sometimes during that time it would start snowing, then we would stop and rest for a few days, and when the snow stopped we would start again. Time has changed many things in Ladakh. Nowadays many of the younger generation have not seen this type of threshing in their life, because they no longer live in the village and it is done by ma-

chines. Our children today, they don't even know the meaning of threshing.

One by one we have seen a lot of changes in our daily life in Ladakh. We have lost many of our traditions and culture. This is inevitable, and while we cannot hang on to the past the visual archive at LAMO helps us understand our past and where we come from.

LAMO has built up its visual archive through generous donations from family members whose descendants travelled to Ladakh, institutions, scholars working in the region and residents of Ladakh. These images are being catalogued, and are accessible to the public for viewing and reference purposes. We welcome additions to the archive, if you have a photo you would like to share with us please bring it to the LAMO Centre or contact us at lamocentreleh@gmail.com

Tsering Chonzom is the Librarian at LAMO.

A Walk Through Leh's Heritage Town

Tashi Morup reflects on the importance and grandeur of Old Town Leh, and how it has suffered in recent times, forgotten and neglected

Paul Simon Mirmont was among one of the first foreign visitors to Ladakh after entry restrictions in the region were relaxed in 1974. He took extensive pictures and there is one particular thing that you get to learn from his collection – the drastic change in Leh town in comparison to the rural areas.

Lush green fields, just on the fringes of Old Town Leh, have today become a concrete jungle of modern constructions. They have almost concealed the heritage town below the magnificent Leh Palace, which was visibly alive in Paul's photos taken in 1975.

In recent decades, changes brought about by modernity including an increase in population and tourism, have eroded the past glory of the historic town to the extent that it has become insignificant in the course of development. Romi Khosla, a renowned conservator, was among the first to propose the conservation of Old Town Leh within the paradigm of modern development in Leh in the 1980s. Later on, in 2008 the area was also declared by UNESCO as an endangered site and included on the World Monuments Watch List.

The only intervention made so far by the LAHDC Leh has been to include this heritage town in the Government of India's scheme for slum development called 'Rajiv Awaaz Yojana'. It is most unfortunate that our own people, including the top leadership, have failed to understand the cultural legacy of Old Town Leh and the



Leh Palace and old town, surrounded by fields of barley. Photo courtesy Paul Mirmont, 1974-76.

need for conservation and upgradation of the area.

Old Town Leh was for centuries the most important part of the town, its commercial and political hub, and the cultural centre of Ladakh. This was especially the case under the rulers of the Namgyal dynasty who built their Palace here in the beginning of the 17th century. Trade was among the main interests behind the Dogra invasion that took place in 1834, under the covert sway of British India. It led to the royal family moving to Stok Palace, followed by other residents gradually abandoning their winter residential homes in the old town and building houses in what was once fields.

Rural migrants, from various parts of Ladakh, started to settle in the Old Town and labourers from Doda Kishtwar area also rented the abandoned buildings during the

summer season. While tourists visit the Old Town in large numbers, however, the poor sanitation and site of garbage often leave them very disenchanted and disappointed.

Expressive feedback from a visitor after a Heritage Walk with LAMO stated his disgust about seeing waste everywhere, including dog and human faeces along the way up to the Palace. Such repulsive sights, common in such a historic town, speaks of the respect Ladakhis give to the epicentre of their culture.

Old town has three magnificent temples, one is to the future Buddha Maitreya with exquisite wall paintings, another has a sculpture of Guru Padmasambhava in Guru Lhakhang believed to have been built by a forefather of the Zipata family is

...continues on Page 7

The LAMO Library

Rigzin Chodon

Libraries can be both boring as well as interesting, depending on what you make of such a place.

For me, they have always been a source of inspiration, if I can find the right corner for myself in one. There are few places in Leh that offer solace when we want to go read a book or write. The LAMO library is one such place where I found solace and peace of mind, a space in Leh Old town where I can engage myself in what I like best – to just sit and read.

Have you ever wondered what makes a good space? For me it's the books that are shelved and the experience of going there day in and day out to read, interact with knowledgeable people, who are often found in such a place, and of course to create some new piece of writing.

Last winter, I used this space for my research writing. I came here every day to write and research. I never really got bored. The architecture of the library room was so well done that a bright sunny day in winters would keep you from freezing. The spectacular view from the library would always inspire me and take me to a new height of thinking. It created a sense of rediscovery in every word I read. Well, it is a fascinating experience in itself!

The LAMO library has a range of reading material from national and local newspapers, magazines, encyclopaedias, journals to English novels. Their collections of books are mostly for reference, ranging from academic to beautiful art books. Young children and teenagers also have a variety of books to choose from; the former, in the age group of 5 to 14 years can

...continues on page 4



LAMO's library; a hub for many books on Ladakh, art and media.

Talk

Tsering Chorol held a talk on the use of Colloquial Ladakhi Language and Classical Language followed by discussion with Tsering Nurboo Martse, Sonam Sopari, Sonam Wangchuk (HCHF) and others.



Conference

A conference to discuss issues related to Khimsa (waste) in Ladakh was held in collaboration with Ama Tsogsopa. Themes covered included the importance of ban on plastics, availability of landmine system to dispose the waste and so on.



Performance

As part of the Khimsa event, a street play was organized in the main market during World Environment Week by Ladakh Film Society in collaboration with LAMO. The play looked at the growing problem of waste management and how it affects the elements of nature.

Postcards from College

Life Worlds of Students Studying Outside Ladakh

Mabel D. Gergan

For most young people in Ladakh, leaving home to pursue higher education is an expected way station in their life's trajectory. In many ways, this experience is no different from those of young people from other remote or rural parts of India who find themselves in big cities in pursuit of higher education while also navigating the vagaries of the urban experience. However, as linguistic, racial, and religious minorities, young people from Ladakh along with those from mountainous hill states, experience the city in a fundamentally different way from other young people. One need not reiterate here the many instances of racial discrimination experienced by people from Himalayan and North-eastern states. This discrimination can in some instances be overt or violent but is most often experienced as micro-aggressions in everyday spaces

like the classroom or workplace. But the city can also be a space for experimentation, a life unfettered from parental control and societal surveillance, where young people discover new ideologies, passions, and friendships. So how does being from Ladakh shape young people's experience of the city? How does this experience change their relationship to India and their communities back home? If these young people return to Ladakh, how will they shape the future of this region?

These were some of the initial questions behind our workshop and exhibition 'Postcards from College: Life worlds of Students Studying Outside Ladakh' organized at LAMO this past summer. They were a culmination of the first year of a three-year project titled, 'Impacts of Education-Driven Urban Migration on Youth Aspirations and Identity', funded by the National Science Foundation and

led by Sara Smith, Associate Professor of Geography at the University of North Carolina. 'Postcards from College' builds on a yearlong project with 13 students that started with a summer workshop in 2016 at LAMO. As part of the project, 13 students took pictures and videos of their everyday experience of studying outside of their homes. During the workshop students shared photographs and their experiences. Students were also asked to bring old photographs of their parents and grandparents traveling outside Ladakh or other meaningful images. This assortment of roughly a thousand photographs (and some videos) captured a range of experiences, from birthday parties to picnics, to train journeys with new friends, cooking Ladakhi food, trips back home during vacations, and also those rare ones of the classroom and exam preparations.

Along with students studying in different parts of India, we also had three students studying in the United States. Their insights brought a different perspective but there were strong intersections with student experiences in India, especially around parental and community expectations. Students would often invert the framing of the larger project, for instance, when asked to reflect on their experience of racism in Indian cities, students brought up concerns around the treatment of minority groups like the Nepali community in Ladakh. There were also heated debates around patriarchy in Ladakhi culture and gendered discrimination. While student photographs were important in framing our conversations, we were curious to understand those experiences not captured by photographs and videos. We asked student participants to write anonymous letters expressing these unaddressed concerns to three groups: their parents,



Stanzin Jidey talking about her experiences as an education migrant in Delhi.

the rest of India, and to any other significant group. Each of these anonymous letters were heartfelt expressions of student anxieties and frustrations but also of their gratitude to parents, teachers, and difficult situations that made them stronger. On the last day of the workshop student created zine pages with a collection of about 200 photographs, discussion notes, and local magazines. (You can find these pages at <https://lamocards.wordpress.com/>).

For the exhibition students selected a few photographs that were displayed in individual frames. The exhibition opened with, students making short presentations, followed by a discussion. Reflections from the older generation and non-Ladakhis in the audience brought up important continuities and differences in the experience of this generation of Ladakhis. For one, communication and travel to Indian cities has become accessible to a larger number of Ladakhis as compared to even a decade ago. But, studying outside Ladakh is still mediated by class and other factors. However, most student participants expressed a strong desire to return to Ladakh either of their own volition or due to familial responsibilities. For those who have returned, there were real concerns around a rapidly shrinking public sector

and lack of employment opportunities. Hope is to be found in the many young Ladakhis who have started successful self-employment ventures and perhaps this generation might help address urgent concerns around creating a sustainable tourism culture. These trends can also be seen in other Himalayan and North-Eastern states, where young people's lives and decisions are re-shaping the relationship between their home regions and the Indian state. For now, Indian cities despite all their liberatory potential and spaces for experimentation, were still viewed as inhospitable in the long term by most student participants. What remains to be seen is, whether Indian cities will accommodate these diverse populations or if they will continue to be hostile spaces for minorities and other marginalized groups.

The project continues with a household survey to better understand if higher education driven migration is as pervasive within Ladakh, as we think it is.

Mabel Denzin Gergan is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Georgetown University, USA.



Students wrote letters to their parents and society and made zines.

Women Empowerment and Awareness on Sexual Health

Tsewang Chuskit and Stanzin Angmo reflect on the workshops they held for women in Ladakh looking at their health and safety

Do new developments like better roads, more schools, an increased tourist economy, and more job opportunities influence how we think on subjects like rape, sexual harassment, and domestic violence? Do they alleviate the social stigma surrounding divorce, gender identity, suicide, menstruation, teen pregnancy, and other serious issues? Attending a class on women's health at Smith College was eye opening for us, because we immediately realized that our classmates from all around the world were better informed than us about their bodies and sexual health. It made us see the need to demystify adolescent growth and the profound physical changes that come with it.

Since 2015, we have been holding summer workshops with a focus on gender, our first on 'Adolescent Girls Health and Wellness', then one on 'Mental Health and Suicide', and in 2017 on 'Safety, Wellness, Health, and Victim Empowerment in Ladakhi Society' where we talked about sexual violence and abuse.

We examined how Ladakhi society encourages a culture of silence and unintentionally perpetuates a culture of abuse. Children are taught to be respectful of authority and remain deferential to our elders, even older strangers. This learned behavior undermines the possibility of a victim reporting abuse. We have also noticed that there is often a public outcry against perpetrators, and even victims, who are viewed as outsiders. Often, villages, families, or schools protect an alleged perpetrator by privately dealing with an accusation. These forces keep the discussion about sexual violence in the shadows and discourage victims from going to the police.

It is important for people to understand that boys and girls are both vulnerable to abuse and children are even more at risk. Often, people don't take physical or mental abuse seriously. It is considered normal, and even preferable, for teachers or parents to hit children when they misbehave or do not perform as desired. Additionally, it is not uncommon for a husband to abuse his wife.

Our presentation's primary purpose was to provoke listeners to rethink their responsibility as family members, friends, teachers, and citizens. We sought to emphasize how critical it is for parents to

speak to their children early and frankly about their bodies, their safety, and what constitutes good and bad touch. It is crucial to teach a child confidence and awareness with his/her body. Parents should talk with their children about a recent case rather than turning off the radio or television when sensitive news comes up.

The theme Safety, Wellness, and Health of Ladakhi Society stressed on the importance of building friendly, communicative relations between parent and child. We believe that open communication is crucial to promoting strong, healthy relationships between adolescents and their parents as the first line of defense against sexual violence and harassment. What is more, when a mother and daughter share everything with each other openly, a young woman's confidence grows, and she will have the strength and perseverance she needs to pursue her dreams.

Over the course of the last three summers, we have learned how sexual health and safety, women's empowerment, parent-child communication, and emotional confidence and support are intertwined. We often compare Ladakhi society with the cultures of other countries to celebrate a common belief that Ladakh is more peaceful, ethical, and safe. Our leaders and scholars often speak of Ladakh this way. Yet, our society still does not talk about sexuality openly, menstruation is still considered 'dirty,' victims are blamed for provoking rape or abuse, and domestic abuse is still a secret kept within the family.



A gathering of women attending Chuskit and Angmo's workshop on sexual health, Nyoma.

We know our society will not change overnight. However, we believe that we must start somewhere. We have been criticized, that because we are not experts in our field, we should talk about something else, something more appropriate for girls of our age. We disagree. We are not presenting ourselves as experts but as concerned citizens who believe in the power of open dialogue and factual information over gossip and superstition. We want to elevate the conversation to include local leaders in health, education, media, and law enforcement to young people and their families and teachers. Of course, it is only with careful mentoring and guidance that we can achieve our goal to support teens to be healthier,

happier, and safer given the social pressures and pitfalls in a rapidly changing Ladakh.

Chuskit and Angmo would like to thank Siddhartha School, LAMO, Leh Women Alliances, Leh District Police Station, Ladakh Chief Education Office, Smith College, Bennington College and Siddhartha School Project SSP USA for their guidance and support.

Tsewang Chuskit and Stanzin Angmo are undergrad students in USA studying at Smith and Bennington Colleges respectively.



Chuskit and Angmo on the road in Changthang, Muth village, to give their workshop.

Film screening

In collaboration with Local Futures, LAMO held a film screening of 'Wisdom of the Mountains'. In this documentary, Frederik van Oudenhoven travels through the Pamir Mountains and speaks with farmers about the struggles they are facing.



Design

Shuchita Grover gave a workshop on the use of Typefaces. She showed how each font has a specific weight, style, width, and condensation that play a role in graphic design.



Film screening

Author and film maker Manju Kak showed her documentary film 'They who Walked Mountains' at the LAMO Centre. The film looks at the trade between Tibetans and Bhotias along the UP border, its earlier importance and decline.



Students Reflections on Local Heroes Exhibition

It has been said that "Education is power" – it plays an important role in all spheres of human life and activity. It is a powerful factor which helps us attain success, power and position in life. Education is not only focused on books but it also on other activities and moral education.

It was a great opportunity to spend time with Isaac Gergan and learn about drawing, and looking at the lives of our most venerable local heroes through art. In my opinion, doing such art activities is good for students life because it makes one's life more enriched.

Drawing can also change our life and correctly use our valuable time, apart from showcasing our talent. It has been rightly said that, "hobbies always come to one's help". If a person has no hobby, his spare time will turn him into a useless, irritated and restless person.

Padma Lhazes
Class 8th, Siddhartha School



The Local Heroes exhibition by students of Siddhartha School at the LAMO Centre.

Heroes Project is a very extraordinary activity that we had done in summer month. I think it is very important project to learn about our local heroes. Through this project we came to know about various types of local heroes in various fields, and felt very proud that great persons are also part of our community. By participating in this Project, I gained lots of knowledges about great personalities in Ladakh who can inspire us. It is very important to do new things from which we can gain lots of knowledge and new experience. By doing this Project we also improve our drawing skills.

It was such a nice experience learning from Isaac Gergan. Doing such a project I think it helps students build up their talent. If someone is not interested in drawing real faces, it helps them draw in other ways such as making a cartoon, which makes it fun and cheerful. It was a great time spent with our friends and learning about local heroes of our community.

Tsering Angmo
Class 8th, Siddhartha School



Students viewing the exhibition at the LAMO Centre.

Learning the Art of Filmmaking

Stanzin Gurmet

This summer I attended a workshop on script writing by filmmaker, Rigzin Kalon. The general flow of the workshop was fascinating and it was wonderfully led by Ka Rigzin. He said "If I can prepare 15 fine young filmmakers from Ladakh, then that would be my humble contribution to the cinema of Ladakh", which showed his passion for providing value to the art and entertainment industry of Ladakh. He did not only emphasize on modern filmmaking but also encouraged value based art and entertainment, which our forefathers have preserved till date. I appreciate his ideas on sharing and passing his knowledge and skills to the younger generation so that Ladakh can have a pool of bright and talented professionals in different creative ventures.

He shared one of his screenplays with us, using it as a base to discuss details about the process and future prospect of his work. It's so rare that a teacher put forth his own work as a medium to teach the practical and rational method of screenplay writing. He showed us some of the finest films in the movie screening sessions, we saw and discussed 'The Court' directed by Chaitanya Tamhane and 'In the Mood for Love' by Wong Kar - Wai.

The program was certainly conducive, especially when it came to brainstorming new ideas for a film. Here we not only learned the art and technique of scriptwriting, but also worked on new ideas for a film that we may like to make in the future. Workshops like these are important opportunities for both students and professionals who are embarking on the path of filmmaking and content creation, and I believe everyone should take part in programs like this regardless of any specialization or interest.

Personally, through the workshop, I re-lived my college days, the feel of cinema classes and all its energies. The learning platform through the workshop did open many avenues for new and creative ideas. Furthermore, interaction with other young artists and professionals was lively, and it surely motivates one to extend one's work to provide more value to society and art industry in Ladakh.

Stanzin Gurmet is a Film Maker. He is the founder of 'Himalayan La-noon Art & Entertainment'.



Chantal, standing far right, instructing participants at the book making workshop.

How to Make a Book?

Chantal Burkhardt narrates her experience of holding a book-making workshop at LAMO

While exploring Leh, during my summer break, I got to know about LAMO. I then decided to get involved as an intern, contribute with my own inputs and gather some work experience in a creative environment.

In August, LAMO offered a Book-Making Workshop and I was happy to be part of its planning and realization. Having grown up just next to my father's print shop, I was familiar with the medium book from an early age. Also during my studies of English Language and Literature I repeatedly encountered the notion of "bookishness" and the aesthetic of the book itself. The goal of the workshop was not only to teach the participants how to make their own books and create original content, but also to give them a new approach to the medium book and give more meaning to its personal usage.

The Workshop had around ten young participants who were excited to learn how to make their own books. The first day, we introduced different techniques of book-binding and started to create our very

own books. The participants could choose whether they wanted to use the Coptic binding technique or the Perfect binding technique. Everyone in the workshop was very motivated and even though Coptic binding requires a little more time and preciseness, the majority decided to apply this technique and did a very good job. We gathered different materials beforehand, such as cardboard, plain paper, colorful wrapping paper, old magazines, and postcards. The first step in the process of book-making was the same for everybody: we created several signatures (groups of sheets of paper); for the Coptic binding we systematically sewed them together with the covers. The Perfect Binding technique, on the other hand, requires glueing instead of sewing, and was therefore a faster method.

On the second day of the workshop the focus was on drawing/sketching and it was artist Jigmet Wangchuk (Adu) who instructed the participants. We learned how to sketch simple shapes and characters. On the third day, we focused on content creation again and this time, it was all about creative writing. Of course

we were already working with our self-made books from the previous two days and started to fill them with fun writing exercises, short stories and poems. Making use of their new knowledge and skills, some of the students even created a second or a third book at home, expanded on discussed ideas and experimented with different materials, such as wooden book covers. It was a pleasure to see everybody engage with the subject so well.

Chantal Burkhardt is an undergrad student in English Literature and Art History at the University of Bern, Switzerland. She interned with LAMO in July-August.

Writing & Photography workshop



Gulzar Hussain explored Leh town through the eyes of the lonely donkey.

Faisal Qadir Abdu

In January, I organised a week-long workshop on writing and photography with LAMO and Stawa. The intention was to pass on the skills of writing and photography to the participants as these mediums give one an alternative way to explore their surroundings. The workshop was based on experiential learning where the participants were involved in mediated discussions and activities, looking at the fundamentals and different aspects of photography and writing. Along with the practical use of a camera, the participants also heard talks by Otsal Jigstenpa and Namgail Tsaskan (Information Department)

on photography, and on various writing styles from Sunetro Ghosal (Editor Stawa) and Rinchen Angmo Chumikchen (reporter at Reach Ladakh)

The photo essays that followed from the workshop explored various issues in Ladakh - the increase of substance abuse amongst teenagers and how old town today has become a "safe" haven for them to consume these drugs, the destruction of heritage buildings in Old Town as development paves the way for modernization and the loss of green cover in Leh town. Later these were shown at LAMO during Dosmoche.



Tsering Stanzin looks at the problem of pollution in Leh.



Faizan Abdullah Aliju attempts to spread awareness on substance abuse.

I have attended several workshops at LAMO in the past but this was the first time I was mentoring one. It was a good learning experience for me as it taught me how to organise and structure a workshop, as well as learning how to teach photography and writing. Later in the year when I joined Woodstock School, this experience played an instrumental role in getting me the position of Events Management intern at the Centre for Imagination there and the post of Photo Editor at Woodstock's online news website "The Woodstocker".

Faisal Abdu is studying in 11th grade at Woodstock International High School, Mussoorie.

Seminar

LAMO Executive Director Monisha Ahmed spoke on 'The LAMO Centre - Restoration and Adaptive Reuse of a Heritage Building', at the newly formed Centre for Archaeological Studies' seminar on "Archaeological Research in the Western Himalayas" in July.



Politics

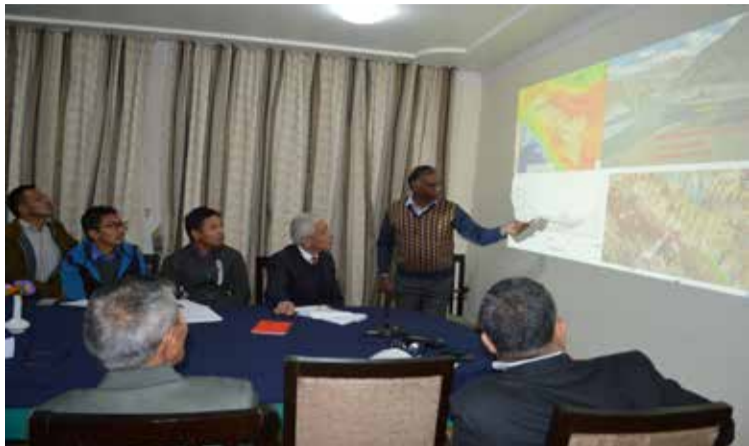
Muzaffar Hussain, Professor at Maulana Azad National Urdu University Hyderabad, gave a talk on 'Discontent with the Modern World: Understanding the Islamist Critic'. He discussed about the encounter of the Muslim world with the West in the 20th Century and the challenges that followed.

Art

A two-day workshop on the art of sketching was conducted by intern Sanya Arshad, a graduate from Delhi's Lady Sri Ram college. She focused on the drawings of figures and still life.



Learning from Disaster around Floods



Dr Pradeep Shrivastava (Wadia Institute, Dehradun) with participants at the Disaster Risk Reduction Workshop at LIC.

Rigzin Chodon

Memories of floods in different villages of Ladakh, in the recent years, are still fresh in our mind. We have still not been able to work out suitable solutions for precautionary measures that need to be addressed in Ladakh.

The month of September, saw an interesting collaboration between the National University of Singapore (NUS), Ladakh International Centre (LIC) and LAMO which resulted in a day long session of presentations and discussions during a workshop titled 'Flood and Debris Flow Disaster Risk Reduction' (DRR) at the LIC.

An interesting factor was the involvement and participation of people from various professional backgrounds – there were scientists, civil society representatives, academicians, historians, government officials, and political leaders amongst others. They all actively discussed flood related experiences of Ladakh; some of these were personal. The first session included some presentations about the historical relevance and events related to flood in Ladakh from both scientific and historical perspectives.

The second half of the session saw more discussions taking place, recommendations suggested and possible solutions on issues ranging from better governance (at village, region-

al and national levels) to Scientific Monitoring and Forecasting as well as Engineering Solutions. Policies in Land Use, Re-greening, Insurance and Education were also deliberated upon.

Raising awareness and creating memory (institutional, public and personal) for flood victims of the past were also considered as an important lesson that should not be forgotten.

The need for active participation of all sections of the society from political and religious leaders to government officials, the private sector, civil society and all citizens was seen as the key factors in addressing such issues in Ladakh. Imbibing and acknowledging the need for DRR in District Development Plans at government level, education and awareness among people at the local level and finally, establishing a group of committed people or a forum to work towards reducing risks in disaster situations in this Himalayan region was also seen as necessary and effective measures.

Rigzin Chodon is a PhD scholar from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. She is currently working on a research project at LAMO that is looking at students studying outside Ladakh.

Do It Yourself! Being Creative with Waste Materials

Jigmet Angmo

"Creativity is Intelligence having Fun" – Albert Einstein

Children love doing a variety of arts and crafts as an outlet to being creative and at the same time having some fun. Little do they know, that it is also good for their development and growth as well.

Over the last year, I've held several D.I.Y (Do It Yourself) workshops at LAMO with children in the age group of 5 to 16 years. A D.I.Y workshop emphasizes making objects or art works with found materials, these can be from home or from the surrounding areas, the street, buildings etc... These materials can range from old DVDs to newspapers and magazines, yarn, containers, boxes, egg trays, scraps of cloth amongst other things that you may just toss in the waste without thinking 'I can still use it'. D.I.Y is the ability to recycle waste and create something meaningful and aesthetic from it.

During the D.I.Y workshops the children, working with waste materials from their homes, turned them into amazing and unexpected things. Some of the younger children made portraits out of Old DVDs, yarn and paper, while the older ones made amazing photo-frames, bookmarks, pen-holders and hanging lamps.

"I don't want to go home, I want to keep making stuff all day," said eight year old Stanzin.

Children love being involved in the preparation process, as much as the final creation. As a child I remember I would love to be helpful around the house, doing and making things. Most kids do. What's great



Some of the DIY products on display during the Khimsa exhibition at LAMO.

about D.I.Y projects is that children learn a lot from them, not only about art and colour and texture. For instance, there is a saying, 'Crafts that require drying require waiting!' This is a great lesson for the child to demonstrate self control and patience. Also, things might not go exactly as we hoped or planned. Crafts are a great way to promote flexibility in your child as they show there is no right or wrong way in exploring one's own creativity.

Encouraging Creativity doesn't just increase the child's chances of becoming the next Picasso, you are also helping them develop Mentally, Socially and Emotionally.

Jigmet Angmo is a Freelance Artist and a Fashion Enthusiast. LAMO has just published her first graphic novel 'Dung Jon-ma'.

Khimsa in Leh



A view of Bhamgarh, literally 'Mountains of Garbage', a gruesome site.

Siddhi Ashar

My internship with LAMO presented a wonderful opportunity for me to go on a solo adventure where I immersed myself in a culture that is vastly different from the one I am from. Hailing from Mumbai, I have never experienced anything like Leh including the temperatures. However, having seen all the pristine images of Ladakh I never imagined that I would go there and work on the topic of 'Khimsa' or Garbage.

During my month long stay, I worked on a couple of different projects, mostly looking at the growing menace of garbage in Leh, waste management and recycling. Earlier Leh was primarily a no-waste region with people largely reusing everything. But this changed when new products entered the market such as plastic, tin and glass, and also as the population grew. The aim was to start and engage in conversations about dealing with mass amounts of waste produced in Leh.

I started with a 'Do-It-Yourself' workshop with students, making art from trash. I then designed an Infographic looking at the waste generated in Leh.

This was challenging as I had to communicate heavy information in an engaging manner. Nobody wants to see a bunch of statistics. They would rather have it in a visual form. Also waste is a dry topic. I tried to make the infographic vibrant and at the same time address how much waste is generated, what kinds of waste, who deals with the waste and how tourism has effected the garbage produced?

The final and most important project during my time at LAMO was to make a short video-documentary about waste in Leh, to create a narrative and educate in a systematic manner. Supported by facts and interviews, I aimed to show how waste is handled in Leh.

The film was called 'The Garbage Mountains' and its focus was on Bhamgarh or 'Bomb Guard' situated in Dsikit Tsal. There are just mounds and mounds of waste there. If I didn't know better, I would think this was from a dystopian future. We interviewed the rag pickers there, as it was essential to know their experience considering the lack of representation given to them.

Art has provided an excellent medium of communicating. It has been an



The infographic shows the daily usage of plastic in Leh District.

experience of give and take where I have learnt so much about the cultural nuances from my colleagues. The difference in our backgrounds posed as a challenge but only made it a more worthwhile experience. I have come to be more aware of the waste I generate on a daily basis.

Siddhi Ashar is a film student from Flame University, Pune. She interned with LAMO in May.

The LAMO Library



contd. from page 2

enjoy reading books that are both informative and interactive.

For readers who are interested in Art, there are a myriad of books on contemporary art, photography, textiles, ceramics, architecture and jewellery, painting amongst others. Academic books on the Himalayan region, mainly Ladakh, Nepal and Tibet are also shelved. Subjects like archaeology, craft and culture, studies, rock art are also covered. While majority of the books are in English, there are also some in Hindi, Urdu, and Bodyig.

A unique feature of this library is its visual archive. This consists of a collection of photographs and films/videos that have been shared with LAMO by the local community, scholars, researchers, institutes and private photo collections. They are primarily used by researchers for reference, as well as for exhibitions and workshops held at LAMO. These visuals form a unique collection – truly a walk into the past of Ladakh, these photographs are a treasure trove into our history.

The library also holds its own digital archive in the form of multi-media photo-

graphs and videos of activities that have taken place at LAMO since 2009 (such as workshops, talks, exhibitions, cultural programmes, and performances). As well as events in and around Leh town, such as construction during the Leh Beautification Project or the Naropa Festival in 2016. Movies and documentaries on various subjects are also available for anyone who wants to use them.

I am not trying to lure readers to the library but just stating the fact that if one wants to use the resources available here, one can walk straight into this historical space and immerse oneself into this labyrinth of knowledge. Come discover yourself!

The LAMO Library is open from Monday to Saturday, 11am to 5pm. Closed on Public Holidays.

Rigzin Chodon is a PhD scholar from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. She is currently working on a research project at LAMO that is looking at students studying outside Ladakh.

On the occasion of the International Tourist Festival, a conference was held at Central Institute of Buddhist Studies. Tashi Morup talked about the importance of the restoration and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings in Leh.

Thupstan Kunphel, a 11th grade student from Delhi Public School, Mathura Road, and his friends, organized a 'Book Party' at LAMO. They encouraged students to read and share what they had read with others.



Historian John Bray gave a talk on the 'Life and Works of Heinrich August Jaschke', who is renowned for having compiled the 1881 Tibetan-English Dictionary. His Dictionary covers both literary Tibetan and colloquial language of the wider region, including words specific to Ladakh.



New Directions - An Art Collaboration

Isaac Gergan

This summer, Stanzin Nyentak, a traditional thangka painter from Nubra, and I, working in more modern and contemporary styles, materials and themes, came together to collaborate on paintings for two months. The conception came through conversations about Art in Asian and other contexts. The collaboration intended to explore the space for the two styles to merge. Two styles, very different from each other, the traditional being systematic and followed according to very particular rules, while my working method being expressive with splashes, drips and comparatively far more impulsive. It was because of such different forms coming together that made the collaboration challenging, exciting and later produced results we were happy to exhibit at the LAMO gallery.



Isaac and Nyentak with the works they created during their Art Collaboration this summer.

tured and ruled style. The colours we would make and use would be new because we didn't know of each other's choices or processes, and coming together – it was always original and fresh. New creations meant new ideas and the more time we spent in the studio, the more ideas we would get. The possibilities and directions are immense; however at this stage we limited ourselves to a set number of paintings and directions, which now comprises the first step in this direction.

Nyentak similarly found the process exciting and the results completely different from what he initially imagined. He thinks such collaborations should be encouraged because they let artists learn and diversify their own practice. While there are some reservations for a traditional style and more over religious art being manipulated, Nyentak thinks that in such collaborations the thangka artist is not deviating from his or her work but in a sense refining the line and the usage of different motifs for the thangka. In a way, it is a time of practice. The juxtapositions and collating of various elements was new and the way we examined and cri-

tiqued our work also effected how he perceived a thangka and art in general. Now the act of painting could be a little more than that which only followed rules.

All the paintings move in different directions and we hope to take some of these forward and continue experimenting, moving to different styles and mediums. It is also important for this work to be critiqued and receive feedback for it to be contextualized in Ladakh and the art movements around the globe.

The Art-Collaboration project was realized with the generous support of Sara Crisp and Laura Kozaitis. Three paintings from the Collaboration showed in Delhi at Bodhi Parv, an exhibition at the Indira Gandhi Centre for the Arts and Ojas Art, December 2017.

Isaac Gergan was one of the artists who participated in the collaboration, he was Arts Officer at LAMO from 2013-2017.

While two or more artists need to be thinking on similar wavelengths, art collaborations often mean compromising on your ways and allowing the others ideas, thoughts and techniques to find room within yours. This is particularly challenging because of how an artist becomes used to working in their own unique way. It is as if a creature from the sea and land were to come together to decide to walk / swim together in sync. So in order to make it simpler for us we set some rules to work, interchangeable roles we would play, from the concepts to the time we would allot to a work, the paints that we would mix and finally the work we would do on canvas. It was stimulating to find ways to keep my uniqueness in a completely different context. Finding accommodation for my expressive brush strokes within a more struc-

DRINK FULL AND ASCEND

Ruhail Qaisar talks about his journey with electronic music and a concert at LAMO

To begin with, there is not much to say, but to hear the shimmering knives between the sound-waves; to cut the cords of endless submission towards the dog-ma of structure, and to disrupt these endless processions, and enlarge the holes of perception.

These visions were not sown with the hope of success and growth, yet they were nurtured unabashedly with passion and crude determination.

I have been an explorer of sonic arts as far as I can remember. The pandemonium of Muharram that made the ground beneath shake or the chants during Go-Chag which would reverberate and re-sound within these very sacred valleys. Or in another realm, discovering Black Sabbath during my time at my boarding school in Haryana.

As I grew up in the vicinity of the Old Town of Leh those sounds play a very important part within my art, yet those memories have become very distinct and fragmented. I'm blessed to have such images and sounds lurking within my subconscious, all of which inspire me. One could call it nostalgia; I'd call it a yearning, a means to churn this pot of introspection in order to bring back vivid details.

I have been able to absorb all sounds and visuals around me and articulate things without the filter of hell-bent virtuosic musicianship with pure detachment and resignation and instinctive improvisation.

SISTER - as my solo project - is an ode to my past and our past as a collective consciousness within this town, a requiem to all our losses and our longings and all of our fragmented memories, all of our funerals, and all of our calamities.

Realism and spirituality stand as equal motifs here, and none cancels the other. It is a weapon to pillage all forms of plastic and unoriginal art, that which is encouraged and propagated by the banality of Bollywood and television. We don't need any Game of Thrones or Mahabharat; we have the epic of King Gyalam Gesar, more scintillating, adventurous and spiritually rewarding than any of the vapid entertainment that is hailed.

The Modern Age is seeping its tentacles within day by day, and we can see the pollution of the cities and the psychological malaise slowly infesting our atmosphere like some poisonous miasma. Nobody desires to dive deep into anything. Technology has reduced our attention span, and we take a look at the surface and glibly disapprove of the structure without knowing what lies beneath.

Ladakh is definitely not a place where left-field art is praised or lauded. If anything, it's most likely to be repressed. And yet these art forms lie deep within our culture from the Cham-Dance rituals or our revered oracles paying obeisance to the gods during Matho-Nagrang. There is endless inspiration within our culture.



Ruhail performing in the Rabzal room at Munshi House wing of the LAMO Centre during Ladakh Festival.

In early 2016, I got into contact with a collective known as REProduce, who conduct "Listening Rooms" all over the country. They reject the commercial distractions of bars and restaurants in order to invite attentive listeners and give a chance to non-commercial musicians and sonic purveyors to take their art to an audience within spaces such as art galleries without any limitations that would maim the vision of the artist.

With this collective the seeds were sown, and they gave me numerous opportunities to bring my art to an attentive audience, and to also learn and experiment through collaborations with the other musicians, as well as helping to land performances at well known venues in Delhi with my tantric death-metal band (a fast-tempo form of heavy-metal music, that particularly deals with the subject of death and beyond) known as VAJRA-VARAH.

Milarepa's Target 25 years of Painting in Ladakh

Roman Kames

Ladakh is a huge painting in which we walk. This is what immediately struck me when I arrived, accompanied by the photographer Jaroslav Poncar and his students, in Alchi in the summer of 1992.

How do you paint within the very interior of this gigantic painting? Faced by the importance of this issue, questions have no meaning. A small sketchbook, pastels and watercolours, and may the adventure begin!

Easier said than done for a painter who, for 15 years, had distanced himself from painting "from life" and who had melted into the crowd of minimalists and conceptual artists of the period.

Once back in Paris, the paintings that had been developed up until then suddenly seemed vain and without a perspective. Many were removed from the chassis and rewashed. Some traces and fragments nevertheless remained attached to the weft of the canvas, which was recoated with markalak (local clay).

Arid, dusty mountains. Let's try dry pastel. Curious technique: oil, pastel and markalak. This material that I've just discovered has been used for centuries by Ladakhi and



Over Stakpila is an artwork by Roman Kames.

Kashmiri artists. The pastel incrustated in the rocky surface of the markalak conveys in a vibrant way the rocks' intimate chromatic variations.

A new journey the following year allows me to discover a handmade paper from Kalimpong (West Bengal) that the Ladakhi call poshok. Poshok, tempera and I now form an inseparable trio.

A period of treks begins, accompanied by Richard, an experienced mountaineer, born in the French Alps. We walk up and down all the possible and impossible tracks of Ladakh and Zaskar. A box of watercolours and a notebook barely fit into the backpack filled to the brim. These treks will become an integral part of the painting process.

The moss, mountains, glaciers, lakes, suns and moons that I encounter will be developed in my small studio, in the home of Lama Konchok Pandey, and then in Paris.

Regular visits to the National Museum, New Delhi, bring a new inspiration and a fascination for ancient cultures, such as Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. My gaze comes to rest on paintings from the Deccan. Then comes reading – Milarepa.

The current exhibition at the Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO) is not my first in Ladakh. In the summer of 2004, my paintings complemented those, ancient, at the Avalokiteshvara Lhakhang, in Lamayuru; a hanging in Lala's Cafe took place in 2013. The following year, a major exhibition presenting all the subjects painted over the years was held in Leh Palace.

Milarepa's Target. A section of this exhibition is devoted to this cycle currently underway. New themes burst forth: Night Construction, Milarepa's Cloud... another approach, more abstract, is required. It seems to predict that my pre-1992 period had not been as vain and devoid of perspective as I'd imagined.

Roman Kames is a Czech artist who has been visiting Ladakh since 1992.

from the cremation mounds to apply to his canvas. This ordeal of his deserves huge applause. In my case I don't require applause, I reach for places that are forbidden and repressed and I am horribly happy if I can tear that membrane and leave a mark.

The entire building and the surroundings are spaces that I have always coveted, these are the places where we would play as children, where we witnessed golden processions in the sky and knew it was time to return home. A gentle reminder of times where the fingers of fulfilment brushed my face as the violet skies unveiled a million stars and I crushed the snow beneath my feet as the winds of time carried me.

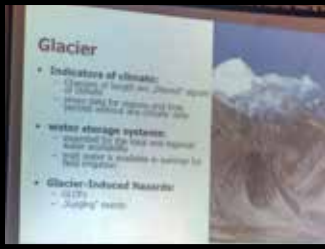
I wouldn't consider this as closure or any form of fulfilment; this is the first rung of a very huge ladder. There is a lot to change, and a lot to assimilate. My only conclusive reduction is that as artists, we need to keep penetrating the veil of mundane and drink deep from the waters of wisdom.

REProduce Artists performed at LAMO with the help of Rana Ghose and the support of Red Bull Music Academy.

Ruhail Qaisar, a graduate in English Honours, is a musician who performs under the guise of his harsh-noise project SISTER, also plays and composes guitar for death-metal band VAJRAVARAH.

Glaciers

Susanne Schmidt, Professor at Heidelberg University, gave a talk on the 'Glaciers of Ladakh'. She looked at glacier-induced hazards and changes of high altitude glaciers in the Trans-Himalaya of Ladakh.



Workshop

'Soundslike' by Avani Kamal, a sound artist, explored the relationship between sound and materials. Building on a project she started in London, Avani experimented with new works at LAMO.



Music

As a part of Ladakh Festival, local musicians presented their music and songs to the audience in an event co-ordinated by ReProduce Delhi and sponsored by Redbull.



Drawing in the Mountains



During the drawing workshop the children were engaged in different kinds of activities that focused on creative learning.

Udit Garg & Harkirat Kaur

With their curiosities aroused and unshackled selves, we set out to do a little something with the children of Leh. We never imagined the kind of response we would get from them, always so eager and ready to look into what may come. Our primary thought was to draw with children in the mountains, and they proved to be the most beautiful mentors for us and each other.

With the motive of having fun, creating and learning, we held a five-day workshop on 'Drawing' in collaboration with LAMO for children from Leh town.

The ease of drawing, mostly without any hard instructions, helped the children express themselves and build on the spirit of the craft, exploring various mediums from pencils to crayons, oil pastels to yarn. Each medium allowed them to explore and enquire in the most innocent yet innovative way – leaving their mark in their own way.

In the course of five days, the children were exposed to audio-visual



Children were encouraged to draw with an open imagination.

media where works of artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh were introduced to them and discussions on how their work inspires the creative culture around us today. Ideas like how simple units come together to make a whole were talked about and interpreted through drawings.

On the last day, an exhibition was organised for parents to view the works of the children and voice issues they face regarding their child's education and upbringing. The common viewpoint from parents was for their children to participate in more such workshops, which are a rarity in the area, as they expand their learning process beyond academia taught in schools.

Through these five days we have initiated a creative process for the children, and every other individual involved, and hope to continue that.

Udit Garg is a Software Engineer and Harkirat Kaur is New Media Executive at Patriot Newspaper.



Children working on their 3-D models during the Drawing Workshop



The participants together with workshop coordinators, Udit and Harkirat, and LAMO staff.

Exploring Soil Pigmentation



Tashi Namgyal exploring soil pigments during one of the workshops at LAMO.

Tashi Namgyal

'The Offering', a painting done in 2016 was one of my first in mix media. This was not because I wanted to do something different but rather because the theme of the art camp focused on the environment, and so I decided to work with earth or soil.

When I reached my village [Skurbuchen] and talked with village elders I came to realise that people in Ladakh used to respect nature in a very different way. They used to have beliefs about not polluting the environment. For instance, when we were young we used to throw stones in streams or river and our elders used to say that when we die we have to take out each and every pebble or stone that we threw with our eyelashes! When we thought about what they said we would feel scared and not dirty the river, as taking out a stone with our eyelashes was an impossible task.

Similarly, in my painting 'The Offering' I used clay (*markalag*) and ashes from cremation sites, as I believed that the whole ritual during a funeral gives physiological comfort to the people who have lost a loved one. As they believe that their lost one will be fine as they have done everything for them by doing the proper rituals. So the whole ritual to

me was an offering to the dead, to the dying mother-nature. I made my painting as an offering to her. An offering to comfort her and to make the environment better.

This was the first time I used soil or clay as a medium to paint. It was a beautiful way to express my creativity, and this experience made me think about using natural pigments for my paintings. Similar to traditional thangka, especially the old ones that were drawn using colours made with natural pigments.

This year when I participated in the Earth Art Project conducted by the Japanese artist Yusuke Asai, I was really happy as this had a connection with my painting 'The Offering'. Asai talked to us about his work; I was really inspired by his journey. I felt I should work more with soil pigments in my own way. The experience of the Earth Art Project and Asai's work left me with a feeling that there is a vast possibility for art done with clay. And I want to explore more with soil pigments in my work.

Tashi Namgyal is a freelance artist. He did his BFA at College of Art, New Delhi, and his MFA from Banaras Hindu University.

A Walk Through Leh's Heritage Town

...contd. from page 2.

an unparalleled masterpiece. There are many other monuments, including significant areas such as where the Darches festival was held, apart from old vernacular houses within whose walls are embodied a treasure of knowledge about Ladakh's history.

They tell you how, until not so long ago, the people of Leh lived cohesively, irrespective of any religious or ethnic background. Sharing common walls and sometimes a single ceiling and roof. A small window between the kitchens of the Munshi and Gyao houses was deliberately made to exchange dishes or cooking ingredients between the two families, sometimes even fire from the hearth. Likewise, most of the houses in Skyanos-Gogsum (local name for Old Town Leh) are attached to each other.

The original families of Old Town Leh

totalled 120 in all; they were called 'Skanos tukchu' and 'Gogsum tukchu' (tuk-chu referring to sixty). Within the city walls were four Stupa-gates in different directions and one main entrance gate next to the Leh Jama Masjid. Almost the entire wall has disappeared, parts of it were first brought down by the Dogras and then gradual destruction caused by development and encroachments in past decades, the most recent being a result of the construction of the new mosque in Leh bazaar. There were also two tax gates [for tax collection] at the end of Leh bazaar and in chutay-ranthak area behind the palace hill for traders.

There were several Sarais (rest houses, inns), locally called 'Ghato'. These were for Central Asian, Balti, Tibetan, Kashmiri and Punjabi traders and also for those from Ladakh. Their assimilation in Old Town Leh took place with many traders deciding to settle here,

while others married Ladakhis. The descendants of some of those traders continue to live in Leh with some having shops in the main bazaar. This actually left a strong influence on the character of the town, which became in a way a melting pot of different cultures. When the King Singe Namgyal shifted his capital from Shey to Leh and built Leh Palace, under the able guidance of his U-la or Lama advisor Stagtsang Raspa, they had this vision of the place developing into a significant cultural, political and trading entrepot. As Old Town grew this realisation certainly took place. But today, with the deplorable condition it is in, this remains only a figment of our imagination.

Tashi Morup is Projects Director at LAMO.

'Destruction with Development'

Padma Lakdan Gangba took part in Faisal Abdu's Photography and Writing Workshop, here is an extract from his piece



View of abandoned house and ruins in Old Town Leh.

Houses constructed with old architectural techniques and materials, which were tried and tested through time by our ancestors, are now being demolished and replaced by modern architecture and materials designed and meant mostly for the plains. The houses in the old town for example are either being broken down or abandoned. The abandoned houses are rented out to non local migrants. My ancestors also lived in the old town, but that house now has already been demolished.

Government nowadays are either renovating or dismantling old structures in the name of development. Some people say that they are doing this for tourist income but from my perspective they come here to see our culture, tradition, simplicity and architectures not the common architectural designs which they can see in their own country.

Padma Lakdan Gangba



Photography

Michael Fung, a UK based photographer, held a two-day photography workshop looking at the Theory of Photography along with practical on-site use of the camera.



Visual Archive

Tsering Chonzom starts a series of weekly discussions titled 'Zilpa' ('Memories from the Past'), focusing on LAMO's Visual Archive. Selecting images from the archive, she discusses them with participants.



Being a Conservation Artist in Ladakh

Noor Jahan Chunka

Art being a visual expression of one's individuality and society has been a medium of effective communication long before the advent of language. And Art History is the tool to acknowledge and understand such artistic creations/traditions. However, conservation/restoration is the means by which these artistic traditions from the past can be preserved for the present and future.

The conservation and restoration of cultural heritage mostly focuses on the protection and care of the tangible cultural property. The work of art is preserved either through preventive measures or through minimal interventions. The aging process affects every work of art, regardless of whether it is an ancient painting or a contemporary statue. Conservation and restoration are concerned with the preservation of works of art and artifacts which, because of their artistic, historic or cultural significance are irreplaceable records, their preservation and protection for present and future generations is the fundamental task of conservators and restorers. The work is characterized by the recognition, analysis, and documentation of complex conservation problems in an overall context, as well as designing and carrying out a plan of treatment in line with the most up-to-date standards of knowledge. A deeper knowledge of understanding and analysis of an artifact is a necessary arsenal for a conservator.

I came across the field of conservation by coincidence, when I wanted to apply for a Masters course. Prior to which I was almost clueless about the field, although I had come across some art conservators during one of



Conservator Noor Jahan and trainee Bhaga Tashi working at the LAMO centre, uncovering paintings under the white-wash (photo: Anne Voll).

my summer visits to Ladakh. Growing up in the midst of this rich cultural heritage of Ladakh, I immediately knew that this profession was best suited for me. I have always had an inclination towards art and art conservation was the best fit for my skills and interest. Choosing a career which was unheard of to the local ears, raised an enormous number of negative remarks in the beginning. But with time, I see that it is changing and the people are becoming more open to new avenues and leaving the orthodox career beliefs of the past.

I sense that it is essential to have more people from the region get engaged in art conservation studies and practices. Through my personal experience, I have come to an understanding that people from Ladakh have become more attentive about their culture and heritage than they were in the past, but are highly dependent on national and foreign experts to carry out any conservation work. A career in art con-

servation requires knowledge of both art and science and currently, there are two universities in India that offer a Masters degree in Art Conservation Studies: National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation and Museology, New Delhi and Delhi Institute of Heritage Research and Management. There are short-term courses on conservation offered by NRLC (National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property, Lucknow), National Museum, New Delhi and LL-FCC (Leon Levy Foundation Centre for Conservation Studies, Nagaur). It is crucial for the Ladakhi's to start thinking about art conservation as a career, as it is an emerging field with a vast extent of potential.

Noor Jahan works as a free-lance Art Conservator while pursuing a PhD in Art Conservation at the National Museum Institute, New Delhi.

Learning Film

Sonam Angchok

In October 2017, the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune organised a 20 day Cinematography workshop, for the first time ever in Leh, Ladakh, with the support of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council. About 16 Ladakhi local professional and aspiring filmmakers actively participated in this programme.

This was the first time I took part in such a workshop and it was definitely an enriching experience for me, having no formal training in the subject. I got to learn a lot of new and interesting things about Cinematography and Filmmaking during the time period of the course. I learnt and understand how to shoot documentaries and film in a professional manner. I was very satisfied with the learning outcome of the course where I could learn how I can handle camera, lenses, camera movements and various other things. This will certainly add to the work I do in media with LAMO.

First of all, I am very thankful to LAHDC, Leh for organising such a wonderful workshop for passionate Ladakhi cinematographers and photographers. Leh being a very small town, such kind of workshops would help nurture the art of filmmaking in numerous passionate youngsters in the town. Even though there was a cost to the workshop, it was nominal, and certainly did not involve the kind of logistics and cost of travelling to Pune. I hope, in the future, that LAHDC would organise more and more workshops like these for emerging Ladakhi filmmakers to nurture their skills and passions. This workshop was on cinematography but there could be other workshops on direction, script writing, editing, lighting, and sound amongst other areas of the craft.

Sonam Angchok is Media Assistant at LAMO.

Conservation of the Fireplace Room in Munshi House

Anne Voll

One of the oldest rooms inside the Munshi House is the Fireplace Room or the Painted Room. It is here where the long forgotten wall-paintings have been rediscovered. Hidden under layers of white-wash, it turned out to be a striking and rather rare painting programme. After a preliminary survey which had been executed in 2014, these wall paintings have been further examined and worked on by a team of conservators in summer 2017. They are now fully uncovered and preserved.

Special feature of this room is the so-called fireplace, a plastered structure worked in beautiful relief. Though it strongly resembles one, it probably was not a fireplace at all but held a big butter-lamp. The wall paintings probably date back to the late 18th century. At that time, the Munshi family still lived here. The room was apparently used to receive and host guests.

The work on the walls in the Painted Room was of conservational character, so a full restoration was not required. The team of conservators carefully removed the layers of white-wash and were able to reduce the heavy soot layer on the paintings meticulously, using special solvents.

A beautiful painting program came to light: secular paintings depicting famous panels such as the Four Harmonious Friends or the Six Symbols of Longevity. The high quality of the artist's brushwork as well as the use of materials, such as gold, highlight the importance of the Munshi family at the time.

Once the cleaning of the paintings was achieved, the next step was to recover their stability. Old fillings had to be removed and cracks and losses were filled with new fillings of fine mud plaster. It was decided to slightly colour the fillings, so they would merge well with the painted surface. A small sample of retouching was executed, too, but it might not be followed up further.

The painting conservation project was realized with the generous support of the Kalpataru Trust, Mumbai. The room can be seen at LAMO during the Centre's regular working hours.

Anne Voll is an Art Conservator, she has a MA in Conservation and Restoration from the University of Applied Sciences, Erfurt.



The wall of the fireplace room in Munshi House after the restoration.



Sonam Angchok receiving his certificate from Course Director A.S Kanal, CEC Dr Sonam Dawa and DC Avni Lavasa.



LAMO Staff

Monisha Ahmed: Executive Director
Tashi Morup: Projects Director
Isaac Gergan: Program Officer, Arts
Rinchen Dolma: Program Officer, Media
Sonam Angchok: Assistant Officer, Media
Tsering Chonzom: Librarian and Accountant

LAMO Trustees:

Ravina Aggarwal
Monisha Ahmed
Phunchok Stobdan
Ghulam Mohd. Sheikh
Skalzang Youdon

LAMO Advisors:

Clare Harris
Ghani Sheikh
Kaneez Fatima
Thinles Angmo
Tsering Dawa
Dorje Angchuk

Newsletter Editor and Designer :
Rinchen Dolma

Copyright LAMO 2017

This is published and printed by LAMO, Post Box No. 152, Below Namgyal Palace, Old Town, Leh, Ladakh 194101, J & K India.

Email : lamocentreleh@gmail.com; Web: www.lamo.org.in

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LAMOLadakh>, <https://www.facebook.com/oldtownleh>

Lamo's forthcoming publications

