



**O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL**  
INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE DEEMED TO BE  
**UNIVERSITY**  
A Private University Promoting Public Service



**THE CONSTITUTION MUSEUM &  
THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS  
ACADEMY**  
A JGU INITIATIVE



**Jindal School of  
Liberal Arts & Humanities**  
India's First Transnational Humanities School

**Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities**

and

**The Constitution Museum & the  
Rights and Freedoms Academy**

cordially invite you to the

**» CONFERENCE «**

on

# **The Artistic Self-Representation of a Nation: Visual Symbolism and the Making of the Indian Constitution**

**Conveners:**

Prof. Gautami Raju (JSLH, BFA)

Prof. Priyesh Gothwal (JSLH, BFA)

Prof. (Dr.) Sucharita Sen (JSLH)

Prof. Susanta Mandal (JSLH, BFA)

Prof. Manas Raturi (Constitution Museum, JGU)

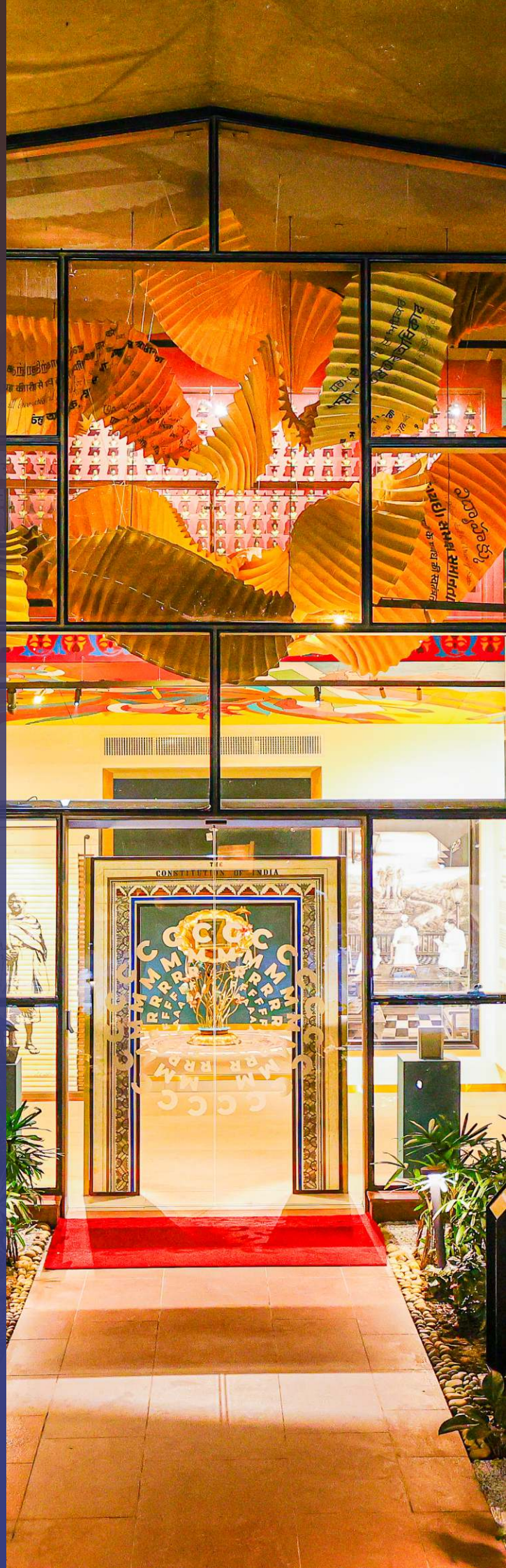
**TUESDAY, 28<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2025**

**9:00 AM – 05:30 PM**

**Imaginarium,**

**Savitri Jindal Faculty Office Block, Ground Floor**

**O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY, SONIPAT-131001**





# ABOUT CONFERENCE

The Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities and the Constitution Museum, O. P. Jindal Global University are pleased to invite you to a one-day conference entitled **'The Artistic self-representation of a Nation: Visual Symbolism and the making of the Indian Constitution'** on campus on the 28th of October, 2025. This collaborative conference intends to bring illustrious speakers who will share their expert views on the interesting ways in which art and politics intersect and the ways in which we could better understand the role of art in the Indian Constitution.

## ABSTRACT:

The Constitution of India is the written story of India, a story that a billion Indians live every day. Being the collective consciousness of India, the Constitution also carries memories of the past of India—from classical to modern history of India. These memories are in the subtext of the spoken language of the Constitution. However, they manifest as images through the art-works in the Constitution. They, born from the brushes of Nandalal Bose and his team, are the cultural memory of the Constitution. They act as cultural codes, historical emotions, and signify the spiritual idea of the nation.

The art is admired for its artistic value. However, the art does not go beyond being the symbolic, rendering it a historical artifact. Indian Constitutions with the art-works—the 1000 photolithographic copies printed in 1949—became relics preserved in national repositories and institutions. They did not become part of the routine, formal reading of the Constitution. In public institutions, e.g., the courts, the text of the Constitution is read in the light of social contexts and receives interpretative expression in judicial language. But the art—the subconscious of the Constitutional consciousness—does not become part of the said hermeneutical construction of reality.

This schism between the symbolic and the utilitarian cannot be ignored, as this has the effect of the symbolic (the art) becoming the esoteric for the Indian minds—the art in the Constitution has been museumized. The text belongs to the realm of the familiar, it is also causal to the social reality that is made and remade every day. This performativity of the text of the Constitution—language is action—is widely recognized. If language is action, then is not art invocation? Has this invocatory power of art been recognized in the interpretation of the Constitution? Does not the exclusion of art from constitutional hermeneutics rendered the constitutional art simply emotional and mythic which are differentiated from the rational and the modern?

This one-day conference aims to explore these questions in detail and depth. It examines the meanings of the art in the Constitution, its potential role in the construction of social reality, and problematizes its exclusion from the institutionalized reading of the Constitution. It asks questions like: *is symbolic art passive or generative? How does it interact with the constitutional text? Is it not art constitutive of action? How could constitutional art improve the discovery of constitutional meanings and values?*

The conference will be in the form of panel discussions organized around the following themes:

1. Visual Symbolism and Constitutional Hermeneutics: The role of art as an accompaniment to the Indian Constitution
2. A historical overview of the Bengal School of Art and their artistic representation of India
3. Reflections by artists: Contributors to the Constitution Museum shall reflect on their interpretation of the constitution and their own artistic presentations
4. Relevance of Constitutional Art in the Making of Modern India: Understanding the spirit of the nation through art



# PROGRAMME

## MASTER OF CEREMONIES

**Dr. Jayani Bonnerjee**, Professor, Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM

### WELCOME REMARKS

**Prof. (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar**

Founding Vice Chancellor, O. P. Jindal Global University

9:45 AM – 9:50 AM

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

**Prof. Kathleen Modrowski**

Dean, Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities

9:50 AM – 10:00 AM

### CONCEPT OF THE CONFERENCE

**Prof. (Dr.) S. G. Sreejith**

Professor, Jindal Global Law School

10:00 AM – 10:45 AM

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Justice Raghvendra Singh Chauhan**

Former Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court and  
Telangana High Court

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM

### DISCUSSION AND AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

11:00 AM – 11:15 AM

### VOTE OF THANKS AND FELICITATIONS

**Prof. (Dr.) Jayani Bonnerjee**

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

### TEA AND COFFEE BREAK



**PANEL 1: 12:00 PM – 01:30 PM**

## The Spirit of the Nation through Art: Politics and Identity in India

Modern India's projection of its political image has been assisted greatly by the creation, curation and interpretation of images and art in general. India's work journey towards political self-consciousness coincided with larger movements in the world which also included the arrival of what Walter Benjamin called the 'mechanical reproduction of art.' When India woke up to its possible political affirmation as a nation, it used many tools to be able to achieve it, art being one important one. It was an opportune time for India when the artistic self-representation was moving away from the romantic notion of merely a vehicle for genius. India was beginning to make sense of its own history through the framework of Western concepts and art played an important role in that expression. Whether it was to understand its own past or legitimate political notions or as symbols of affective social unity, artistic expression made itself a ready instrument. This panel will talk about how art, politics and history was instrumental in imagining our nation.

### SPEAKERS:

- **Prof. (Dr.) John Clammer**, Professor, Sociology (Art and Development Sociology, Social Theory), Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities
- **Advocate Vishavjeet Chaudhary**, Supreme Court of India
- **Ms. Chinki Sinha**, Editor, Outlook Magazine

**Moderator: Prof. Jayani Bonerjee**, Professor, Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities

**PANEL 2: 02:00 PM – 04:00 PM**

## Artists' Reflection

The original manuscript of the Indian Constitution—illustrated by the master artist Nandalal Bose and his team at Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan, and calligraphed by Prem Behari Narayan Raizada in English and Vasant K. Vaidya in Hindi—transforms a political document into a work of art. Each page is illuminated with intricate floral borders and on its upper half are images drawn from India's rich artistic heritage. These illustrations appropriate elements from history, folklore, and mythology to create a multi-layered visual identity of a nation shaped by diverse faiths, philosophies, dynastic legacies, and political ideals.

The panel—**Artists' Reflections**—seeks to explore what the Constitution means to us today and how its visual imagery takes on renewed significance in our current political climate. It also considers how the constitutional values of secularism, federalism, minority rights, and freedom of expression are being interpreted and reimagined by contemporary artists. Through their work—in art practice and curation, they respond to the Indian Constitution that is both perennial and ever-evolving—anchored in its founding principles yet constantly questioned, challenged, and redefined by the present.

### SPEAKER:

- **Mr. Debasish Mukherjee**, Mixed media artist, New Delhi
- **Mr. Ananda Moy Banerji**, Artist and Academic Dean, South Delhi Polytechnic for Women, New Delhi
- **Ms. Anjchita Nair**, Co-founder and CEO at Cultre, Co-founder of Centre for Museums, Curator, Constitution Museum, O. P. Jindal Global University
- **Ms. Ananya Radhakrishna** (JGU Student, Bachelor of Fine Arts, 3rd year)
- **Ms. Keya Hiremath** (JGU Student, Bachelor of Fine Arts, 4th year)

**04:00 PM – 04:30 PM**

## Vote of Thanks and Closing Ceremony

**Prof. (Dr.) Jayani Bonerjee**, Professor, Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities

**04:30 PM – 05:30 PM**

## Visit to the Constitution Museum

For all panellists, faculty and students