
Media Release

Nita Ambani meets Pichavai artists, Vows to rejuvenate world's oldest practising art form

Ahmedabad: August 31, 2016: Continuing with her journey, which last year saw Reliance Foundation exhibiting Pichavai paintings to the world, Smt. Nita Ambani, Founder and Chairperson of Reliance Foundation, interacted with a group of Pichavai painters today. These painters, hailing from Nathdwara — a small town, 45 km from Udaipur in Rajasthan, have kept Pichavai, the world's oldest practising art form, alive. Smt. Nita Ambani who is passionate about art today announced that Pichavai painting will soon adorn the walls of RIL headquarters and other offices, hospitals and a convention centre that is coming up in Mumbai.

Today, in Ahmedabad, Smt Ambani got a first-hand experience of the art form that adorns walls of various Krishna temples and many Vaishnava homes. The forefathers of these artists are believed to have travelled to Nathdwara around 1672 AD to decorate the temple of Shrinathji. They created art works for the Pushtimarg sect of Hinduism, founded by Mahaprabhu Shri Vallabhacharyaji in the 15th century.

These artists, numbering over a hundred, created some of the most enchanting paintings depicting Lord Krishna. Etched in vivid colours, they bring forth various moods of Lord Shrinathji, such as the young Lord playing with gopis, or depicted as the icon of Divine Oneness, inspiring us to rise above our differences and bring the world closer together.

During her interaction with the Pichavai painters of today, Smt Ambani said, "Pichavai is an integral part of our rich heritage of Art & Culture. It is commendable that in spite of so many obstacles and challenges, the artists from Nathdwara have kept the art alive, making it the world's oldest living art form. Whatever we are doing at Reliance Foundation is only a small part to ensure that we can make our country recognise this art and nurture it for future generations."

Shri Parmanand Sharma, Mukhiya of Artists of Nathdwara Sansthan, said, "Artisan families in Nathdwara are striving to keep Pichavai, the oldest continuous artistic tradition in the world, alive. It is not an easy task as the times have changed. The support offered by Smt Nita Ambani and Reliance Foundation is invaluable for the artistic fraternity in this ancient town. She is not only promoting our work across the world, but also helping us to sustain ourselves by generating work. All the Pichavai artists pray for her. She is a beacon hope for us."





Reliance Foundation has been promoting and nurturing India's heritage through a number of extensive collaborations which are part of a holistic approach to strengthen the material and spiritual foundation of the nation.

As part of its core pillars of promoting art, culture, and heritage, Reliance Foundation showcased Pichavai art to a global audience in Chicago. The Foundation was the lead sponsor of an exhibition — 'Gates of the Lord: The Tradition of Krishna Paintings' — held at Art Institute, Chicago, from September 13, 2015, to January 3, 2016. Over 1,00,000 visitors attended the exhibition, exploring the myriad aspects of Lord Krishna's life depicted in the Pichavai paintings on display.

Another recent initiative was supporting an exhibition at the The Met Breuer, New York, the first museum retrospective of one of the most significant artists to emerge in post-Independence India, Nasreen Mohamedi (1937–1990). She created a body of work that demonstrates a singular and sustained engagement with abstraction. Her minimalist practice not only adds a rich layer to the history of South Asian art but also necessitates an expansion of the narratives of international modernism.

About Pichavai: Pichavai (Sanskrit for back and hanging) art is an old and living artistic tradition of India. It involves intricate paintings on textiles that are hung behind the idol of Shrinathji. The themes of these paintings are Shrinathji, a form of Lord Krishna as a child, and his exploits. The paintings depict scenes of Lord Krishna lifting the Govardhan Mountain on his little finger, playing with gopis (milkmaids), or pastoral scenes with cows and forests. The Pichavai art form, which developed in the 17th century, is a tradition of the Pushtimarg sect, founded by Sant Vallabhacharya about 500 years ago.

About Reliance Foundation: Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing the nation's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Founder and Chairperson Mrs. Nita Ambani, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working towards facilitating transformative changes to ensure overall well-being and higher quality of life for all by developing the nation's social capital. Among India's largest social initiatives, the Foundation is focused on addressing the nation's development challenges in areas of Rural Transformation, Education, Health, Sports, Disaster Management, Urban Renewal, and Arts, Culture and Heritage. The Foundation's direct, hands-on approach has touched the lives of more than seven million people across India, in more than 10,500 villages and urban locations.

