

## **An Ode to Bhubaneswar — One of India's leading contemporary artists Manav Gupta has beautified the Rasulgarh flyover under NHAI project**

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BHUBANESWAR: Manav Gupta, one of India's top ten contemporary artists, has bedecked Rasulgarh flyover area with glimpses of Odia culture and tradition under the public art museum project titled 'An Ode to Bhubaneswar'.

Gupta, who is recognised as a true visionary and thinker, has taken art beyond its chartered realms. In a career spanning over two decades, he has established himself as a unique cultural ambassador, building bridges beyond borders for world peace, harmony and sustainable living. His latest attempt is a museum of Water and Sustainable Development.

The artist was in city for the last one and a half month creating the masterpiece in the flyover area. The concept is 'creating a city within a city' by the use of scrap products such as used metals and pressure testing blocks. The whole project is aimed to showcase the importance of sustainable development. This apart, he also showcased culture of the state Odisha and paid tributes to its art and history.

Public Art is an endeavour which is planned and executed with the intention of being stationed in the physical public domain, usually outside and accessible to all. It is significant within the world, amongst curators, commissioning bodies and practitioners of public art, to whom it signifies a working practice of site specificity, community involvement and collaboration.

*Gupta said, 'Shree Jagannath Expressway Pvt Ltd had entrusted me to create a piece of public art. I believe that art is one of the prime ways of displaying an important message. In Odisha, artistes had used the medium to showcase the state's culture. In recent times, mural art works have been created in the city to showcase and promote culture, such as Hockey World Cup. I wanted to showcase the concept of sustainable development. Aside from this, I wanted to pay respect and tribute to the rich cultural heritage of the state.'*

Acknowledged as a 'pioneer of reinventing pottery as global Public Art for sustainable development and taking local craft to the level of avant-garde art', he has been regularly quoted by critics, leading experts and luminaries from various walks of life as 'one of India's most erudite and versatile contemporary artists', the 'maverick genius' of 'pioneering innovations', 'piped to be the next big thing in international art' and 'a master of light and colour'.

He said that the work will be completed in a month and will formally be inaugurated soon. Public art signifies the work of an artist who wants to showcase a burning issue through his work. The state has witnessed numerous instances of public art works in recent times. The state got its first waste museum created by Artists Network Promoting Indian Culture (ANPIC) at Kalinga Nagar here.

In the state's first open-air waste museum which was inaugurated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, 21 sculptures and installations made out of waste by national and international artistes were displayed. The latest masterpiece by Manav Gupta will go a long way in the beautification drive of the temple city.

Gupta has created an expansive public art museum on water and sustainable development beneath the flyover, transforming a formerly unused scrapyards into a landmark installation. The work includes a 20-foot giant hand pump crafted from scrap metal in gold, seven towers constructed from discarded concrete load-testing blocks bearing murals of Odisha's rich heritage, and flowing water pathways carved from the ground.

The gold-painted tube well serves as a metaphor for water as the new gold — the most precious resource. The project represents the artist's statement on the value of water as a resource, and Odisha's deep cultural connections to water, heritage and sustainability.