

# ENCOUNTERS WITH KHOJ

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## KHOJ [KHŌJ]

*noun:*

**search**, discovery, research,  
quest, exploration

*verb:*

(to) **inquire**, find, seek,  
discern, investigate

*In 1997, when a group of young artists got together to form an artists' collaborative, I and many of us who were a little older looked on with encouragement, albeit from a "benevolent" disposition . . . Khoj, true to its name, which means "search," set off on a route of experimentation and discovery, setting up signposts that became increasingly significant in the development of contemporary Indian art . . . There was no looking back, and for those of us who are from another generation, any note of condescension has been expunged by our open admiration.*

### Nilima Sheikh, Artist

Khoj International Artists' Association is an alternative arts space in New Delhi. Starting its journey in 1997 as an annual artists' workshop that aimed to challenge and push the boundaries of creative practice in the country, Khoj has grown into one of the most significant contemporary art organizations in the country, committed to experimentation, exchange and innovation in the field of artistic production.

Khoj believes in supporting artists and art practices that are ephemeral, alternative and interdisciplinary. Khoj's programming of artist residencies, exhibitions, workshops and seminars reflect the organization's belief in seeking excellence in the arts, developing new audiences for emerging practices, and the overall democratization of contemporary art-making. The initial

workshop impulse—the fulcrum on which Khoj was built—has been sustained in the form of itinerant international workshops in non-cosmopolitan centers across India such as Mysore (2002), Srinagar (2007), Patna (2009), Dharamshala (2012) and Pune (2015), events that have catalyzed the growth of the local contemporary art ecosystem.

Since 2002, Khoj has been based in a multifunctional space situated in the dynamic urban village of Khirkee in South Delhi. Over the years, Khoj has been able to permanently acquire and extensively renovate its spaces through the sales of artists' portfolios. The generosity of the artists' community furnished the organization with the means to provide infrastructural support to emerging practices.



(Top)  
**ANOLI PERERA**, *Dinner for Six: Inside Out*, 2007, installation view at “Six Degrees of Separation”, an exhibition by SANA commemorating 10 years of Khoj, 2008.

(Bottom, left)  
 Poster for “Six Degrees of Separation”.

(Bottom, right)  
 “Aar Paar” (detail), (2000–04), a collaborative public art project between **HUMA MULJI** in Karachi, Pakistan, and **SHILPA GUPTA** in Mumbai, India.

Khoj focuses on building networks and learning through collaboration and exchange. Over the last 17 years, Khoj has been building and supporting artists’ networks not only in India but also in the larger South Asia region and beyond.

Over a decade that saw the region’s most violent clashes over national borders, Khoj sustained friendships and solidarities with contemporary creative practitioners in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Through this the seeds were sown for the South Asia Network for the Arts (SANA), a collaboration that has established similar alternative arts spaces in the region such as Britto (Bangladesh), Vasl (Pakistan), Theertha (Sri Lanka) and Sutra (Nepal) to facilitate exchange of ideas, artists and artwork, across barbed wires. This labor of love reached its fruition in the SANA Book, which was unveiled at the Dhaka Art Summit in 2014.

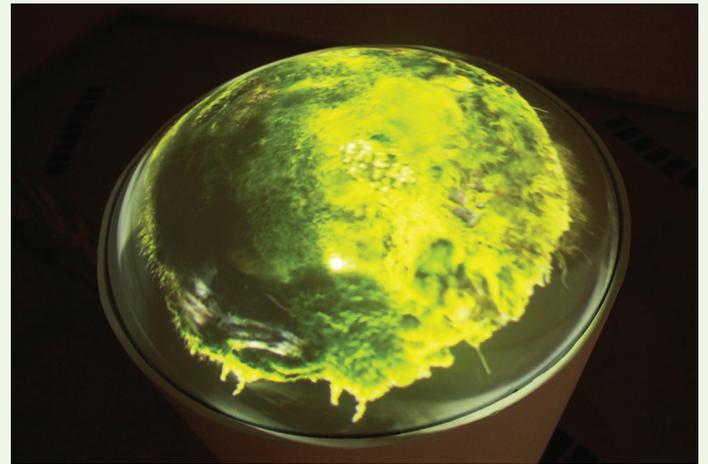
Khoj remains committed to its responsibility to enrich and invigorate the local contemporary art landscape by being a catalytic presence in off-center spaces within India. From 2007 to 2011, Khoj supported three nonprofit artist-led initiatives in different parts of the country at the inception stage. CAMP in Mumbai, Desire Machine Collective in Guwahati and 1 Shanthi Road in Bangalore have become key organizations within the experimental art ecosystem of the country.



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*By giving a space for things to happen,  
Khoj encourages art-making in its most  
interesting forms.*

Bharti Kher, Artist

Khoj seeks excellence within contemporary art practice. In a cultural landscape that still values traditional object-making, Khoj pushes the envelope by aligning itself with marginal, ephemeral and interdisciplinary practices that challenge norms.

(Left)  
Performance by **MEHR JAVED** at  
Khoj Live '08, a live arts festival, 2008.

(Right, top)  
**VINIT NIKUMBH**, *Home*, for *Of Games - II*,  
Art and Gaming Residency, New Delhi, 2014.

(Right, bottom)  
**ROHINI DEVASHER**, *Terrasphere*, in  
collaboration with **CITY AS A SPACESHIP**,  
for *The Undivided Mind: Part I*, Art and Science  
Residency, New Delhi, 2015.

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*Khoj is an ideal platform for new and experimental art. The dialogue it has initiated through various workshops has given many new directions to the younger generation of artists. It is a playful and thoughtful bridge between the artists from various locations. We are proud of Khoj.*

Atul Dodiya, Artist



**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**  
**PEERS**  
2015

Khoj is inviting applications for PEERS 2015 from final year MFA students and/or young artists with a minimum of 2 years of experience in the field to push and experiment with the interdisciplinarity of contemporary art.

*Self taught artists may apply.*

*The call is applicable only for Indian nationals.*

**APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN FOR**  
5 Artists-in-Residence  
1 Critic-in-Residence

To apply, please send the following documents to [applications@khojworkshop.org](mailto:applications@khojworkshop.org) with "PEERS 2015 Application" in the subject line.

**For applications for Artists-in-Residence**

- Updated CV
- Images of previous works not exceeding 5 MB (still) to 25 MB (video).
- Each work must have a short concept note or explanatory text accompanying it.
- 2 Letters of Reference from faculty members/senior artists/other (with designation)

**For application for Critic-in-Residence**

- Updated CV
- Recent piece of writing(s)
- 2 Letters of Reference faculty members/senior artists

**LAST DATE TO SEND IN APPLICATIONS: 31 MARCH 2015**

**KHOJ**  
INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS ASSOCIATION

**KHŌJ**  
STUDENT RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

**PEERS**  
**2010**

Peers is a 4-week residency programme in May-June for recent graduates + masters students trained with support from IFA, which provides an opportunity for exchange and dialogue. It is an attempt to network students from various art/architecture/visual design colleges and to provide a forum for experimentation and interaction with the larger creative community.

**PEERS 2010 PROGRAMME DETAILS**

Duration  
**4 WEEKS**  
**MAY 15 - JUNE 15, 2010**

Seats  
**5 PRACTITIONERS / ARTISTS**  
**+ 1 CRITIC / THEORIST**

Applications accepted from only final year students or recent graduates.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE 10th MARCH, 2010**

by email or post to:  
Khoj International Artists Association,  
S-12, Khirkee extension, New Delhi-110017  
<http://khojworkshop.org> Tel: 011-65655874/ 29548274  
Email: [interact@khojworkshop.org](mailto:interact@khojworkshop.org)

Application materials:  
**ARTISTS**

- CV
- Images/videos (on CD or DVD if no slides please) and other visual material of recent work
- Two letters of Reference from people familiar with your practice i.e. teachers/professors

**CRITIC**

- CV
- At least 3 examples of writing
- Two letters of Reference from people familiar with your practice i.e. teachers/professors

**IFA**  
**HINAS**  
**ARTISTS**  
**DOEN**

**KHŌJ**  
INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS ASSOCIATION

A FOUR WEEK RESIDENCY PROGRAMME, WHICH PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE, ENGAGE AND EXPERIMENT WITH THE CREATIVE ENCOUNTERS OF ART. A DIALOGUE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF EXCITING DYNAMIC ARTISTS FROM ART COLLEGES ACROSS INDIA.

**peers07**

**IN AN OUT OF THE HEARTSCAPE**  
Aishwarya Sultania  
(Govt. College of Art, Chandigarh)

**REVERBERATIONS**  
Shaahkar Siddique  
(Self-trained musician, New Delhi)

**INHALE AND EXHALE**  
Aditi Kulkarni  
(Abhinav Kala Mahavidyalaya, Pune)

**JOURNEY INWARD - JOURNEY OUTWARD**  
CROSS OVER  
THE TRAIL  
Uma Raj  
(Visva Bharati University (Sculpture),  
Shantiniketan)

**PLEASE MIND THE GAP**  
Jagashree Venkatadurai  
(Critic-in-Residence, M.S.U,  
Baroda/Chennai)

**HOOKED TO VIRTUAL HALUCINATION...BYE**  
Prathap Modi  
(M.S.U, Baroda)

**OPEN STUDIO**  
**JUNE 14TH**  
**7.00 PM ONWARDS**  
**THE WORKS ARE**  
**AVAILABLE FOR**  
**VIEWING ALSO ON**  
**JUNE 15, 1100 TO 1700**

**Khoj Studios**  
S-17 Khirkee Extension  
New Delhi 110017

011 65655874/3  
[khojinteract@gmail.com](mailto:khojinteract@gmail.com)  
[www.khojworkshop.org](http://www.khojworkshop.org)

**HINAS**  
**IFA**

In 2003, Khoj launched PEERS, an annual four-week-long residency for young artists. A unique program in its scope and impact, PEERS enabled recent graduates from art schools across the country to create work in residence and have a safe, stimulating environment in which to experiment and fail. The country's arts education system is often unable to make space for radical, interventionist practices that characterize the works of young artists. The PEERS program at Khoj is such a space that maintains its significance to this day and provides mentoring, ideas and guidance in the professional trajectories of new and emerging artists within the country.

With the PEERS program, Khoj creates an alternative pedagogical space within the institution-dominated landscape of art education in India. The organization's methodology, though grounded in theoretical rigor, focuses on creative practice as a mode of inquiry.

Clockwise from top left: Open call poster for PEERS 2015; Poster for PEERS 2010; Poster for PEERS 2007.

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Khoj's belief in artistic practice as a methodology for building a public discourse around social, political and environmental issues is reflected in the organization's involvement with various aspects of ecology in its programming. Being present in a rapidly gentrifying urban village such as Khirkee gives one a skewed and deeply agonistic understanding of urbanization and its ecological repercussions. Khoj has curated public art projects and more recently hosted residencies on the two subjects of art and food that each explore the bodily, social and environmental impacts of food policies. These projects and practices also situate Khoj within the larger public conversation about sustainable living.

In 2010, Khoj initiated "Negotiating Routes," a site-specific commission for artists working with community-based creative practices in peri-urban spaces within India. In its intent to encourage local, site-specific practice that fosters and harnesses creativity for the cause of environmental advocacy, "Negotiating Routes" has deepened Khoj's commitment toward understanding and enabling ecological art.



(Top)

Work by **ACKROYD & HARVEY** at  
In Context: Public Art. Ecology, International  
Artists Workshop, New Delhi, 2011.

(Bottom)

**NAVJOT ALTAF**, *Delhi Loves Me*, at Public Arts  
Residency, New Delhi, 2006.

(Right)

The Khirkee Hip-Hop Community Center at the  
Khirkee Park Jam, New Delhi, 2011.

*Because of Khoj, Delhi has become a prime hub for art practitioners who wish to investigate the issue of urbanization within specific contexts . . . Many artists-in-residence at Khoj have engaged with class, ethnicity, racial and cultural sensibilities of the inhabitants; more pointedly, the rights of the democratically designated yet disenfranchised polity in India's capital city.*

Geeta Kapur, Art Critic

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*In terms of the larger perspective of India, Khoj managed to bring life out of what appeared to be barren ground. It planted seeds of a certain kind of artistic thinking that was outside the system and triggered many ideas and careers as a result. In the late 1990s, it was one of a kind and hence invaluable. It has since reinvented itself and become bigger. Its role will be unquantifiable for another decade.*

Jitish Kallat, Artist



Over the course of 17 years Khoj has worked across different registers—the local, the regional and the global. Our core value has been to be tethered to the ground by realities of contemporary art in India and the region, while striving to reach out to global art audiences. In 2013, Khoj collaborated with the Tate Modern in London on the international exhibition “Word . Sound . Power .”

A recent exhibition Khoj co-curated with New Zealand-based art critic and psychotherapist Dr. Leon Tan was “Nameless Here For Evermore.” Held in January 2015, the show brought together works by Indian and international artists on the theme of art practice as a response to trauma.

(Left, top)  
**AMAR KANWAR**, *A Night of Prophecy*, 2002,  
at “Word. Sound. Power.”, Tate Modern,  
London, 2013.

(Left, bottom)  
**LAWRENCE ABU HAMDAN** with  
**JANNA ULLRICH**, *Conflicted Phonemes*, 2012,  
at “Word. Sound. Power.”, Tate Modern,  
London, 2013.

(Right)  
**GAURI GILL**, *Jis Tann Lage Soee Jane*, 2014,  
photo and text project.



*Contemporary art in India has not realized its full potential due to a dearth of not-for-profit art spaces that nurture artists. Khoj is one such space that has persevered in supporting experimentation in artistic practice despite all odds.*

Dayanita Singh, Artist