



**Press Release – for immediate release**

## **Silk River Unfurls - Community Programme and Exhibition at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew as part of autumn arts festival**



**Celebrating the connections between Britain and India through plants, people, art and artefacts.**

Nash Conservatory, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew  
Sunday 22nd - Friday 27th October 10am – 6pm.  
Free with entry to Kew Gardens.

Kew is collaborating with acclaimed international outdoor arts organisation, Kinetika, on the ambitious Silk River project, connecting 20 communities along the Thames Estuary and India's Hooghly River. *Silk River* explores the unique relationship between London and Kolkata through community artistic exchange. The fruits of this collaboration are twenty stunning six-meter, hand-painted silk scrolls, ten created in India and ten in the UK.

This year-long international community collaboration between artists will be celebrated by bringing together all twenty hand-painted silk scrolls in a sensational exhibition in the Nash Conservatory at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew from 22-27 October 2017.

The exhibition opens on Sunday 22 October with a day of activities for under 5s and families, including storytelling sessions, a natural dye workshop, a recipe exchange, dance performances and a collaborative artwork. More information on the activity programme is available [here](#)

The banner designs themselves are richly coloured and layered, depicting a mixture of landmarks, local personalities and aspects of history, ranging from pop culture in Dartford to a Tudor fort in Tilbury. The banner designed at Kew points to old trade links between the UK



and India in the form of Indigo, quinine and silk. Many of these old trade connections have not survived the test of time, but the Silk River project has delighted in reviving at least one.

### Revival of old skills

With the assistance of the Crafts Council of West Bengal, this has turned out to be a great silk weaving revival project, creating a showcase for a superior quality silk cloth from Murshidabad. In fact, the silk for the banners was hand woven on looms that had not been used in recent memory and only contains silk threads from that locality, not from other parts of India or indeed the world. More information on the silk is available [here](#)

### Notes to the Editor

#### Silk River Partners

Kinetika - <http://www.kinetikaonline.co.uk/site/>

Think Arts: <http://www.thinkarts.co.in/>

Creative People and Places Hounslow - <http://creativepeopleplaces.org.uk>

Watermans - <https://www.watermans.org.uk/>

Tower Hamlets Council: <https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Home.aspx>

Royal Borough of Greenwich and Woolwich, Dartford Council, Gravesham Council

Creative Barking & Dagenham: <http://www.creativebd.org.uk/>

Tilbury Riverside Project: <http://tilburyriverside.co.uk/>

Bata Heritage Centre: <http://www.bataheritagecentre.org.uk/>

Southend on Sea Borough Council

Totally Thames - <http://totallythames.org/>

Long Distance Walkers Association - [www.ldwa.org.uk](http://www.ldwa.org.uk)

Bath Spa University <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/>

[Silk River](#) has been developed and delivered by Kinetika in the UK and Think Arts in India along with an international team of artists, writers and photographers and is supported by Arts Council England, British Council, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Tower Hamlets Council, Royal Borough of Greenwich, Creative Barking & Dagenham, Thurrock Council, Dartford Council, Kent County Council, Gravesham Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Metal, Royal Opera House Thurrock Trailblazers programme, Bath Spa University and the Long Distance Walkers Association London Group. It has featured as part of the Totally Thames festival, organised by the Thames Festival Trust, and the UK/India 2017 season curated by the British Council.

The Silk River Unfurls exhibition and activity programme has been supported by the Heritage Lottery fund.

UK Walks: <http://www.silkriver.co.uk/UK-walks/>

India Walks: <http://www.silkriver.co.uk/india-walks/>

To book tickets to Kew visit [www.Kew.org](http://www.Kew.org)



Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/silkriverkinetika/>

Twitter #SilkRiver  
<https://twitter.com/SilkRiver2017>

Instagram #SilkRiver  
<https://www.instagram.com/kinetikapeople>

**Silk River** is an ambitious project which explores the unique relationship between London and Kolkata through artistic exchange between communities along the Thames Estuary and India's Hooghly River. Kinetika's Artistic Director Ali Pretty, with associate Artistic Director Ruchira Das (Think Arts, India) and an international team of artists, writers and photographers, will capture and interpret the experience of journeying along these two mighty rivers. Working in 20 locations from Murshidabad to Batanagar (Hooghly) and Royal Botanic Gardens Kew to Southend (Thames) to reinterpret a shared heritage, Kinetika's Silk River will raise cultural awareness of the Indo-British relationship through engaging diaspora communities who live alongside both rivers.

Silk River took place along the Thames between 15-24 Sept and will culminate in West Bengal along the Hooghly 7-17 Dec 2017 with two river walks where the stories of the 20 locations will be revealed to local, national and international audiences through the showing of 20 giant hand-painted Bengali silk scrolls and accompanying performances.

22-27 Oct Banners on display at Kew Gardens  
<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/artful-autumn-silk-river-unfurls>

16 Nov Tower Hamlets & Burrabazar banners on display  
Exhibition, workshop and reprise performance of the Tower Hamlets walk 'from Street to Stage' at the Brady Centre, as part of 'A Season of Bangla Drama'.

6-17 Dec 2017 Silk River Walk India  
<http://www.silkriver.co.uk/india-walks/>

- Tues 5th - Arrive in Kolkata and travel by train to Azimganj, Murshidabad
- Weds 6th - Azimganj, Barikothi & seminar on placemaking
- Thurs 7th - Silk River walks begins: Azimganj to Hazarduari
- Fri 8th - Artists exchange workshop on board boat from Murshidabad to Krishnanagar
- Sat 9th - Krishnanagar visit to sculptors studios & local artists & former Indigo Estate
- Sun 10th - Boat to Chandannagar, exchange with lighting artists
- Mon 11th - Chandannagar to Barrackpore
- Tues 12th - Barrackpore
- Weds 13th - Kumortuli, Jorasanko and Marble Palace, North Kolkata
- Thurs 14th - Tour of Burrabazaar and Howrah
- Fri 15th - Visit to Kidderpore docks and tour of Batanagar
- Sat 16th - Botanic Gardens, Kolkata
- Sun 17th - Finale Procession from Princep Ghat to central Kolkata



**Kinetika** is an internationally renowned company with an 18-year track record of combining world-class design with community projects to produce spectacular outdoor events that engage diverse audiences wherever they work. Founded by artist Ali Pretty in 1997, and inspired by her training in carnival arts in Trinidad and India, Kinetika now has an unrivalled reputation for working with local communities on projects that change the way people feel about where they live. From local community events in shopping centres, ceremonial boulevards and local high streets, to the Great Wall of China and the heart of Kolkata. The charitable arm, Kinetika People, is known for its high quality community engagement work, running participatory programmes, workshops and artist training schemes, which aim to nurture new artistic talent and engage communities, raising aspirations and building a sense of place. The commercial arm, Kinetika Design Studio, has been commissioned to create work for ceremonies at high profile events including FIFA World Cup 2009, the London Paralympic games/Team GB Parade in 2012 and the European Games 2015.

**UK/India2017** is a year-long celebration of the long-standing relationship between India and the UK, which will see a vast programme of cultural exchange and activity take place in cities across both countries.

Silk River is part of the UK/India 2017 programme. Working with a huge number of partners and institutions, the British Council is developing a programme of cultural activity which will connect and inspire people in both countries; and strengthen and celebrate the UK and India's cultural ties. For more information on UK/India 2017 please visit [www.britishcouncil.in](http://www.britishcouncil.in)

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