

# Creative art festival with award

**CHANDREYEE  
CHATTERJEE**

CIMA Awards is back for the second edition and in the modified avatar of CIMA Awards — The Kolkata Art Festival 2017, a month-long, pan-city festival of arts.

Applications for the awards have already started pouring in and requests for more time have led to the extension of the deadline from February 16 to February 29.

The biennial CIMA Awards invites applications from artists in the age group of 25 to 45 years and covers paintings, sculptures, graphics and emerging new media such as video art, installations, graphic novel and digital art. The photography category has been dropped.

"We've already received entries from 22 states of the country, and they are not just from big cities but also from small towns. We've even got applications from Indian residents who are studying or working in Dubai, Singapore, France and the UK," said Rakhi Sarkar, the director of CIMA, while announcing the awards on Monday.

Applicants have to send in a body of their work in a par-

ticular category as a proof that they are "practising artists" as well as a proposed work for the award show to be held for a month from February 4, 2017. "The general quality of work this year is very good," shared Sarkar.

CIMA Awards — The Kolkata Art Festival 2017 will include collateral ventures like seminars, discussions and workshops for which it is tying up with institutes and universities in India and abroad. There will also be exhibitions from abroad and international workshops. Resource people from within and beyond our boundaries, like heads of museums, art journal publishers and curators, are being drafted in. "We will also felicitate some distinguished people who have contributed significantly to the study and understanding of art," added Sarkar.

One collateral venture will be a travelling show called Art Space Germany with 42 works including installations, paintings, sculptures and video art, organised by the Goethe Institut. "CIMA Awards is a perfect context to bring such a big show. We will have the curator and some of the artists coming down as well and engaging

in talks and seminars," said Friso Maecker, the director of Goethe Institut in Calcutta.

Another such project is a design capsule by the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, under their Science and Heritage Interface (SandHI) initiative.

In terms of timing and positioning, The Kolkata Art Festival is being aligned with other art festivals "from Jaipur Lit Fest to India Art Fair to Kochi Biennale to Kala Ghoda" so that is all in the same circuit and "one flows into the other". The festival will see a limited number of galleries and artists showcasing their work, especially public art projects.

The month-long event will start with the awards ceremony on February 4, 2017 followed by the CIMA Awards Show, to open on February 5 and showcase the works of the finalists selected by a preliminary jury. A final nine-member jury will select the winners of the different award categories. There will be at least 12 awards including the CIMA Award, two Jury Awards, two Special Mentions and four Merit Awards.

The CIMA Award winner, apart from the prize money

and a trophy, gets the opportunity for a solo showing at CIMA within two years of winning the award. Mansoor Ali Makrani, the winner of CIMA Award 2015, will be displaying his work at the Sunny Park gallery this August.

"It is almost like we are unearthing these artists, especially from smaller towns, with this award show," said Pratiti Basu Sarkar, chief administrator of CIMA. Going online and digitising the process of applications have helped reached out to more people as has working with established and reliable art institutions across the country to whom these forms have been distributed. The 25 senior artists working as nominators for the CIMA Awards are also spreading the word.

"The idea is to get anyone and everyone to apply as long as they meet the criteria. Then the jury will decide whether your work will make it to the awards show or not," said Rakhi Sarkar.

The jury, comprising 15 to 16 people from different disciplines of visual arts, will start assessing and selecting from the middle of April. The selection will be "cite unknown", whether it is the gender or the

province from where it has come, and will only be on the merit of the work. The first round of selections will be over by May 2. The final round of judging will be done towards the end of January 2017 by visual artists as well as experts from other creative arts.

"CIMA Awards has created a level of excitement among the younger generation and they are trying to work out how to be more creative so that they can participate in it," said artist Partha Pratim Deb and an advisory committee member of CIMA Awards — The Kolkata Art Festival. Shreyasi Chatterjee, painter, dean of visual arts, Rabindra Bharati University, and an advisory committee member, agreed, adding: "The CIMA Awards show is no longer just an award show.... The huge buzz that it is creating, it will become like the Durga Puja of art awards!"

Apart from collateral ventures in visual art, the CIMA Awards will also include similar ventures in performance art. "We are getting in touch with agencies to work in the field of cinema, performance art and experimental music so that the whole city vibrates with it," said Rakhi Sarkar.