

Making art accessible

A mentorship and networking session by an interdisciplinary arts organisation promises to help creative professionals navigate the art industry



The session will take place for the first time, followed by an open networking event

DALREEN RAMOS

dalreen.ramos@mid-day.com

PERHAPS the biggest tragedy about the Indian education system is this — it doesn't equip you for the "industry". And then there are additional roadblocks one has to face if they aren't a science or commerce graduate. Rashmi Dhanwani, founder of the Art X Company, an interdisciplinary arts organisation, echoes this sentiment. "There is no formal training in the arts and culture space. If you're enrolled in an engineering or medical course, you have a set career path — for instance, an engineer will know when he will need to do an MBA. But what about the others?" It is this question that her organisation aims to tackle this Wednesday.

ACRI (Arts and Cultural Resources India) Culture Meet is an event where professionals have an opportunity to engage with industry experts. With similar meet-ups held before



in various cities, this is the first one that offers a one-on-one mentoring session, i.e. attendees have to fill a form and sign up to be mentees, after which they will be assigned to mentors. These include arts consultant Anupa Mehta, Joyoti Roy, head of marketing and communications at the CSMVS, art historian and archivist Deepthi Sasidharan, arts manager and producer Niloufer Sagar, and scenographer Ruchita Madhok. The session is an offline manifestation of a public Facebook group called Arts and Culture Opportunities, Residencies, Workshops, Jobs in India that includes over 48,000 members and is meant for job postings.

"We realised that every city presents different challenges. In Mumbai, for example, there are very few opportunities for cultural professionals to actually meet. How can you engage an advertising professional who would love to explore museums? There is no common body that governs this industry, unlike other countries where you also have

funds parked for this," Dhanwani tells us, adding that even though discussions are being organised in the city, they continue to be sector-specific and not cross-sectional — like a forum theatre artistes participated in last month to discuss copyright issues.

The ACRI culture meet will give mentees a platform to not just discover more about their field of interest, but also make meaningful connections. "With the arts, you get to know more about how the industry functions only when you start working. But you can't just ride on good luck," she cautions, adding that physical access is also a challenge, given that most arts institutions are located in South Mumbai. "That's the reason we're going to have this one in Kalina. People shouldn't have to keep travelling to town every day. And we

hope to organise more in the future after we get feedback from this one."



Rashmi Dhanwani

FREE ON May 15, 5 pm onwards AT The Art X Company, Kagalwala House, Kalina, Santacruz East. **LOG ON TO** www.art-x.co/events