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PORTFOLIO
Chief Editor's Choice

Public Art and Murals

Suresh K. Nair

Artist Statement

My murals begin where the wall meets life. Trained in traditional Kerala mural painting at the Institute of Mural Painting, Guruvayur, Kerala, under Mural Maestro Mammiyur Krishnan Kutty Nair, and later at Santiniketan, inspired by Tagore, Nandalal Bose, and Ramkinkar Baij, I see the mural not as decoration but as dialogue.

Since 2007 in Varanasi, my practice has moved from temple walls to public walls—from the City Decorative Project, which transformed garbage sites into art spaces, to airports, railway stations, schools, and streets and other public spaces in India and abroad. My materials vary—mixed media, cement relief, terracotta, natural pigments, mirror and glass work—but the intent remains: to create *sattvik* vibrations of calm, harmony, peace, and goodness.

Suresh K. Nair

Music is integral to my work. I translate ragas, rhythm, and silence into line, colour, and texture. Water, the five elements, and Shiva as mirror reflecting the self—*Tat Tvam Asi*—become metaphors for collective healing and shared memory.

About the Artist

Suresh K. Nair was born in Kerala, India. He studied at the Institute of Mural Painting, Guruvayur; the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune; and Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, and studied at the Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia. As a muralist, he has established a significant artistic presence in India and abroad for his public art projects, exhibitions, and research, including in the UAE, UK, USA, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

His awards and fellowships include the Kerala Lalithakala Akademi award (2005), the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Scholarship (1997), a Fulbright Fellowship (2005–06), Earth Day Network awards (2015 and 2018), the BeFantastic Fellowship (2021) from Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Bangalore, U.S. Embassy Singapore, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia (New Delhi), and the Agastya K. V. Raghavan Changemaker Fellowship (2026), among others.

Nair has presented music-based drawing performances at TEDx IIT, Banaras Hindu University; Carnival of Creativity at the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong; and the Kabira Festival in Varanasi. He participated in the OVNI International Art Project—Mural Urbano in Caldas da Rainha, Portugal, where he performed with Portuguese

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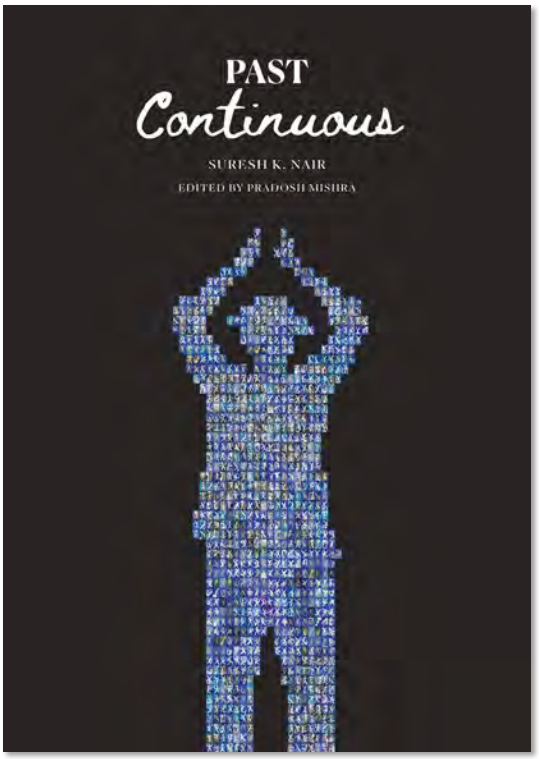
musician Joana Rodrigues. Other festival appearances include Banaras Utsav, Jaipur Literature Festival, Jaipur Kala Chaupal, Druv Festival, Barbil Art Project, and the Hyderabad Literary Festival.

He has curated two CRACK Trust International Art Camps in Bangladesh; the exhibitions "Desh Paradesh," "Revival," and "Wonder That Was India"; more than 25 exhibitions for Indian and international students and visiting artists at the Faculty of Visual Arts Gallery, Banaras Hindu University; and a Students' Biennale of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. "Revival" was a fundraising exhibition supporting Kerala flood relief.

Specializing in Indian and Western mural techniques, Nair has executed monumental murals in public and private spaces in India and abroad, including projects at Varanasi International Airport and the Indian Embassy in Paris. His interest in Chinese, Japanese, Islamic, and Indian calligraphy also informs his music-based drawing practice. Through art, activism, and performance, his work addresses environmental issues, plastic pollution, world peace, Partition, and migration.

Nair's recent practice has also emphasized community awareness and public engagement, including artistic contributions to cleanliness initiatives. He is a member of INTACH and other cultural organizations. He has taught visual art for 18 years and is Professor in the Department of Painting, Faculty of Visual Arts, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India.

For more information, visit: https://wallofpeace.in/



Past Continuous (forthcoming book)

Cosmic Form. Mirrors and coloured glass. Size: 16 × 60 feet. Visva Bharati University, 2002.

Ananthashayana Vishnu. Earth colours on the wall. Kerala mural style and technique. Size: 7 × 12 feet. Kalady, Kerala, 2002.

Veena Poovu (Fallen Flower). Earth colours on the wall. Size: 7 × 10 feet. Trivendrum, Kerala, 2005.

Five Elements. Cement relief, mirrors on the wall with acrylic paint. Size: 20 × 40 feet. Public School, Varanasi, 2013.

Cement relief on wall. Collectorate Office, Kottayam, Kerala, 2013.

Natural on Medicinal Plants. Natural colours on wall. Casino Group of Hotels.

(Top photo) **Peace**. Cement relief on wall. Size: 10 × 25 feet. Nepal, 2013.

(Bottom photo) **Make Peace Not War**. Cement relief with mirror and acrylic paint on wall. Size: 20 × 20 feet. Public art project done at Hyderabad Literary Festival, 2020.

Wall of Peace. Cement mural on wall. Size: 10 × 100 feet. Public Art Project, Cherppulassery, Kerala, 2019.

Shivalinga Mural. Cement relief with acrylic and mirror. Size: 4 × 8 meters. Aaha Banaras, Varanasi, India, 2018.

Confluence of Indian Art and Dance. Acrylic on the wall, 3 x 15 meters. Indian Embassy Paris, France, 2026.

Flowing River. Cement relief on the wall with mirrors, coloured glass and acrylic paint. Size: 12 × 60 feet. Jaipur City, 2017.

Partition. Cement relief mural. Size: 10 × 150 feet. India-Pakistan border at Wagah, 2016.