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Old Port the stage, 'Water' the theme for photo exhibition

- [Annie Philip](#)



Photos of tribal people exhibited inside the Old Distillery, during the first edition of the festival in Puducherry and (right) the Old Port premises which will host the second edition of PodyPHOTO.— Photo: S.S. Kumar and Special Arrangement



Second edition of PodyPHOTO is scheduled from February 13 to 28 to view water in its various aspects

After having transformed the premises of the unused Old Distillery in Puducherry into a space for public art for the first edition of PodyPHOTO in 2014, the organisers are back with the second edition of the festival with the Old Port on the southern end of the Beach Promenade here set to be the stage, and 'Water' the theme.

PodyPHOTO 2016 is organised by cultural organisation PodyART.

The festival scheduled from February 13 to 28, 2016, will feature a large scale photography exhibition, moving pictures, dance, theatre, workshops and discussions, apart from outreach programmes.

"PodyPHOTO 2016 will seek to augment the efforts of individuals, organisations and government to educate the public about issues surrounding water and its usage by bringing photographers and artists together to share the Indian sub continent's water stories, both of the past and of the present, and asking change makers to explain how they are working to preserve this extraordinarily important resource," said Kasha Vande, founder, PodyART.

New venue

The sprawling Old Port ground which has been off limits to the public, will allow for vastly creative use of the space, rivalled perhaps only by the Old Distillery. The Puducherry government has opened it up for the organisers in recognition of 'its appeal, both spatial and emotional to the people' of this coastal town, said PodyART.

“The relevance of using a once profitable and busy port as a site for a festival focusing on this crucial environmental resource now challenged by modern development and its rapidly evolving industries is self evident,” said Ms. Vande.

Photographer Pablo Bartholomew, who is on the PondyART advisory board which is overseeing the festival said, “The port is a very exciting space, and a very different space from the Old Distillery. With every new space are the challenges that you have to tackle and at this point the advisory board is looking into these aspects.”

Others on the advisory board include Ms. Vande, Ravi Agarwal, founder of Toxics Link, Audrey Richard Ferroudji of the French Institute of Pondicherry, Raghu Menon of the Pondicherry Science Forum and photographers Nicolas Chorier, Waswo X. Waswo and Sebastian Cortes. The festival is also supported by the Pondicherry Science Forum, French Institute of Pondicherry and the Alliance Francaise in Puducherry.

Organisers are hoping PondyPHOTO 2016 will be on the scale of national photography exhibitions like the Delhi Photo Festival.

A mix of works

On the photography exhibition, Mr. Bartholomew said it includes young photographers' competitive section, as well as a section showcasing works of renowned photographers, promising a mix of different kind of works. He said that PondyPHOTO is set apart because there is an effort to “create an impact and engage the larger public rather than be a photo festival just for photographers.”

This would mean using the approach of public art through large panels of photographs and billboards.

Mr. Agarwal, whose organisation, Toxics Link, is coordinating the 'Change makers' section of the festival said, “We hope to create a forum for water conservation practitioners to be able to tell their stories and their insights on the water situation as they encounter it, the reasons and what can be done about it. We plan to have a diversity of experience and views from across the country, but specifically from the South of India. The idea is to think of water in its various aspects of biodiversity, culture, conservation, politics, and as an eco-system.”

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