



*Happy Diwali & Best Wishes
for the Festive Season to all Our Readers*



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EXPLORING NEWER MEDIUMS

It needs some innovative thinking, but supporting and utilizing art and artists can elevate tourism departments' narratives.

Art and artists are often used in offers prepared as part of a promotional campaign for individual regions and even countries.

I recently came across a promo of the Ypress region in a Visit Flanders video. The video included visuals of a young Indian artist, Baptist Coelho in a poetic message highlighting the area's natural beauty. While the video doesn't mention his name directly, by using him in its promo clip, the indication of Flanders or even Belgium itself being a destination that attracts artists across the world and encourages their craft is a subtle subliminal message.

Mumbai-born Baptist who featured in it was the 2022 artist-in-residence at the In Flanders Fields Museum. In fact, the museum has published a book that is an overview of his works from 2006 to date. It includes a selection of fifty-six artworks and ten essays on them by academics amongst others.

On the other hand, Indian tourism campaigns remain poorer with the non-inclusion of contemporary art, especially the one not from the framed variety. This lack of enthusiasm can be forgiven for an evident lack of understanding of subliminal angles to a country's image, aspects that are not in-your-face objects of 'sightseeing'.

Usually, barely any sort of cultural offering occupies minimal mind space or priority in the fiscal calculations of tourism promoters or marketers. And that is exactly my point.

It can be understood that it is much easier to convince potential tourists to take advantage of an offer that includes beautiful views and comfortable hotels than an offer that requires having to indulge in artistic pursuits. That is all the more reason the government should identify and promote Indian artists, especially the young and innovative ones, who project the nation's imagery as a thinking, inspirational, or even interesting subject.

Baptist's book and his installation artworks present narratives that are Indian in context but global and human in sensitivity. No tourism company or brand will venture to pick such subtleties for marketing. It is clearly the job and responsibility of government departments, ministries, and institutions to further this.

Knock, knock. Anyone there?

Anurag Yadav
Industry Expert

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The views expressed in the column are of the author, and may or may not be endorsed by the publication.