

Press Release

A project by Monica de Miranda and Ananda Surya



Project summary

Name: The guru, the tourist and globalization

Visual Artist/Photographer: Monica de Miranda

Poet artist: Ananda Surya

Art Mediums: Art photo and poetry book and dvd research documentary project

Date: 6th of January to 22nd of February 2007

Location: Thiruvanamalai, Tamil Nadu , India

Artists websites: www.anandagaya.com , www.monica-demiranda.com

"On the west with the fall of religion and spirituality and the death of god , global times opened up new territories of exploration A rise to a new movement of tourism towards the east became a trend to reclaim lost beliefs. Consumerism of the guru package holiday gave rise to the spiritual tourism conquer journey and to the enlightenment quest.

To attain enlightenment one needs to departure to foreigner lands, but the destination there will lead to the confrontation of cultural differences, where one needs to enter the constant division and segregation in between white and black, native and foreigner, rich and poor, eastern and westerner, Christian and muslim. The question " where are you from? " is the beginning and end of any dialogue , the welcome and the goodbye. The visa entry is bought but the cultural entry is not for sale. The spiritual tourist is always outside trying to get in. The path for enlighten costs 10 days of retreat, a hug, a blissfully gaze from the guru. But the quest to find the guru within is another story, other journey. A journey where the guru is within is a local inner truth that is out of reach from global market economies. The travel guide to freedom and enlightenment is to find out that we can stand alone and be home anywhere, to discover that the world travel

is within. The travel guide is live itself, and the exchange currency is paid at your own respect rate commission to others. No need for translation as the interpreter is the same with you. No need to crossing the global borders, if u did not cross your own personal custom barriers. On arrival you have nothing to declare , you cross the departure lounge to find that your suitcase is empty. The tourist and the guru are partners in the same game played by globalization."

Art Book

The "Guru, tourist and globalization" is an art book created as a result of a creative collaborative process in between two artists and two cultures. Ananda Surya and Monica De Miranda explored the relationship in between the West and the East, worked with their own biography and therefore they were as two poles for the reflection of the meeting of East and West in Thryvanamalai. The concept of the book was to give to the spectator and the reader , the view point of the contrasting situation of the meeting of two cultures specially to the reference of the tourist and the guru in a spiritual place in a context of globalization. They shows us through the photos and poetry how the flux of spiritual tourism is changing the geography and landscape of Thyruvanamalay, by the large building construction sites around the mountain to accommodate the large number of tourists , by the incorporation of eastern clothes styles by westerns and use of western clothes styles by Indian people , by the change of behaviors in between generations, by changes in traditions and assimilation of modernity into traditions. The reflection of this project was also on how post-modernity, technology exists integrated and side by side with ancient traditions and religious practices. The focus of attention is on the turning point,, in the clash of cultures, in the meeting of past and present histories of colonization and post-colonization discourses and confrontation of cultural differences and beliefs.