CONNECTING CULTURES: INDIA

Connecting Cultures through Expressive Arts
India (Chennai, Agra, Delhi)

June 2 – July 15, 2020
Application due: February 15, 2020

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
ART THERAPY LEARNING CENTER
MILESWORTH TRAVEL & TOURS PRIVATE LIMITED
The George Washington University Art Therapy Program has been involved in international cross-cultural community service learning since 2008. Our students have had this opportunity to study and explore social and cultural diversity, connecting collaboratively in India, South Africa, France, United Arab Emirates, and Croatia. To celebrate GW Art Therapy’s 50th Anniversary and after numerous requests, we have created a trip specifically for professionals who want to connect across cultures, learn from each other, and work in the community.

This trip is for anyone who has a desire to connect to others; an openness to expanding your own self-awareness; a commitment to give of yourself and to learn from everyone; a willingness to participate in art-making; and an interest in mental health, community support, and cultural issues that divide and unite this world.

The main focus of the trip is community service and connections with local experts, trainings/workshops, and discussion groups with art-making. Cultural excursions include arts & cultural center, dance school, flower market, handmade artbook publishing house, and exploration of temples, Agra Fort, and Taj Mahal with storyteller guides.

Community Connections
We have organizations we have worked with for over 9 years (women’s and men’s shelters, cancer center, schools, differently-abled adults) where we can do community work (dependent upon their needs); however, if possible, we would also like to tailor the trip to each participant’s interests, professional work, and skills. Therefore, setting up learning exchanges with leaders in the area to create connections for present and future collaborations. These may be through visiting sites, over dinner, or doing/attending workshops/trainings.
Discussion Groups with Artmaking
Each evening we will end our day with artmaking, journaling, and discussion as a group. It is mandatory that everyone be willing to participate in order to strengthen bonds with the group and to explore and process the days events. Former participants have stated that this ritual each evening becomes one of the most important and looked forward to aspects of the trip. No previous experience with art is required.

To see previous student summer abroad experiences, visit:
https://www.facebook.com/gwartxindia
https://www.facebook.com/GWARTXAbroad2017/

Costs
$2500 (double accommodation)
$3000 (single accommodation)

Includes: accommodations, group meals, local flight within India, local transportation, art supplies, excursions, and entrance fees. CEC’s available upon request.

Not included in costs: International airfare, visa, travel insurance, vaccinations, and personal expenses.

Deposit: $750 (due 10 days after acceptance email)
April 1—Installment #1: $1000 (double); $1125 (single)
May 1—Installment #2: $750 (double); $1125 (single)

Requirements
- Application and Deposit—application and CV must be completed before approval can be given to attend. We have a limited number of spots, so it will be based on first completed. Once approval is given we will send you additional information regarding non-refundable deposit of $750, purchasing your flight and trip insurance, applying for your visa, and suggestions for vaccinations.
- Pre-trip Orientation—mandatory on-line or in-person group orientation that will introduce everyone to each other, review itinerary, details of the trip, and requirements and expectations of participants. There will be required readings for this orientation and prior to in-country orientation.
Schedule of Activities:

CHENNAI (10-nights) – AGRA (1 night) – NEW DELHI (1 night)

July 2, Thurs.  
Leave United States—see notes on purchasing international flight

July 3, Fri.  
PM arrival group—Arrive in Chennai, pick up and transport to Madras Club  
Get settled, relax, suggestions for dinner, if needed

July 4, Sat.  
AM arrival group—Arrive in Chennai, pick up and transport to Madras Club  
Get settled  
Breakfast on verandah; group meeting; free time to explore  
Afternoon—local interactive 2 ½ hours workshop. Get orientated with India’s history, the basics of Hinduism and how these two affect the local values. Discussion of broad differences between Indian and American culture.  
Evening—Celebrate the 4th of July at our host’s beach villa—dinner, drinks, swimming.

July 5, Sun.  
Morning—Walking tour of Mylapore. 400 year old temple with storyteller guide, explore Hindu spirituality, arts, and culture. Auto rickshaw ride through narrow streets.

South Indian breakfast served on a banana leaf with traditional coffee/tea at local restaurant

Afternoon—explore culturally appropriate clothing for work in the community (discussed in Pre-Trip Orientation)  
Evening—Group meeting/Discussion and Art; dinner as group at Madras Club

July 6-10  
Mon.-Fri.  
Same schedule each day  
Breakfast on veranda  
Community work  
Late Afternoon—Discussion and Art  
Dinner as group in Madras Club

July 9, Thurs.  
Afternoon—visit to Tara Books, globally awarded art publishing house. Visit workshop where screen-printing and binding occur. Then book store to view homemade books using local artists and folk stories.  
Late Afternoon—Discussion and Art  
Dinner as group in Madras Club
July 10, Fri.  
Evening—Explore Chennai and have dinner on your own

July 11, Sat.  
Breakfast on veranda  
Travel to Mahalabalipuram—historic monuments (Shore Temple, Seven Rathas, Krishna’s Butterball) built between 7th and 9th century. Center for stone carving and traditional sandals.  
Lunch on beach  
Afternoon visit to Dakshina Chitra, center for preservation and promotion of South India’s architectural and cultural traditions.  
Drive back to Chennai, dinner on own.

July 12, Sun.  
Early morning—visit Flower/Fruit/Vegetable Market  
Return to Madras Club for Breakfast on veranda  
Morning—freetime  
Afternoon—Community connections

Evening—Traditional dance school, Pandanallur style of Bharatanatyam dance; instructor one of India’s celebrated danseuses. Invited to join her students to learn basic movements.
July 13, Mon.  Morning—Fly from Chennai to New Delhi; Drive to Agra
Check into hotel
Afternoon—Visit Agra Fort; take Mughal Heritage Walk

July 14, Tues.  Sunrise Taj Mahal—guided tour
Breakfast at hotel, check out, travel to Delhi
Evening—Visit temple of Sikhs, Gurudwara Bangla Sahib.
Visit kitchen and perform a unique seva as you make Indian breads for visitors to temple.

July 15, Wed.  Early morning explore New Delhi on cycle (or walking for those who prefer).
Traditional breakfast in Delhi neighborhood.
Check out of hotel and transfer to airport to fly home or continue your journey on your own.
Accommodations

The Madras Club is in a quiet residential area of Chennai. The rooms are a mix of different traditional styles. All rooms have air conditioning (essential at this time of year), wifi, tea/coffee makers, and ensuite bathrooms. Other amenities are: pool, gym, café, and bar. Many quiet areas to explore and within blocks of local grocery store and shops.

Meals

All group meals are included in the cost of the trip. There may be occasional meals where you would like to explore on your own (these will be delineated in the schedule); suggestions for local places will be provided as part of the in-country orientation. Breakfast will be at the hotel each morning on the veranda. Dinners, when at the hotel, will be provided in the Dining Room. Most meals will be traditional, local, Indian cuisine. Snacks and smaller meals can be purchased at the local grocery store or the on-site café. Numerous coffee shops in the area.
Leaders

Heidi Bardot, ATR-BC, LCPAT is Director and Associate Professor of the GW Art Therapy Program. Having grown up overseas, she has brought an international focus to the GW Program through immersion diversity courses and service-learning programs in France, India, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, and Croatia. Bardot collaborated to create the first post-master’s program in Croatia now in its third year. She also has partnered with local organizations in Lebanon to work with refugees and train relief workers in art techniques, self-care, and trauma. She has led student groups to India since 2008 and is now expanding this opportunity to professionals interested in making international community connections.

Mary Ellen Ruff, LPC, ATR-BC, ACS is an Assistant Professor in the GW Art Therapy Program and is board certified art therapist, a licensed professional counselor and clinical supervisor in private practice. Mary Ellen has supervised on an international level with art therapy students in Croatia. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Mary Ellen is Coordinator of the GW Art Therapy Learning Center, providing a range of didactic and experiential training and service learning travel opportunities for professionals.

CECs available upon request.

Learning Objectives

- To engage in a cross-cultural experience that will increase understanding of the local community needs and opportunities for future collaboration
- To provide specific opportunities within the community to understand needs, strengths, problems and resources and to share knowledge, skills and abilities with individuals and groups in order to enhance professional identity.
- To increase the commitment to social responsibility and to remove barriers to future service.
- To improve understanding of diverse populations and different perspectives with a focus on cultural traditions.

The George Washington University Art Therapy Department has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 3053. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. The George Washington University Art Therapy Department is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs.