

INTERNATIONAL ARTIST RESIDENCY & CULTURAL EXCHANGE

HIMALAYAN PLEIN AIR

Mastiff Wildcrest 2027 edition

ARTIST FIELD GUIDE & PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

Residency Dates: 24th February – 10th March 2027 (15 Days)

Host Venue: Mastiff Wildcrest, Gopalpur, Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh, India.

Curator & Lead: Arijeet Chanda

Participating Nations: India, Lithuania, Poland, Denmark, Latvia

1. Programme Vision & Regional Orientation

Core Ethos: “Art becomes the medium; cultural dialogue becomes the lasting outcome.” Himalayan Plein Air 2027 brings together master painters from India and Europe to observe, capture, and reflect upon the Kangra Valley's natural light, sacred heritage, and rural architecture beneath the snow-capped Dhauladhar Mountain Range.

Key Residency Objectives

- **Creative Exploration:** Capture shifting mountain light, tea estates, and heritage architecture en plein air.
- **Bilateral Dialogue:** Foster deep artistic exchanges between Indian and European painters.
- **Heritage Preservation:** Engage directly with indigenous craft legacies including Kangra miniature art, studio pottery, and thangka weaving.
- **Community & Market Connection:** Present original works to collectors, press, and art lovers during the Grand Closing Exhibition.

Geographic Route & Transit Roadmap

Origin	Transit Gateway	Regional Arrival	Final Destination
Europe / India (Home Studio)	New Delhi (DEL) (Indira Gandhi Intl.)	Dharamshala (DHM) / Pathankot (PTK)	Mastiff Wildcrest (Gopalpur, HP)

2. The Residency Journey & Plein-Air Philosophy

The 7-Stage Creative Progression: ARRIVE → OBSERVE → EXPLORE → PAINT → SHARE → EXHIBIT → CONNECT

Studio Practice vs. Himalayan Plein-Air Painting

Dimension	Controlled Studio Practice	Himalayan Plein-Air Practice
Light & Environment	Constant artificial studio lighting	Rapidly shifting mountain sun, mist, atmospheric haze
Collaboration	Solitary individual workflow	Shared outdoor easel sessions with international peers
Subject Matter	Reference photos & indoor still life	Direct live response to tea gardens, forts & Dhauladhar peaks

3. Living Cultural Landscape & Key Regional Hubs

Excursion Sites & Heritage Immersion

- **Norbulingka Institute (Sidhpur):** Preservation center for traditional Tibetan arts. Artists observe master thangka painters, woodcarvers, and statue makers amidst serene Japanese-style gardens.
- **Kangra Fort (ASI Site):** Ancient 8th-century stone fortress with panoramic views over the Manjhi and Baner streams. Excursion permitted under Archaeological Survey of India access.
- **Andretta Artist Village:** Historic creative sanctuary established by Norah Richards and Sobha Singh. Includes studio pottery masterclasses at the Andretta Pottery & Craft Society.
- **Kailash Ashram (Gujrehra):** Spiritual sanctuary providing morning yoga and meditation sessions amidst peaceful pine forests.
- **TIPA (McLeod Ganj):** Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, hosting cultural evening showcases of traditional Himalayan folk music and dance.

Required Artist Contributions

- 2+ Completed Original Artworks created en plein air for the final exhibition and catalog.
- 1+ Heritage Response Piece reflecting visits to Kangra Fort, Norbulingka, or Andretta Pottery.
- 1+ Knowledge-Sharing Roundtable contribution during nightly country-specific garden sundowners.

4. Pack Your Studio (Field Equipment Checklist)

Paints & Canvas Mediums

- Professional oil / acrylic paint tubes
- Odorless mineral spirits / linseed oil in leak-proof containers (if permissible in the flights)
- Palette knives, brushes & brush washer jars

Weather & Personal Attire

- Thermal underlayers (temp varies in mountains)
- Windproof/water-resistant jacket & fleece
- Sturdy walking/hiking boots with good grip
- Wide-brim sun hat, UV sunglasses & sunscreen

Field Studio Equipment

- Lightweight French easel / pochade box with tripod
- Portable folding field stool / seat (if any)
- Viewfinder, palette clips & canvas carriers
- Rags, paper towels & trash disposal bags

Digital & Travel Documents

- Passport (valid for 6+ months past Mar 2027)
- Print copy of Indian Conference / Business Visa
- Personal artist portfolio & business cards
- Emergency medical insurance card & contact details

5. 15-Day Residency Schedule & Daily Rhythm

Three-Phase Residency Progression

Phase	Dates & Focus	Key Excursions & Evening Events
Phase 1: Regional Scouting	Days 1–5 (Feb 24 – Feb 28)	Arrivals, Norbulingka Institute, Dalai Lama Temple, Kangra Fort, Andretta Pottery & Kailash Ashram Yoga.
Phase 2: Core Workshops	Days 6–13 (Mar 1 – Mar 8)	Daytime plein-air painting in Palampur tea gardens & Neugal Khad. Nightly country-specific garden sundowners.
Phase 3: Grand Exhibition	Days 14–15 (Mar 9 – Mar 10)	Grand Pop-Up Exhibition & Fine Art Sale on Mastiff Wildcrest lawns, catalog release, Gala Dinner & departures.

6. Ethos, Code of Conduct & Cultural Decorum

5 Core Residency Principles

- **1. OBSERVE:** Approach the landscape, temples, and villages with quiet mindfulness.
- **2. ENGAGE:** Connect respectfully with local artisans, tea growers, and spiritual monks.
- **3. CREATE:** Produce original plein-air works capturing authentic light and atmosphere.
- **4. SHARE:** Participate actively in nightly country-specific roundtables and workshops.
- **5. CONNECT:** Build lasting cross-border creative relationships between Europe and India.

Cultural Guidelines

- **Sacred Site Etiquette:** Remove shoes before entering temple premises and monasteries.
- **Photography Ethics:** Always request permission before photographing local villagers, monks, or private studio spaces.
- **Environmental Care:** Leave no trace in tea gardens, forest trails, or stream banks. Carry all paint trash and rags back to hotel bins.

7. Essential Contacts & Final Master Checklist

Key Residency Contacts

Role / Department	Contact Entity	Email / Phone
Curator & Founder	Arijeet Chanda	arijeet@himalayanpleinair.com https://himalayanpleinair.com

Host Venue

Mastiff Wildcrest, Gopalpur

+91-9816-757-100

reservations@orangetigerhotels.com

Pre-Departure Master Checklist

- ☐ Passport valid for 6+ months beyond March 2027
- ☐ Approved Indian Visa printed
- ☐ Round-trip flight tickets to New Delhi (DEL) / Gaggal (DHM) confirmed
- ☐ Paint tubes & field tools for craft packed
- ☐ Warm layering apparel, boots & rainwear packed
- ☐ Emergency contact form & travel insurance copy completed