

# Saving big cats through art

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**NEW DELHI, Dec 18:** Anjolie Ela Menon's latest art project has a statement to make. A stretched fibre glass tiger with three babies in black and gold, it is part of a public art project that will see installations of tigers at various spots in the capital.

The project, "Artiger - Art for the Tiger", features 58 artists, 50 corporate houses and installations of tigers spread across 52 public locations in the capital to save the big cats which are threatened by a combination of factors in their habitats. Only 1,400 tigers are believed to be left in India.

The project is the brainchild of art promoters Swapan Seth, Aparajita Jain and Nandita Kathapalia Baig, the founding board of Youthreach, a Delhi-based non-profit organization. It is being implemented by Saat Saath Arts, an NGO that uses art to generate funds and awareness on public issues.

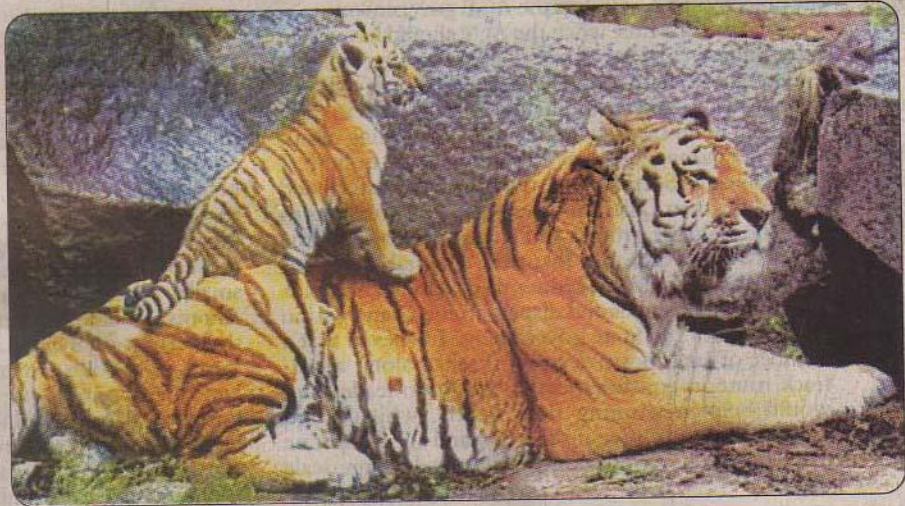
The participating artists in-

clude Anjolie Ela Menon, Akshay Rathore, Arpita Singh, Chittrovanu Mazumdar, Jayasri Burman, Arzan Khambatta and Manu

tiger is a good cause," she said.

The tiger installations will be allotted to corporate houses at a ceremony here on December 19.

in public space, given their unfamiliarity to good art. It is a good example of the democratization of art. Art should be egalitarian."



Parekh, among others.

The initiative is being described as the "largest public art display the country has ever witnessed" by its hosts.

"I completed my tigers a week ago. The first fibre glass dummy of the tiger I had received to work were too fat and short. I had to requisition a fresh tiger which was more elongated and stretched. I had to make a cut in the middle of its stomach to place three babies inside," Menon told IANS.

"The corporate houses have booked the tigers and the proceeds from the blind auction will go to the Ranthambore Foundation," Menon said.

The artist wants to devote the rest of her working life to the cause of public spaces. "I think

After the auction, the tigers will be installed at strategic public spaces across the capital for four months for people to engage with the models and at the end they will be taken away by the corporate houses.

Ranthambore Foundation will use the money to develop economic options and skills of women living on the fringes of tiger habitats to cut down their dependence on forests and in planning ways to reduce the population burden on the tiger reserves, education and eco-sensitization of children and direct intervention at the local level to stop poaching.

"The project is a remarkable testimony of the coming together of artists, corporate groups and the government to leave behind an imprint in public space. It is also a philanthropic effort," project co-promoter Swapan Seth told IANS.

"The project will also change the attitude of people towards art

Gallerist and curator Aparajita Jain said the project was inspired by the London Elephant Parade. "I saw in London and discussed with my husband the idea of initiating a similar project to save Asian tigers. Later I met Swapan (Seth) and carried it further," Jain told IANS.

London Elephant Parade in 2010 summer celebrated the "beauty of the Asian elephant with 260 painted elephants festooning the parks, squares and streets of central London".

It drew over 25 million people between May and June and raised four million pounds to benefit 17 conservation charities in Britain. It was voted one of the "moving public art projects in Britain". Bharat Kapur, member of the board and chairman of Ranthambore Foundation, said: "We are delighted to be the prime beneficiary of Artiger, the most creative and innovative resource generation initiative I am aware of." IANS