

The initial series of twelve weekly workshops for 16 – 24 year olds will run from Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January to Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Time: 4.30-6.30pm

Venue: The Station, Silver Street, Bristol BS1 2AG

No experience necessary, all equipment provided

FREE

If you know a young person who might want to be involved, or you would like to be interviewed as part of the project, please contact [polly@asianartsagency.co.uk](mailto:polly@asianartsagency.co.uk) or call 0117 929 1110

### About Asian Arts Agency

Asian Arts Agency is an arts development agency that develops, promotes and supports international contemporary and traditional South Asian arts in the South West and across the UK.

Asian Arts Agency, Royal Oak House, Royal Oak Avenue, Queen Square, Bristol BS1 4GB

[www.asianartsagency.co.uk](http://www.asianartsagency.co.uk)



## *Desh*

### Project launch

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October, Watershed Bristol



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Asian Arts Agency, in partnership with individuals and community groups, has devised the *Desh* project, to collect, exhibit and archive the folk art forms of the South Asian diaspora settled in Bristol and the surrounding areas. 'Desh' means 'homeland' or 'motherland' in Hindi and Urdu.

We are aware that many heritage projects in Bristol's BME communities have focused on stories of migration. Whilst it's vital we understand and learn about the migration stories, we want to also make sure our folk culture, which is so important in shaping who we are as individuals and communities, is preserved for future generations to explore and to be understood by the wider public. Folk culture often reveals a lot about the social and historical context of a people. We want to bring Asian elders together with the younger generations of the South Asian diaspora to share their knowledge and wisdom and make sure it is not lost. The memories will stretch back to 1930s-1960s, and will span not only the South Asians who migrated from the sub-continent directly to move to UK, but also those of Indian origin that travelled from South Africa, Uganda and Kenya, whose stories and folklore have evolved and intermingled with local histories over generations since they were displaced during the British Empire.

Even today, Asian parents and grandparents living in the UK repeat lullabies or nursery rhymes that reveal a lot about the social history of India/Pakistan pre-partition. The materials

collected will encompass folk songs, lullabies, stories from the days of Empire, parables and spiritual tales that will be lost if we do not record them now, before the first generation of immigrants die out.

Further, the project will collect interpretations of the traditional folk heritage by the younger generation of British Asians in the South West. Young British Asians from Bristol and the surrounding area will interview elders to collect the oral histories, but will also explore the theme of "homeland" through the creation of digital stories. Each participant will have the opportunity to 'respond' to a poem/story/song told by the elders through animation and music, to research the historical context, and share experiences and impressions about being born into a multiple-heritage context in Bristol today. Throughout the project young people will work with professional artists to explore different animation techniques, digital story telling and music production, gaining new skills and experience that will build up their CVs.

The result will be a dynamic and interactive touring exhibition with traditional and contemporary interpretations of folk arts collected from older South Asians settled in the South West region.

The exhibition will be launched in Bristol in September 2014, and will tour to Swindon Library/community venues in partnership with SAPAC and Plymouth University in partnership with Plymouth Mela. The *Desh* Project will run from January 2014 until March 2015.