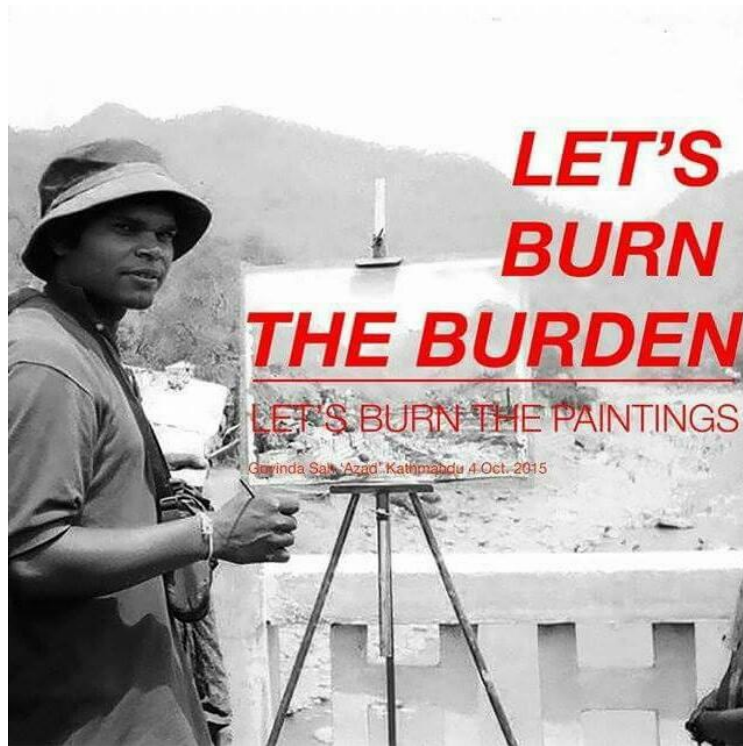


Let's Burn the Burden, Burn the Paintings: an arts protest for Peace and Humanity



'It is 15 years ago I made my journey for peace, when Nepal was at unrest with the Maoists war against the government and now 15 years later, with the government against the Terai people. This event is dedicated to people who have lost or are losing their lives for equality, respect and justice before and now. May peace prevail.' Govinda Sah Azad 16th September 2015

On 4th October 2015, UK based internationally renowned painter, Govinda Sah 'Azad' will be involved in a once in a lifetime event that very few artists ever experience – burning his paintings. The paintings in question, were created at the time of his legendary cycle tour across Nepal from Mechi in the far east to Mahakali in the far west of the country in 2000. At that time, Nepal was engulfed in the troubles of the Maoist insurgency, and the cycle tour, in which Govinda taught art and painted as he entered community after community across the nation, was undertaken for the cause of Peace and sharing the experience of humanity through the practice of art. Now 15 years later Govinda has returned to his beloved Nepal to show solidarity with all of its People, in an act of sacrifice of historic proportions and rarity.

He is burning all of the paintings he created at the time of the cycle tour fifteen years earlier, to show that art is not for entertainment or a leisure pursuit, it is not even a career or vocation, it is nothing less than Life and Humanity united through the act of creativity. So how is the burning of paintings to be understood as being an act of creation?? An artist's work constitutes his very soul and spiritual children, and so to burn such work is akin to an act of spiritual self-destruction – only in the most exceptional circumstances do artists burn their own work, and this for exceptional reasons.



Govinda Sah Azad in taking this action is making a call not only to all fellow artists in Nepal and across the world, but to the People of Nepal at this time of national tragedy and sorrow with the recent deaths and killings in the Terai. In burning the paintings he calls witness to the fact this is done as a symbolic act (as with the original cycle tour of 2000) for the nation to return to peace and for all of its citizens to be able to live lives free of fear, violence, discrimination, injustice and division. Through this event, Govinda calls on all to support these values who through them and their Humanity truly love Nepal.

This exceptional event highlights so well in Nepal itself and to the broader world how artists and the creative community of Nepal are at the forefront of activity in support of values of humanity through their work for all peoples of Nepal and by extension the wider world. This special role of the artistic community of Nepal is a core part of the vision and values of the Nepal International Arts Programme which are directed by the aim of supporting equality and empowerment initiatives of service to all sections of Nepali society and the nation:

<http://creativenepal.co.uk/equality-empowerment/>