



presents

# Sacred Hills

*A Vibrant Serenity*

*Photography Exhibition by **A. Prathap***

*(Special photographer with The Times of India, Chennai)*

of

Lalitgiri, Udayagiri & Ratnagiri - The Buddhist Archaeological Sites of Odisha

(marked by UNESCO as World Heritage)

with dancers **Ramli Ibrahim & Geethika Sree**

*Officiated by **YBhg Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria***

*Executive Director, APEC Secretariat, Singapore*

**16 March, 2019 @ 8.00 pm**

(Exhibition continues until 07 April 2019)

**Sutra Gallery**

12, Persiaran Titiwangsa 3

53200 Kuala Lumpur





# A VIBRANT SERENITY

– An Introduction

About fifty years ago, as a child, I often used to visit Dhauli, a small hill lying at a distance of a couple of kilometres from my village. The now famous Ashoka rock edict lay neglected and attracted few visitors from the world outside. As we played around the head of the elephant sculpted out of the outcrop of rock bearing the edict, little did we realise that it had been carved more than two thousand years ago and took no notice of the strange serenity it quietly exuded. Not far away from Dhauli lies Delang, a small railway station one crosses on one's way to Puri. Much later in my life I was told that Delang derives its name from the famous Buddhist scholar, Dingnag. Recently I met a Tibetan Buddhist monk who came all the way from Dharamshala to locate the cave which was Dingnag's abode several centuries ago. Villages in the vicinity of Dhauli bore names such as Bodhakhandi and Budhipada. Chakulia Panda or wandering beggars carrying palm leaf umbrellas, would pass through my village singing songs urging householders to make gifts of rice but not stopping to ask for alms. We were expected to go after the mendicants and offer charity to them. Even as children, we were struck by their distinctive ways of seeking alms. It is only later that I learn from an article written by the renowned scholar, Nilakantha Das that the Pandas were living relics of a Buddhist past. They continue to adhere to practices of Buddhist monks in the hoary past, going out to collect alms from householders in villages.

In short, beneath the surface of a world crowded with Hindu gods and goddesses, colourful and intricate Brahmanical rituals associated with the worship offered to them, lay buried a rich but forgotten legacy of a Buddhist past. It now requires an enormous effort to re-imagine an Odisha that was a flourishing centre of Buddhism for over a thousand years, which was home to *sramanas* (itinerant Buddhist monks) even before Ashoka invaded it in the third century B.C.. All that is left of this world, intellectually and spiritually, once so vibrant and so cosmopolitan in its outlook and character, are the

magnificent ruins one comes across in Lalitgiri, Udayagiri, Ratnagiri and Langudi and the remains of stupas and monasteries in so many other sites in the state. The grace, beauty and elegance of whatever has survived the ravages of time, human neglect, even animosity, take one's breath away. How one wishes one could hear what a lost world speaks to us through its majestic remains!

Historians have sought to reconstruct the many-layered Buddhist heritage of Odisha through meticulous research and painstaking archaeological excavations. Published



*Lalitgiri*

in 1959 by Utkal University, Professor Nabin Kumar Sahu's monumental study titled *Buddhism in Orissa*, which carries an 'opinion' by Sir W.Y.Evans-Wenz, author of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and a foreword by the eminent professor of Pali, Nalinaksha Dutta, offers a vivid account of the growth and decline of Buddhism in this part of India and shows how it emerged as a cradle of Mahayana Buddhism. He also tells us how Bajrayana, an offshoot of Buddhism, originated in Odisha and eventually reached and permeated Tibet. The art historian Charles Fabri, while providing a detailed study of the three Buddhist sites constituting the Diamond Triangle – Lalitgiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri – offers tantalising speculations about the factors that caused the rise and decline of these huge monastic complexes and the social and political order that sustained them. Debala Mitra's notes on the excavation of the Buddhist site at Ratnagiri urge the readers to look beyond the Brahmanical heritage that dominates Odisha today at a past that once contested it, sculpting alternative orders of thought and forging a distinctive worldview.



*Udayagiri*



*Ratnagiri*

But excavations and scholarly reconstructions of a lost world can only go so far in reimagining it. The artist has a distinct advantage over the scholar here. The entralling poses struck by Ramli and Geethika Sree in front of the images of the Buddha in the three famous Buddhist sites, deftly and memorably captured by photographer A. Prathap, pay a tribute to what is unique about them: the pulsating stillness they radiate. The transience of the human body is transcended for a moment as it seeks to convey through joyous abandon a sense of bliss born of detachment. Passion shades into compassion and the viewer is drawn into the heart of a vibrant quietude. For a brief fleeting while, one is miraculously transported to take part in a rite of lost innocence.

**Jatindra Kumar Nayak**

7 February, 2019



*Set to Row*

Photo Nelly Astana  
December, 2018

## A. Prathap speaks...

Photography is my passion, my job, my career; but photographing Ramli improvising his dance amidst ancient temple settings, is an inspiring experience that has become a compulsion for me. I first photographed him in 2015 at the Sun Temple of Konark after which we ran a successful exhibition, *Ramli in Konark* (2016), at Sutra Gallery in Kuala Lumpur. Early 2018, I photographed a resplendent Ramli at the magnificent Ellora Rock Caves (Maharashtra) and subsequently we ran another exhibition, *Cave of the Heart* (2018), at Sutra Gallery.

*Sacred Hills* will be the third in my series of Ramli in Indian temple sites, this time with the added interest of Geethika Sree, talented principal dancer of Sutra Foundation, being also featured alongside Ramli.

Photographing Ramli at the Diamond Triangle, the sacred hills of Lalitgiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri in Odisha had become a bee buzzing in my head for some time and the opportunity to translate the obsession into reality presented itself when Ramli and Geethika were invited to perform in Bhubaneswar (Odisha) in October 2018. Ramli asked me if I wanted to pick up on the opportunity to do a Diamond Triangle shoot. I jumped onto the next flight out of Chennai. The timing I thought was also perfect as it was just after the monsoon and this would give the Buddhist archaeological sites a garden-fresh and crisp look.

When we reached Bhubaneswar though, a casual chat with friends revealed that our timing calculation might be a bit off the mark. We were warned that there was likely to be rain and that it was the wrong time for a photo shoot at the sites. Challenging situations are not new for Ramli or me, and having come this far, we decided to take the chance and to proceed, ready to face the consequences of bad weather. Luckily for us, Mother Nature was on our side the next day and it rained elsewhere.

After a two-hour morning drive from Bhubaneswar, we reached Lalitgiri for a recce. Ramli became excited, telling me that the site of Lalitgiri looked just like the Bujang Valley in Kedah (Malaysia), and proclaiming that there surely must be a long and deep

connection between the peoples of the two regions. We identified the interesting key spots and proceeded to the only hotel around the sites for a little rest.

We began shooting at Ratnagiri, which was just five minutes away from our hotel. The weather was favourable. We started shooting around noon and were able to wrap up in just a couple of hours. After a quick late lunch and a short break, we headed to Udayagiri during a slight drizzle, which made us a little worried about being frustrated in our plans. When we reached the site around 3 p.m., the weather cleared and was perfect for the shoot. We worked till it was almost dark before calling it a day. Exhausted, we headed back to the hotel after a long and satisfying shoot. The next morning, a pleasant day greeted us and we drove early to Lalitgiri. It was a relatively easy work as there was hardly anyone at the site at that time and we had done our recce earlier.

Photographing at the sacred hills of Lalitgiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri was a totally novel experience as compared to my earlier shoots at the Sun Temple of Konark and the Ellora Rock Caves. The sites had a serene atmosphere with palpable austere and meditative quality inherent to Buddhist philosophy permeating the sites. Crowd management at a public site is always challenging with the distraction of people milling around with the persistent requests for *wefie* with Ramli & Geethika in full costume.

Upon completing our assignment at the three archaeological sites, we headed back to Bhubaneswar, a happy trio with lots of images and a treasure trove of memories. As I had not been to Puri, Ramli suggested that we head there, while Geethika was to stay in Bhubaneswar to learn new odissi repertoire while we relished a two-day rest in Puri.

My trip to Odisha ended on a windy morning but not before taking an evocative photograph of Ramli relaxing on a fishing boat by Puri beach, as we waited for first ray of Surya to light the day. I then hurried for my long drive to the airport in Bhubaneswar to catch my flight back to Chennai, which greeted me with a heavy downpour.

[Apart from these series of photographs on Ramli and Indian temples, A. Prathap has also been working on other subjects, the most recent being on the *Orang Laut* (Sea Gypsies) of Sabah, East Malaysia. But that's another story for another exhibition.]

**A Prathap**  
December, 2018



## Ramli Ibrahim speaks...

My initial impression of Lalitgiri in the first light of day transported me to the Bujang Valley in Kedah, Malaysia. It was the way in which the clay bricks were laid out as the base for a complex of stupas, that caught my attention. The slivers of forlorn-looking clay bricks sans stupas (rather than heavy stones edifices) revealed the layout design of the campus complex. Across the waves of the Indian Ocean, in the Bujang Valley in Kedah (the oldest Hindu-Buddhist archaeological site (2nd Century B.C. - 7th Century A.D.) in Southeast Asia), this traditional design construction was repeated. The déjà vu feel was distinct and palpable, making my hair stand on end and sending a shiver down my spine. I had always intuited that the Eastboard of the Indian Ocean, once the seat of the ancient Kalinga (former name of the region which is now Odisha) Empire would logically have a strong connection with the Bujang Valley. Now, I was utterly convinced!

Lalitgiri, Udayagiri, Ratnagiri. These '*Giris*' or hills (otherwise '*Bukit*' in Malay) are well known Buddhist archaeological sites in Odisha. In the 3rd Century B.C. when hundreds of thousands were killed as a result of the great Kalinga War, the triumphant but remorseful conquering Maurya emperor, Ashoka embraced Buddhism and declared that there would be no more wars and killing. In time, Kalinga became a centre of

*Ramli in Bujang Valley, Kedah*  
Photo Kishore Sahoo  
December, 2018

Buddhist thought and learning. Buddhist philosophy spread far and wide to Sri Lanka, Burma and Southeast Asia from Kalinga. Seekers of the Path of Dhamma flocked to Kalinga and the three sacred hills - Lalitgiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri, became renowned Buddhist centres of learning.

It is not difficult to imagine and accept that the initial link with India as far as the Malay Peninsula was concerned would be with the vibrant Kalinga Civilisation. Trade and cultural links between the two regions would have prospered then. *Bali Jatra*, a festival commemorating the sending off of Kalinga merchants to Malay Peninsula (*Suvarnadwipa*), the Indonesian islands of Sumatra (*Malayadwipa*), Java (*Yavadwipa*), Bali and others, has been celebrated for centuries past in Cuttack (Odisha) along the Mahanadi River up till the present day. Significant maritime contact with Kalinga took place far earlier than those with the Cholas, which ensued later. Kadaram, or Kataha (Kedah) was the first port-of-call for the merchants of Kalinga who were referred to as the '*Kelings*'. But it is not for me to examine and debate here on these archaeological and anthropological issues.

In April 2018, Sutra Foundation had organised a lecture by Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, who was Chairman-Founder of Kalinga International Foundation, at the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Indian Cultural Centre in Kuala Lumpur. The talk was an eye-opener as it discussed in detail the many cultural and trade facets forged over centuries through the maritime links between the two regions.

Previous to this, I had also brought my young dancers to visit the Bujang Valley where we experienced an insightful lecture-tour by Prof Dr Mokhtar Saidin, Director of Centre for Global Archaeological Research (CGAR), University Sains Malaysia. Dr Mokhtar spoke of the rich and interesting new discoveries, especially of the Sungai Batu areas and its implications as far as updating and re-reading of the history of the Malay Peninsula. The Valley once ran a vibrant and prosperous iron smelting trade industry with the rest of the world. Now, the date of the Bujang Valley civilization has been pushed as far back as 535 B.C.!

Chennai-based photographer A. Prathap, whose photography exhibition titled *Sacred Hills* we are presently celebrating, had previously displayed his photographic series inspired by the majestic Temples of Konark and Ellora Rock Caves at Sutra Gallery. The opportunity to visit the 'Sacred Hills' arose when Sutra dancer, Geethika Sree and I, were invited to perform in Bhubaneswar. Good fortune allowed us to spend time together with Prathap and accompany him to the three archaeological Buddhist sites of Lalitgiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri, there to be photographed by Prathap. According to Prathap, he needed our presence there to energise the space and to connect the old temples and sculptures with the present time.

Serendipitously, at the performance in Bhubaneswar, we met Mr Vijay Gupta who was attached to the Archaeological Survey of India and with his help, we were able to get our photographic work done without too much bureaucratic hassle. And so, it came about that on one fine day in October 2018, the three of us – Prathap, Geethika and I found ourselves being driven to these Buddhist sites which are about 100 km Northeast of Bhubaneswar.

I guess it was in relation to these subsequent series of events, which eventually drew us to Lalitgiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri. Though marked by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites, these three sacred hills of ancient Buddhist centres have yet to gain fame in the general mill of popular tourist track. However, they have started to acquire popularity amongst international Buddhist pilgrims judging from the roving visit of a good number of saffron-robed monks and acolytes. One can still saunter around the '*Giris*' and not feel unduly hassled by hordes of noisy tourists and distracting devotees as with other popular temple grounds. One can still walk among the ruins and commune with the silent spirits of the relic of stupas and sculptures. Within the atmosphere of quietude yet vibrant serenity, one cannot help but wonder if the universal wisdom and message espoused by the noble men who once walked these sites will ever again find currency in this present technologically driven, digitised and global era.

**Ramli Ibrahim**

16 December, 2018





*The pilgrim communes  
With past lives and events  
When knowledge was  
Man's greatest gift*

*A Quietude*  
56 x 84 cms  
October, 2018

## Lalitgiri

Located at a distance of 85 kilometres from Bhubaneswar, Lalitgiri is a centrally protected Buddhist site since 1937. Excavations carried out in 1977 and 1991-92 have yielded remains of an extensive Buddhist establishment that flourished from the 2nd century B.C. to 11th-12th centuries A.D. These include an impressive stupa, an apsidal temple, four monasteries and finds such as stone sculptures, terracotta seals, inscribed potsherds and bricks. The discovery of a casket containing a charred bone wrapped in gold foil lends immense significance to the site as the bone could well be a relic of the Buddha, an object worshipped by his devotees. Several Buddha images found at the site are datable to 6th-7th centuries and reveal features of late Gupta sculptural style. These include that of Muchhalinda Buddha, which shows him seated on the coil of a snake whose hood protects his head in the form of a canopy.





*In my next life  
Grant me  
The nectar of your  
Blessings*

*Rebirth*  
56 x 82 cms  
October, 2018





*I drink from  
The compassion  
Of your transcendent knowledge  
O, Mother!*

*Compassion*  
56 x 86 cms  
October, 2018

*Let me soar  
To the highest level  
Of Knowledge  
Truth & Beauty*

*Soaring Beyond*  
56 x 80 cms  
October, 2018









*Let my body  
Conjoin with yours  
In form  
Anticipating the return  
Of Your Divine Spirit*

*Joined in Form*  
56 x 84 cms  
October, 2018



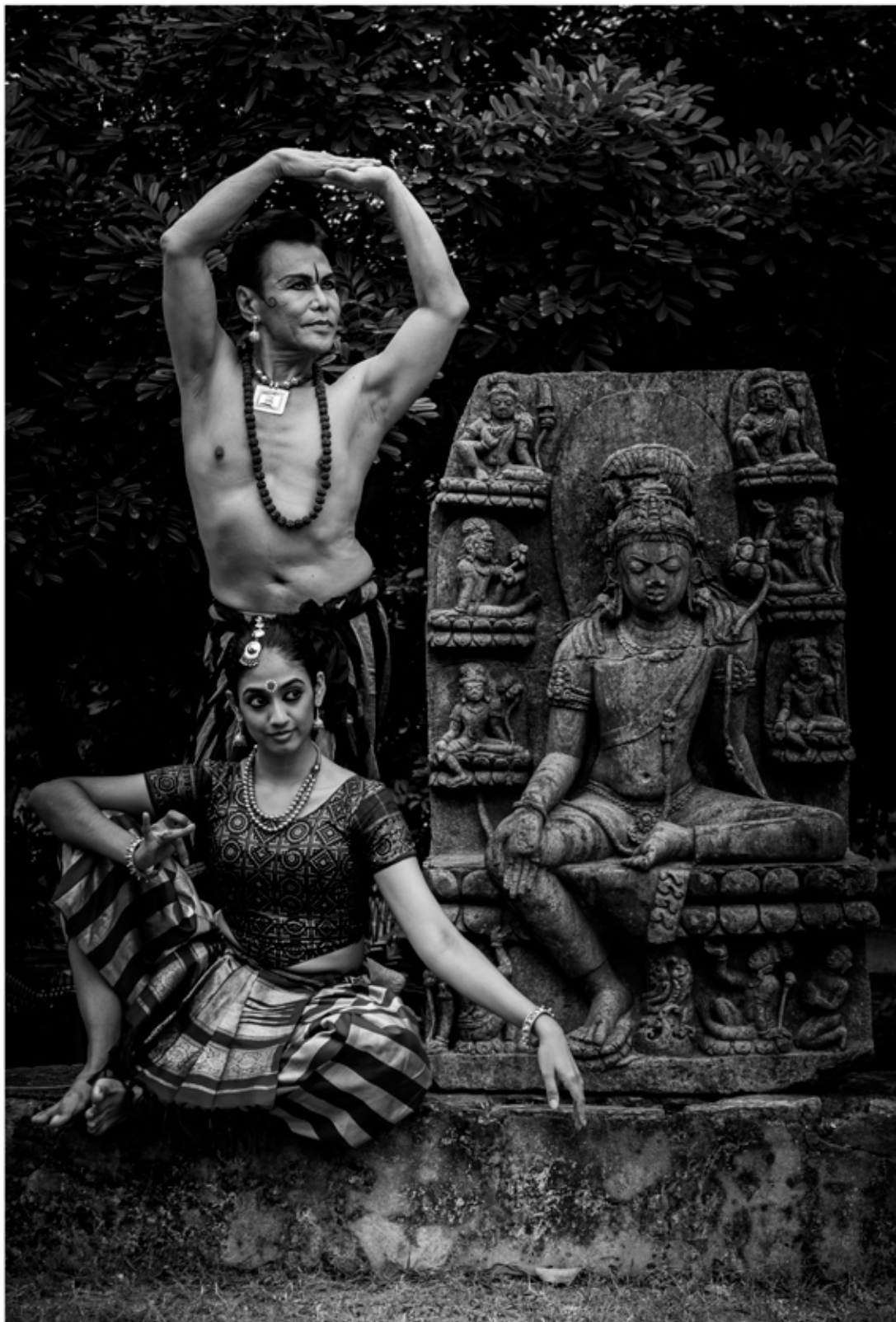


*Once, here walked  
Wise and noble men  
To whom was revealed  
Universal Wisdom*

*Pastoral Tranquillity*  
56 x 84 cms  
October, 2018

## Udayagiri

Situated at a distance of about 90 kilometres from Bhubaneswar, Udayagiri is the youngest of the three Buddhist sites constituting the celebrated Diamond Triangle. Excavations conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1985-1989 and 1997-2000 in two locations led to the discovery of two magnificent monastic complexes here. The hills rearing on three sides of the site that overlooks river Birupa provide it a fascinating backdrop. The first monastic complex comprises a stupa, an ornamental gate and a residential shrine. The second complex consists of a north-northwest facing monastery having a stone-paved courtyard and several monastic cells. It houses a massive image of the Buddha in *bhumisparsha mudra* made of separate blocks of stone. The excavation of the site has also led to the discovery of several votive stupas and the 2.40 metre high image of Avalokiteswar. Thirteen rock-cut images placed in niches cut into the hill constitute another important attraction of the site. One also comes across here a deep stepped well.



*A Vibrant Composure*  
84 x 56 cms  
October, 2018

*When the stable tension  
Of three  
Creates  
An active balance in  
Composition*

*Symmetry and balance*  
*Principles of order and discipline*  
*Reflected*  
*In design of form*

*The Perfect Symmetry*  
56 x 84 cms  
October, 2018





*Exploration, danger*  
*Off-balance composition*  
*Anticipation of*  
*A creative future*  
*Encounter*

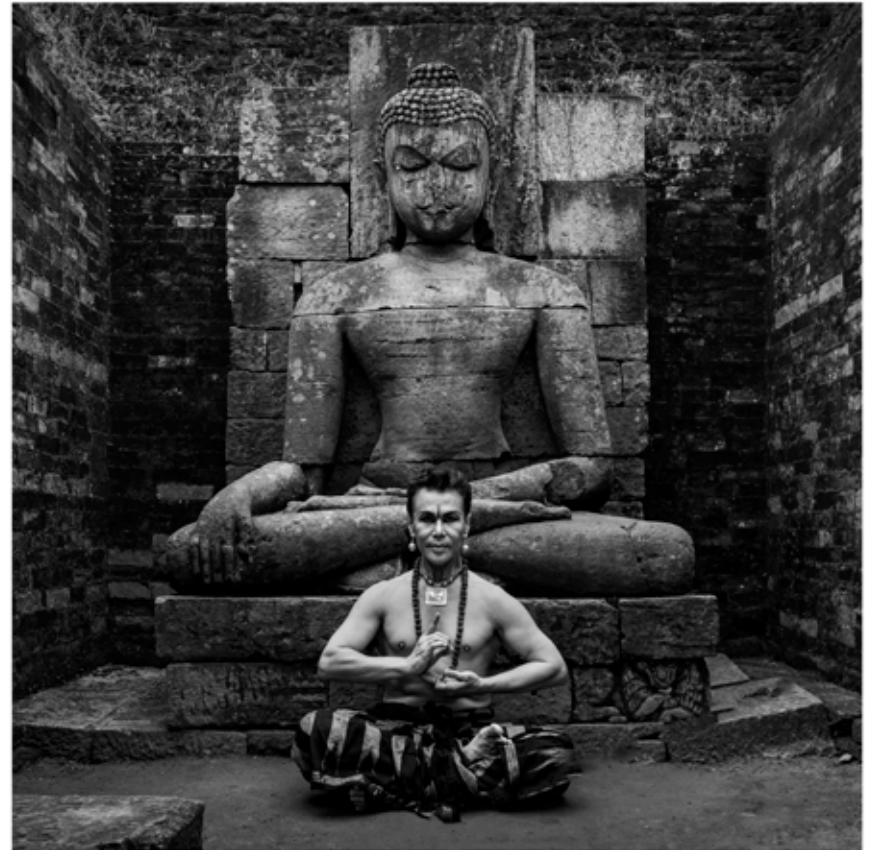
*Eager Anticipation*  
56 x 82 cms  
October, 2018

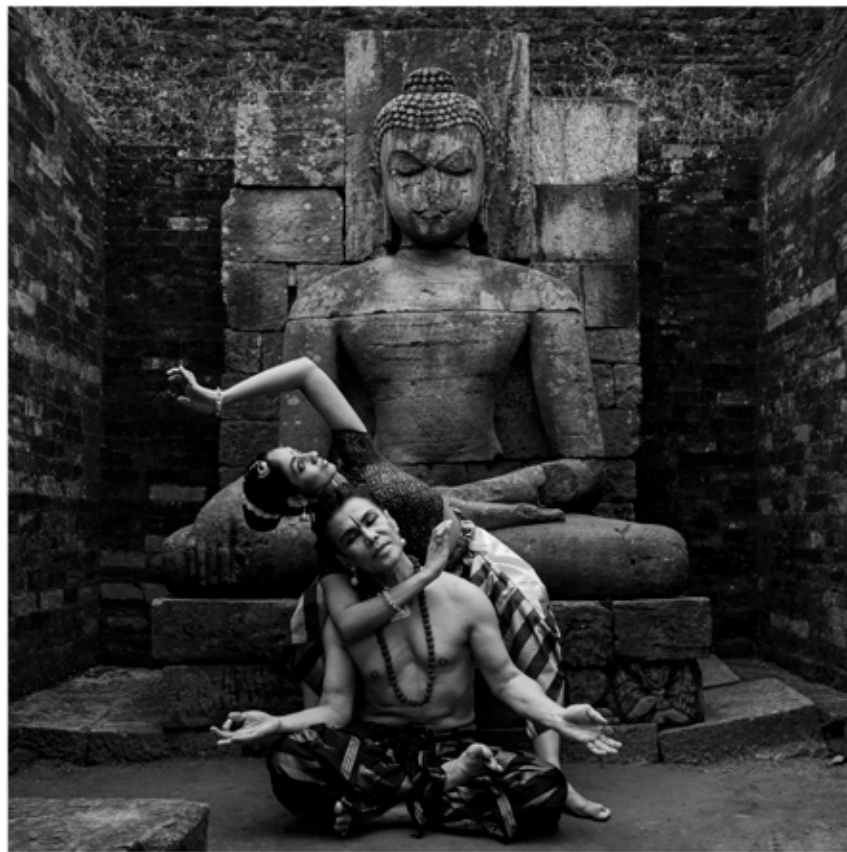
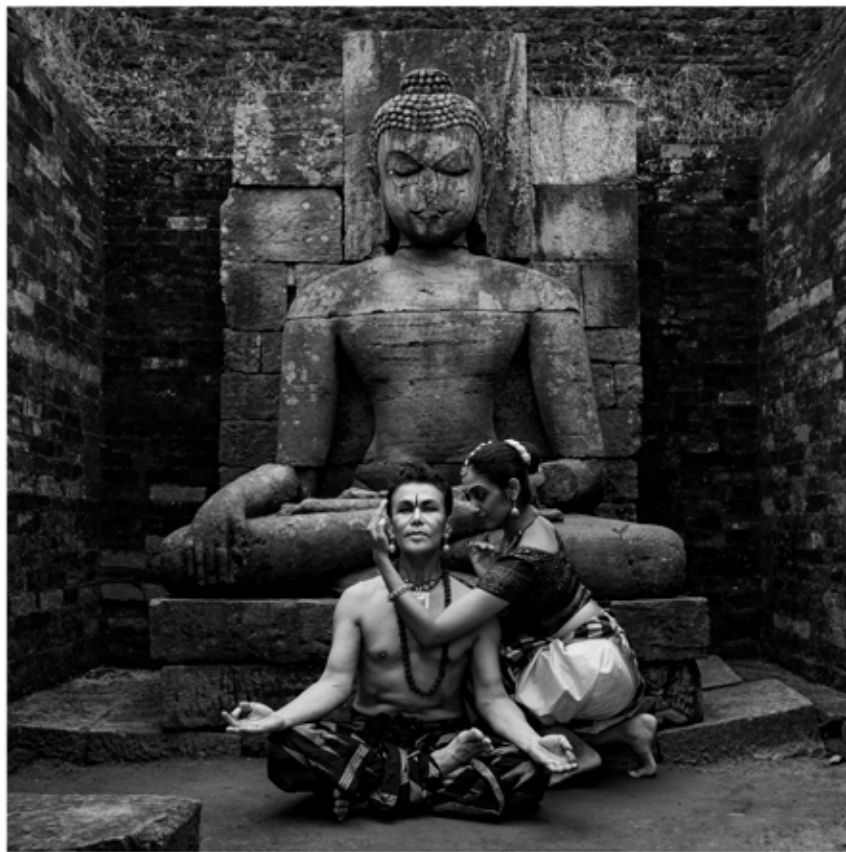


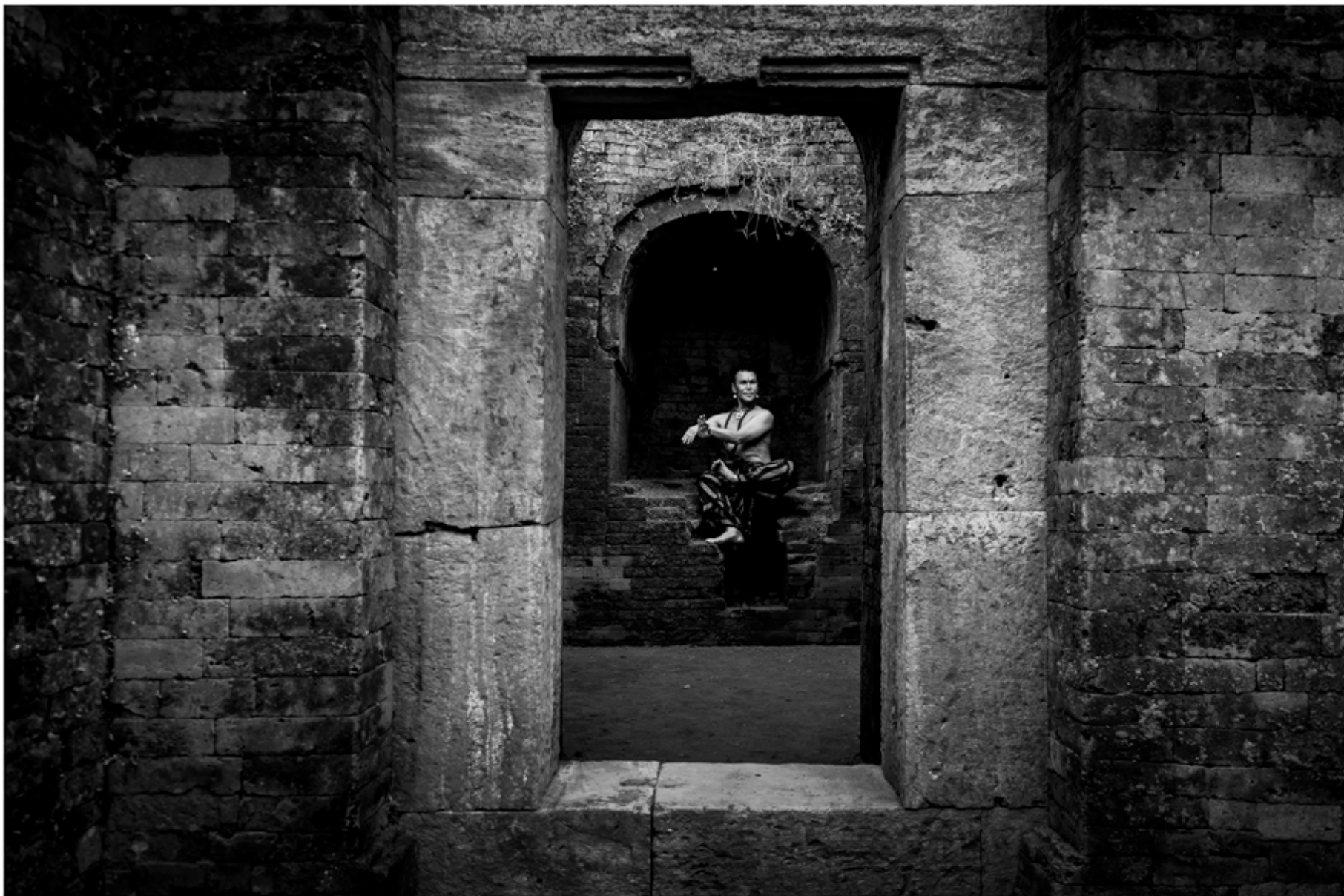


*The Buddha  
Un-swayed  
By the Temptress  
Why be concerned  
with the fate of  
The fallen acolyte?*

*The Temptation I, II, III*  
100 x 100 cms  
October, 2018







*Divinity Framed*  
56 x 84 cms  
October, 2018

*At the sanctum  
The Lord beckons me  
After an arduous journey*

*The Pilgrim descends  
Down the ancient stepped well  
Which welcomes him  
With cool, turquoise-green water  
To quench his thirst*

*Well of Salvation*  
56 x 86 cms  
October, 2018





*Complementary energies  
Unite, soar  
Generating a quiet  
amplified resonance  
Of blessing*

*A Blessed Union*  
56 x 84 cms  
October, 2018









*The Tree of Life  
A witness  
To the joy of union  
Of mind and matter*

*Pastoral Embrace*  
56 x 86 cms  
October, 2018

## Ratnagiri

Rising from the expanse of an alluvial plain, Ratnagiri or the hill of the jewel, is situated on the bank of river Kelua at a distance of about a 100 kilometres from Bhubaneswar, the state capital of Odisha. Excavations carried out by Debala Mitra of the Archaeological Survey of India from 1958 to 1961 yielded the remains of a large monastic establishment that flourished between the 5th century A.D. to the 13th century A.D. Mitra expresses the view that in its overwhelming number of monolithic stupas, Ratnagiri can compete with even Bodhgaya. Historian Nabin Kumar Sahu informs us that Prajna, who was studying in the monastery in Ratnagiri, was sent as a cultural ambassador by Subhankar, a king of the Bhauma-Kar dynasty, in 790 A.D. to the court of the Chinese emperor, Te-Tsong. In his pioneering work, *The History of the Art in Orissa*, Charles Fabri traces the evolution of this monastery over the centuries and suggests that dancing had penetrated the sacred precincts of this great monastery by about 850 A.D. or so. Of an image of the Buddha discovered at this site, Fabri says, "*There is a superb peace, serenity and contentment that dominate the entire figure... there plays around his lips a smile, the smile of contentment, not that of pessimism (as so many people assume wrongly of Buddhism) but of a man of detachment*".

*I have waited  
Centuries for the  
Spirit of joy and blessings  
To once again fill this hall*

***Repose***  
56 x 82 cms  
October, 2018







*As the wind blows  
The lotus stem  
Inclines under the weight  
Of the petals of a flower  
In full bloom*

*A Leaning Lotus*  
56 x 86 cms  
October, 2018





*Is it possible to enhance  
Divinity  
Already perfect in  
His Equanimity?*

*Framing Equanimity*  
56 x 84 cms  
October, 2018



*The glow  
Of Divinity  
Expressed in stone  
The inner beauty of  
A vibrant serenity*

*Lotus Face*  
56 x 86 cms  
October, 2018





*Tara,  
You are the guardian  
Of transcendent knowledge  
A sentinel of  
Ancient relics*

*Tara*  
56 x 120 cms  
October, 2018

*Celestial Beings  
Hover  
Over stupas  
Like dragon-flies  
Lingering around flowers in full bloom*

*Boundless Leap*  
56 x 82 cms  
October, 2018





## A. Prathap

---

A. Prathap is a Special Photographer with *The Times of India*, Chennai. He has spent more than 15 years behind the camera, freezing images of national and international events, personalities and performers, and documenting life for posterity in all its myriad situations. Though it began as a hobby (and later became his profession), photography developed for Prathap in a natural progression to become a love as he deepened his aesthetic appreciation and knowledge. Prathap has an intense passion to learn new things from situations and people. He brings the same passion and curiosity while covering a wide range of subjects.

Prathap started his career in 2004 with *News Today*, an evening daily in Chennai, and subsequently joined *The Times of India* after it began its Chennai edition in 2008. He was involved in directing a short-film documentary that was screened at *Bridging Cultures*, a documentary film festival organized by Brooklyn College City University, New York.

## Exhibition & Book

### **Vision of Odissi**

Forum Art Gallery, Chennai (2012)

### **Joined In Dance**

Sutra Gallery, Kuala Lumpur (2013)

### **Between Creations**

Foyer exhibition at the KLPAC (KL Performing Arts Centre) & Sutra Gallery, Kuala Lumpur (2014)

### **Transforming Lives - Transforming Culture**

An exhibition on Kattaikkuttu at Café Amethyst, & Grand by GRT Hotels, Chennai (2015)

### **Padme**

An exhibition showcasing the artwork of select painters, sculptors and photographers at Forum Art Gallery, Chennai (2015)

### **Quintessential Sutra**

A pictorial book by Sutra Foundation, Kuala Lumpur, co-published by The Malaysian Institute of Translation & Books (2015)

### **GANJAM**

Sutra Gallery, Kuala Lumpur & The Bellevue Gallery (Penang Hill), Malaysia (2016)

### **Ramli in Konark**

Sutra Gallery, Kuala Lumpur (2016)

### **Myriad Faces**

An exhibition on Kattaikkuttu, jointly organized by the Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Indian Cultural Centre (Malaysia) & Sutra Gallery, Kuala Lumpur (2017)

### **Perceive - Dance and Monuments**

An exhibition on Ramli Ibrahim surrounded by the majestic architecture of the Sun Temple of Konark at Art Bistro (Grand by GRT Hotels), Art Houz and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai presented by Natya Darshan (2017)

### **Cave of the Heart**

Photography exhibition of Ellora Caves, Maharashtra, India with odissi dancer Ramli Ibrahim (2018)

### **Sacred Hills**

Photography exhibition of Lalitgiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri - the Buddhist archaeological sites in Odisha, marked by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites, featuring Ramli Ibrahim and Geethika Sree (2019)





## **Datuk Ramli Ibrahim**

Artistic Director and Chairman  
of Sutra Foundation

Described by international dance connoisseurs as one of the finest artistes of his generation, Ramli Ibrahim is a cultural icon who has performed internationally for more than four decades. His rigorous training in ballet, modern, and Indian classical dance reflects not only his diverse technical accomplishment, but also his multifaceted approach to the performing arts.

As artistic director of Sutra Dance Theatre, Ramli has choreographed stunning works and nurtured some of the brightest dance talents from Malaysia, many of whom have won international acclaim in both traditional and contemporary scenes.

Ramli has been instrumental in transforming the dance scenario in Malaysia to the vibrant state it is today. He is known for single handedly establishing odissi as a recognisable and widely appreciated dance form in the country, while creating a distinctively Malaysian interpretation of this ancient tradition.

As a dance pioneer, Ramli is recognised internationally within the arts scene, evident in the numerous accolades conferred upon him. He is acknowledged as a 'Living Heritage' by the Government of Malaysia as the United Nations declared him to be a UNESCO Living Treasure in 2012.

The Presidents of India conferred Ramli with the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2011), the first ever for a Malaysian and also the Padma Shri Award (2018).

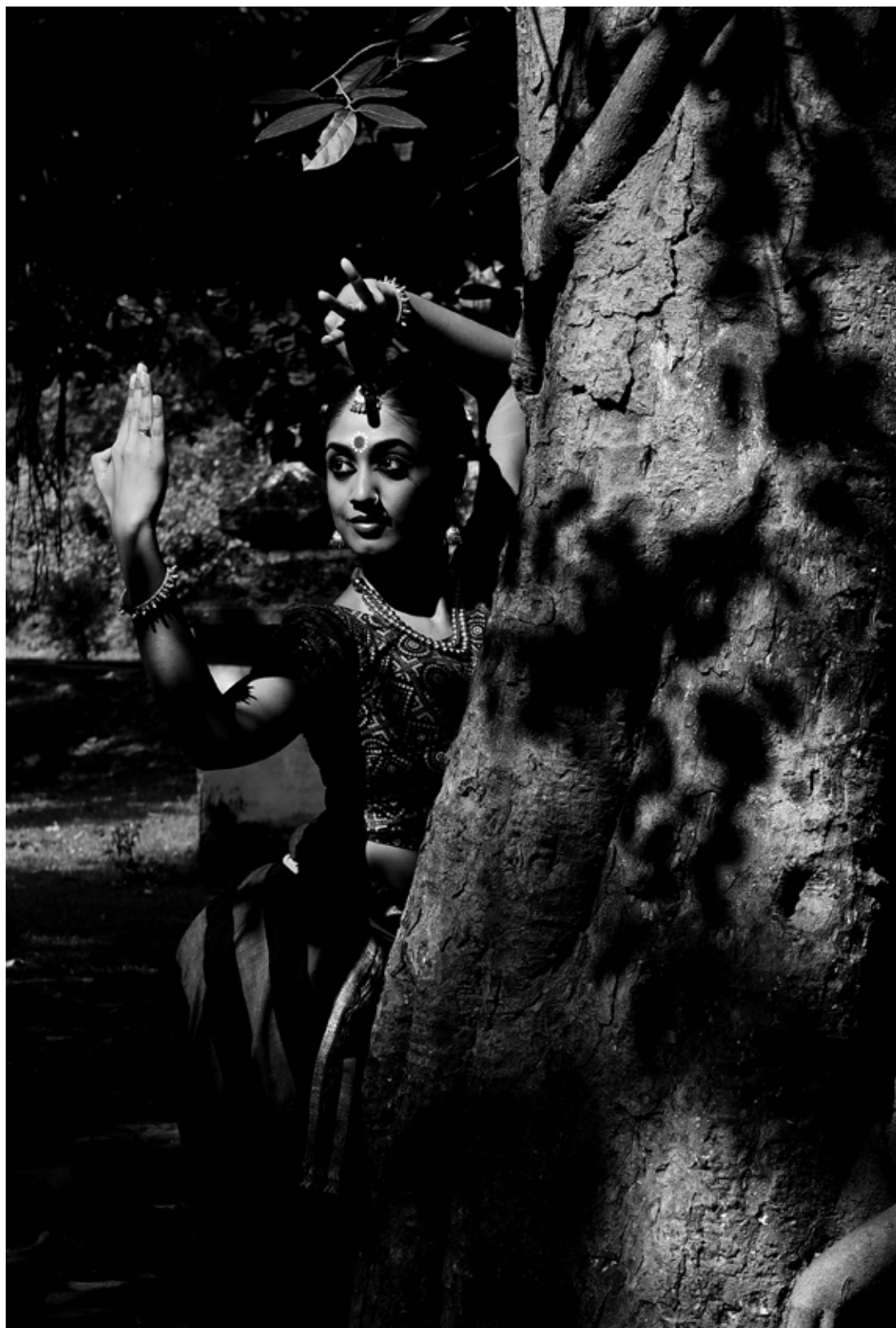
### ***Reflection***

*Photo* A. Prathap  
October, 2018

## Geethika Sree

Principal Dancer, Sutra Foundation

Geethika Sree started bharatanatyam under her mother, Sudha Sasikumar and then commenced odissi with Ramli Ibrahim. She was first featured at Sutra when she was 11 years old and now, she is a seasoned dancer performing internationally in Sutra's major productions. Geethika was assistant to artistic director for Sutra's latest productions, *GANJAM*, *Amorous Delight* and *Odissi on High*. She performed solo in *Penetrating the Goddess* (2017) and was chosen as one of the 'Top 10 New Generation Malaysian Cultural Dancers-2017'. Geethika has recently received the '*NALCO Guru Debaprasad Yuva Prativa Samman-2018*' Youth Award by Tridhara (Bhubaneswar) and '*Swayam Prakasha Nartakhi-2019*' award by Sarasalaya (Chennai). She has partnered Ramli Ibrahim in several performances of odissi for heads of states at international gatherings.



*Geethika Sree*  
Photo A. Prathap  
October, 2018

**SUTRA FOUNDATION** is a bastion of traditional and contemporary arts bequeathed to Malaysia by one of her most celebrated sons, Ramli Ibrahim. It carries into the future the thread of Ramli's vision and contribution to the Malaysian arts scene and strives to develop the breadth and depth of Malaysian performing and visual arts by stimulating the creative spirit of cross-cultural Malaysia. Sutra Foundation has presented outstanding local, international artists and groups apart from training a professional and creative staff in the areas of lighting, stage management, theatre production and administration. Various cultures come together here to forge a unique 'sutra' bond that fosters a universal yet distinctively Malaysian interpretation of the arts.

Sutra Foundation has been vital in sustaining Sutra's activities during a most challenging period when sponsorship in the arts is difficult. It continues its creative efforts in providing Malaysia with sustained activities in the performing arts, exhibitions and teaching. Immense care goes into crafting a Sutra Foundation be it in terms of impeccable design input, selection of dance talent, devising sets, costumes, lighting or graphics and coupling them to the choreographic intent to assure a flawless production.

**Sutra Foundation**

12, Persiaran Titiwangsa 3,  
53200 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

**T** +603 4021-1092

**E** [sutrafoundation25@gmail.com](mailto:sutrafoundation25@gmail.com)

**W** [www.sutrafoundation.org.my](http://www.sutrafoundation.org.my)

**F** [www.facebook.com/  
sutrafoundation](http://www.facebook.com/sutrafoundation)