

**Boy.Brother.Friend**

Announces Thirteenth Artist Commission:

# Harrikrishnan

Film :

**Beadmakers of Neelasandra (Play)**



In collaboration with artist Harrikrishnan, **Boy.Brother.Friend** premieres this new film work on the **Boy.Brother.Friend** digital platform over the next 30 days. *Beadmakers of Neelasandra* is a film that follows the immense, almost primitive handwork involved in this craft. It was passed down through generations and is now practiced by a handful of people today, making it one of the most rare and valuable forms of craft today.

## A statement from Harrikrishnan

This film is a raw capture of my trip to one of the oldest craft clusters in the world : Channapatna, a town in South India once known around the globe for its lacquer toys and beads. This town has a rich cultural history and has been home to seasoned artisans practicing the craft of woodturning since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

While reading about the great Triadisches Ballett of Bauhaus during my MA, I was taken back to my childhood memories of playing with small wooden lacquer toys resembling the Ballet characters. So, driven by pure curiosity, I decided to dig deeper into the origins of those toys and ended up in Channapatna, astonished by the age-old craft of making them.

This is My tribute to all artisans of Neelasandra village in Channapatna, India. I hope to work with them again and again.



## **About the craft**

Channapatna is a small town on the way to Mysore. For an outsider, it's no different from other craft communities in India, but this is an exceptional place for designers and artisans to learn. I still remember my childhood when all houses in South India had at least one Channapatna lacquer toy. Around thirty years back, it was a staple craft. However, the whole craft has changed in the past three decades due to many socioeconomic factors.

But still, there is one village well concealed from the outside world, where every household will have men and women sitting in front, hand carving beads. The precision and quality you see in their making and finishing are unimaginable. This is a community of people whose life is centred around this craft. They start their mornings making beads and wrap up and start the household work by afternoon - more like a half-day for work and a half-day for themselves. This, for me, was a culture shock. How in the world can people be so balanced? Especially when you go from the craft clusters of North India like Delhi, where artisans work 15 -18 hours and still struggle to get both ends meet. The community here in Neelasandra made me rethink life in all aspects.

## **The uniqueness of the Craft**

As a nation popular for its craftwork, India is known across the globe for intricate and delicate embroideries, textiles, carvings, and heavy jewelry. Although these crafts significantly impact culture and development, a few crafts are less popular and still left unexplored. Beadmaking of Channapatna is a prime example of such crafts.



Although the village of Neelsandra in Channapatna has been making wooden beads since the eighteenth century, it took nearly two centuries to get global recognition and the tag of GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION by the World Trade Organization. Sadly, the entire village that was once very invested in bead making migrated to other parts, and many of them even left bead-making ultimately. As a result, today, only fifty families made up of one-fifty individuals are practicing the precious craft of bead making.

## About the Artist

Growing up in Kerala, in Southern India, Harri was influenced at an early age by his father who was an amateur artist, Harri would try to replicate his old man's "life drawing" collection. Through this replication, Harri developed an affinity for art and creativity. He would go ahead to attend the National Institute of Fashion Technology before working for the 2015 International Woolmark Prize winner Suket Dhir. He also obtained a Masters in Menswear Design from the London College of Fashion. According to him, science and math were out of the question when deciding on a career path. He chose design and hasn't turned back ever since. He began to study art as a means of escape from his hometown and immediate reality.

Armed with a young affinity for anatomy (thanks to his father), and growing up around numerous temples with religious sculptures, Harri has heavily incorporated the essence of human form and physique into his fashion design. Most popularly known for his eccentric and colorful inflated pants that took social media by storm as well as his attention to detail in beaded fashionwear and the craftsmanship. His passion for the details and craftsmanship led him back to India to describe the ancient, intricate art of beadmaking.



For further information  
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