

SWALI CRAFT PRIZE

in partnership with

INDIA ART FAIR

In collaboration with India Art Fair, Karishma Swali and the Chanakya Foundation are honoured to present The Swali Craft Prize – an homage to craft's enduring and evolving language. Grounded in technical mastery, conceptual depth, cultural resonance, and sustainable impact, the prize recognises craftsmanship as a precise skill and a profound mode of expression. It celebrates work that blends narrative with intellectual clarity, honours heritage while engaging the present, and upholds ethical practices that ensure the transmission of knowledge across generations.

Through this lens, the Prize challenges the conventional hierarchies between craft and fine art, advocating for a more expansive view of creative practice. It invites a renewed understanding of craft – not as static tradition but as a vital, contemporary force within cultural discourse.

ELIGIBILITY

The Swali Craft Prize, along with its accompanying residency, is open to artists and collectives whose work engages with interdisciplinary approaches to handcraftsmanship.

To be eligible, applicants must currently reside and work in India, and must demonstrate an established practice. This includes having held at least one solo exhibition within India, as well as participation in at least one solo or group exhibition internationally within the past seven years. The Prize is open to individual applicants and established collectives only.

PRIZE

The second edition of the Prize will confer a prize of INR 11,00,000 to an artist whose work exemplifies innovation and excellence at the intersection of art and craft. In addition, the recipient will be invited to undertake a fully supported, two-week long residency at the Chanakya School of Craft in Mumbai, and receive a generous budget for research and development toward a collaborative installation. The residency offers time, critical mentorship, and material resources to deepen and expand the artist's practice within a context of rigorous craftsmanship.

The final works developed through the residency will debut at India Art Fair 2027 in New Delhi. Select works may subsequently be included in a curated exhibition with the potential to travel to a major cultural institution internationally.



APPLICATION

To apply, participants are invited to submit a digital portfolio by **20th May, 2026**, via the [Application Form](#)

Submissions must include:

- **Updated Curriculum Vitae (CV):**

A current and comprehensive CV detailing academic background, professional experience, exhibitions, residencies, publications, and any relevant awards or recognitions.

- **Short Biographical Note (max. 1250 characters):**

A concise narrative summarising the applicant's background, key areas of practice, and current research interests.

- **Digital Portfolio (.pdf or .docx format):**

- Up to 15 images of previous work not exceeding 100 MB (each).
- Each work must have a short accompanying note or explanatory text
- Should the applicant choose to submit a .pdf portfolio with images and the explanatory text the size of the final pdf must not exceed 100MB

- **Concept Statement (max. 4500 characters):**

A detailed proposal outlining the intended project to be undertaken during the residency.

This statement should address the following:

- Central themes and conceptual concerns
- Materials and methods of production
- Technical and logistical production requirements
- How the proposed project engages with and responds to the material practices, pedagogy, and collaborative processes of the Chanakya School of Craft
- How the Prize and Residency will support the applicant's ongoing practice and contribute to the development of their research and proposed project

- **Preliminary Visual Proposal:**

Visual materials offering insight into the proposed project may include, but are not limited to, hand-drawn sketches, digital renders, CAD drawings, reference photographs, and scaled models or diagrams.



SELECTION PROCESS

The Swali Craft Prize will be adjudicated by a distinguished jury composed of leading figures from the fields of contemporary art, craft, design, and cultural scholarship. This includes senior industry experts, established artists, and acclaimed practitioners whose work has shaped the discourse around material and making.

The jury will review all eligible applications to determine a shortlist of three finalists, from which one artist will be selected to receive the Swali Craft Prize and accompanying residency.

TIMELINES

April-May 2026	Open Call for applications
June 2026	Applications are received and open call is closed
July 2026	Announcement of winner
August - October 2026	Project development in collaboration with Chanakya School of Craft
October / November 2026 (TBD)	Residency at Chanakya School of Craft
February 2027	Presentation at India Art Fair 2027

STRUCTURE AND BUDGET

1. The Prize and Residency will run as an open-call process, accepting applications as per outlined criteria. The winning practitioner will be selected by an international jury of industry experts, senior artists, and institutional leaders.
2. The winning artist will receive a generous budget for research, development, and production toward an ambitious, collaborative installation, a fully-supported two-week Residency in Mumbai, and an artist prize of **INR 11,00,000**.
3. The Prize would provide the winning artist access to boarding for a **two-week residency period**; research and material resources of the Chanakya School of Craft and associated ateliers.
4. The Prize would serve as seed money toward the development of the winning artist's research and practice with craft exploration, through the realization of an ambitious art installation co-produced with the Chanakya School of Craft over a 6-month project development period.
5. The final commission will be showcased at **India Art Fair 2027 in New Delhi**.



OWNERSHIP

The Chanakya Foundation shall retain full rights, title, and interest — including all applicable copyrights — in any artwork(s) created or produced during the residency period. This includes any derivative works or adaptations arising therefrom.

The Foundation further reserves the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, publicly exhibit, and digitally disseminate these works for purposes aligned with its mission, including but not limited to promotional, educational, and commercial use. No additional compensation shall be provided to the artist for such uses.

FAQs

1. What are the eligibility requirements to apply for the Swali Craft Prize?

Applicants must be India-based artists working within or across interdisciplinary traditions of handcraftsmanship. A demonstrated practice is essential, including at least one solo exhibition in India, and participation in one solo or group exhibition internationally within the past seven years.

2. How do you define an artist in this context?

For the purposes of the Prize, we consider an artist or practitioner to be someone deeply engaged with material, technique, and tradition through a contemporary lens — exploring the evolving language of craft across disciplines.

3. Is there an application fee?

No. There is no application fee to apply for the Swali Craft Prize.

4. Can the proposed work be submitted to another prize simultaneously?

No. The work must remain exclusive to the Swali Craft Prize, as it will be developed in close collaboration with the Chanakya School of Craft during the residency. It may not be submitted concurrently to any other award or prize.

5. Is there a curatorial theme for this edition?

There is no predetermined theme for this edition. However, all proposals must meaningfully engage with the spirit of handcraft, whether through process, materiality, or conceptual inquiry, and respond to the pedagogical textile practices of Chanakya School of Craft demonstrating innovation and relevance within the field.

6. When and how will the selected artist be notified?

The selected artist will be contacted via email by July 2026. Public announcement will follow shortly thereafter.



7. Who is responsible for the costs of the residency?

The cost of the two-week residency including travel, accommodation, materials, and mentorship will be covered by the Chanakya Foundation.

8. Can I apply if my work incorporates industrial elements?

Yes. While the emphasis must be on handcraftsmanship, proposals may include industrial components if they are thoughtfully integrated and serve to expand or deepen the craft-based inquiry.

9. I am having trouble uploading my work on email

Please submit your application through the official form provided below, and ensure all files — including PDFs, JPEGs, and external links — follow the submission guidelines outlined in the application portal.

For any queries regarding your application, please write to us at swalicraftprize@chanakya.school

[APPLY NOW](#)