

## Asia Triennial Manchester 2011

**N.S. Harsha *Thought Mala or Spiritual Garlands***

**1 October to 27 November 2011**

A fascinating series of 'thought' garlands reflecting observations of how people spend their time in the John Rylands Library have been created by Indian artist N.S. Harsha.

Commissioned specifically by the Library for Asia Triennial Manchester 2011, in consultation with Alnoor Mitha, Director of Shisha and Artistic Director of ATM, visitors to the Rylands are invited to wear and use the garlands for inspiration during their visit.

In wearing the *Thought Mala or Spiritual Garlands*, Harsha intends to transform the Library into a spiritual place full of ritual, as visitors borrow the garlands as they would a book - wearing them, handling them or simply contemplating them - as they explore the gothic splendour of the Library or work in the reading rooms.

Rachel Beckett, Head of Special Collections at the John Rylands Library, said:

"With this fascinating artwork N.S. Harsha has brilliantly captured the Library's passion for inspiring readers and visitors to engage with our amazing collections and extraordinary building in new and exciting ways. Harsha's intellectual curiosity and artistic vision are an inspiration, and we are delighted to have had the opportunity to work with such a talented and respected artist."

Born in 1969, N.S. Harsha lives and works in Mysore, India. Harsha was the recipient of the prestigious Artes Mundi 3 Prize in 2008 and has taken part in a variety of collaborative projects and exhibitions internationally. Most recently, he has shown work at Liverpool Biennial (2010), the 26th Sao Paulo Bienal (2010), Herring Art Museum, Denmark (2010) and Musée d'Art Contemporain, Lyon, France (2011). He is represented in the UK by Victoria Miro Gallery London - [www.victoria-miro.com](http://www.victoria-miro.com)

**Ends**

### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

Public Programmes Manager at the John Rylands Library, Jacqui Fortnum, is available for comment.

Images are available.

The UK's only Asian Art Triennial opens 1 October – 27 November 2011 in Manchester, showcasing current contemporary visual art from Asia. Initiated by Shisha, Asia Triennial Manchester 11 (ATM11) is a festival of visual culture featuring exhibitions, commissions and interventions by international and UK artists exploring the theme of Time and Generation, presenting new site-specific work alongside work not seen before in the UK, and challenging stereotypical viewpoints of contemporary Asian artistic practice.

Further information about Asia Triennial Manchester 2011 can be found at: [www.asiatriennialmanchester.com](http://www.asiatriennialmanchester.com)

The John Rylands University Library is part of The University of Manchester. Its research collections are world-famous and in 2008 it was nominated one of five National Research Libraries by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The Library's Special Collections are housed in the historic, Grade 1-listed John Rylands Library, on Deansgate in the heart of Manchester, which is open to the public free of charge.

The Library's Special Collections are exceptionally important in a wide range of subject areas. Highlights include the St John Fragment, the earliest known piece of the New Testament in existence; breathtaking medieval manuscripts; outstanding early printed books, including arguably the best collection of Caxtons in the world; and a splendid array of materials in many formats – from clay tablets to digital archives – covering more than five thousand years of human endeavour.

[www.manchester.ac.uk/library](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/library)

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