

John Keells Foundation and City of Dreams present Channa Ekanayake's 'What Lives Between' at the Artist Spotlight

John Keells Foundation and City of Dreams present Channa Ekanayake's 'What Lives Between' at the Artist Spotlight

Posted on



The eighth edition of Artist Spotlight at Level 23, Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams, with 'What Lives Between' will be on display until November 30, 2026.

Some stories are carried in words. Others survive in gestures, images, and

John Keells Foundation and City of Dreams present Channa Ekanayake's 'What Lives Between' at the Artist Spotlight | 1

John Keells Foundation and City of Dreams present Channa Ekanayake's 'What Lives Between' at the Artist Spotlight

fragments of memory passed quietly between generations. Channa Ekanayake's 'What Lives Between', curated by Kasun Jayamanne, looks to these less-visible forms of inheritance, drawing on Sinhala folk poetry and the lived experiences of Sri Lankan women to consider how culture continues to shape identity.

Presented as the eighth edition of Artist Spotlight by John Keells Foundation and City of Dreams, the exhibition brings Ekanayake's distinctive contemporary practice into a setting where art becomes part of the wider Cinnamon Life experience. His work draws from Sri Lanka's architectural, spiritual, and natural environments, translating familiar forms into compositions shaped by geometry, color, rhythm, and restraint.



John Keells Foundation and City of Dreams present Channa Ekanayake's 'What Lives Between' at the Artist Spotlight



Explaining the ideation behind *What Lives Between*, artist Ekanayake says, “The process began with an interest in memories that outlast the people, places, and moments that shaped them. Sinhala folk poetry carries many of these memories, particularly stories and experiences connected to women that have been passed down through generations. I wanted to explore that inheritance through a contemporary visual language, allowing the familiar to become something that can be seen and considered anew.” That exploration extends a practice developed across more than two decades. His early solo exhibition *Dwellings* in 2001 established an interest in architecture and inhabitation, while later works, including *Silence of the Blue* and *BODHI*, explored spirituality, environment, and cultural symbolism. International presentations, such as *Islanded* at Aicon Contemporary in New York, further expanded his engagement with Sri Lanka’s visual and cultural landscape.

John Keells Foundation and City of Dreams present Channa Ekanayake's 'What Lives Between' at the Artist Spotlight



What Lives Between continues this trajectory while turning its focus towards cultural memory and Sri Lankan womanhood. Folk poetry serves as a point of departure rather than a literal source, allowing Ekanayake to simplify and reconfigure familiar references into a visual language that invites interpretation. Kamal Munasinghe, Senior Vice President, Colombo Hotels, Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts, and General Manager, Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams, says, "Art has a powerful ability to create connections, particularly when it becomes part of an environment where people can encounter it naturally."

Artist Spotlight allows us to bring Sri Lankan artistic expression into the City of Dreams experience while giving artists an opportunity to engage audiences who may encounter their work for the first time.

Artist Spotlight allows us to bring Sri Lankan artistic expression into the City of Dreams experience while giving artists an opportunity to engage audiences who may encounter their work for the first time." That philosophy places Artist Spotlight within a broader commitment to creating meaningful encounters between artists and audiences.

The initiative gives Sri Lankan artists a platform to reach new audiences, collectors, and art enthusiasts, while positioning City of Dreams as a living gallery where local artistic expression can be experienced alongside the hospitality and lifestyle

John Keells Foundation and City of Dreams present Channa Ekanayake's 'What Lives Between' at the Artist Spotlight | 4

John Keells Foundation and City of Dreams present Channa Ekanayake's 'What Lives Between' at the Artist Spotlight

environment. Carmeline Jayasuriya, Head of CSR, John Keells Group, says, "Supporting artists is about enhancing space for creativity to be seen, experienced, and valued by diverse audiences."



Through Artist Spotlight, we hope to contribute to a stronger creative ecosystem in Sri Lanka while encouraging conversations around the stories, identities, and experiences that shape our culture. As in the case of all our art-based activities, John Keells Foundation's aim is to provide a platform that provides wider opportunities to the artist while promoting cultural understanding and appreciation through the amazing artistic talent of Sri Lanka."

John Keells Foundation and City of Dreams present Channa Ekanayake's 'What Lives Between' at the Artist Spotlight



At its heart, *What Lives Between* invites audiences to look beyond the visible. Through poetry, memory, and visual form, Ekanayake explores what survives, changes, and connects generations, presenting a distinctly Sri Lankan story through a contemporary artistic lens.

'What Lives Between'

Till November 30, 2026.

Level 23, Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams, Colombo