

# PRAKRITI

## Man in Harmony with the Elements

2nd Feb.1993 - 13th Mar.1993

3, Dr. R. P. Road, New Delhi



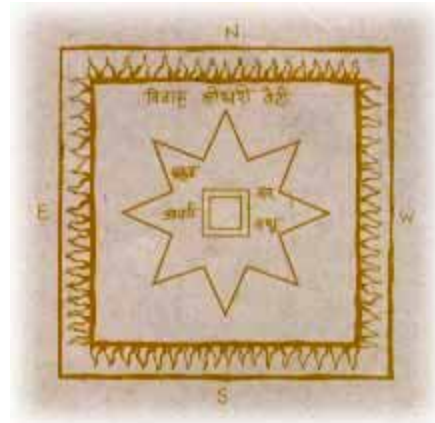
The exhibition endeavours to evoke the experience of the integral vision of man and nature. The theme is explored through finding common ground across civilizations. The five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether/space, are considered to be the building blocks in most of the traditional societies based on a cosmocentric vision. They form the basic vocabulary of creation myths, sacred rituals, creative expression in architecture, and the understanding of the human body. Here man lives in harmony with the cosmos. These perceptions culminate into a holistic worldview, and the elements, provide a window through which primal perceptions can be comprehended.

Today the relevance of these early views is because they have an inherent awareness, intrinsic to man's symbolic existence -- a view that contemporary ecological thinking revalidates.

The exhibition re-evokes the traditional perceptions for the mutual benefit of both. The exhibition opens with ancient articulations from Hindu, Chinese, Christian, Greek and Islamic sources and goes on to show the cross-cultural universality of the concept of the elements.

**The written word flows into the earliest known water cosmologies and creation myths from the Native American, Australian Aboriginal and Indian vision reflected in Vishnu floating in the cosmic waters of creation. They show an amazing solidarity in their perception of the primal beginnings of life as the Cosmic egg, emerging from the animated waters of existence.**

The path continues towards a more concrete expression of man's relationship with the elements in sacred performance and ritual. This section displays the celebration of life through the sacralization of elements in life cycle rituals, through which the drama of life is enacted: birth, growth and death.



The village and tribal perceptions of the elements in sacred ritual are put together in a self-contained exhibit, entitled, 'The Story of the Pot'. This section explores the metaphor of the pot through life cycle rituals. It also gives a first hand experience of how the five elements unite to create the pot. The process of creation and its earthy quality bring the macrocosm into the microbody of the pot.

The next section takes one into the act of creation of sacred space, by invoking the elements as a metaphor. Here the symbolic world of the built environment, based on the Indian and Chinese architectural design principles signifying the five elements, is represented.





In many traditional systems of medicine (or thought) man is regarded as a miniature cosmos whose body is composed of the five elements that permeate creation. This section is concerned with the association of the elements with parts and functions of the body expounded in the disciplines of holistic medicine: Chinese acupuncture, Yunani, Yoga, Ayurveda, Tibetan and the Greek view of the humours.

From the bio-energetic mechanisms, the path leads to maps of the subtle realms of consciousness, as envisioned in the esoteric traditions.

The ecocentric view of traditional societies as reflected in their attitudes towards plants, animals, rivers and earth is represented in the next section. This reverence is concretized in a visual imagery of sculptural form. The Varaha (Boar) rescuing Prithivi (Earth), embodies a cosmic myth in iconography.

A walk through an arena of poetical verses drawn from selections of modern poetry, reflect the agony and ecstasy of man's deep concern for the natural environment.

The sections are arranged around a centre circle which displays the morphology of the elements and their associated meanings from various civilizations.



**The exhibition carries the message of peace for all:**

Pure and peaceful be earth,  
 Peaceful ether,  
 Peaceful heaven,  
 Peaceful water,  
 Peaceful trees,  
 May all gods and environs be pure and peaceful,  
 May there be purity, non-pollution and peace through these invocations.