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FREE ENTRY

# ART & CHEESE

RECEPTION AT OKAPI WORLD ART GALLERY



FEATURING: **BENARES**

**B**enares is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together.

Varanasi said to be the oldest living city in the world, is inhabited on the left bank of the Ganges and is world famous for its Ghats. It presents a complete museum of Indian art and culture. At Varanasi, one can feel the changing patterns and movements in course of history. It has a rich and unique style of art forms and folk art. For centuries, Varanasi has produced master craftsmen and earned name and fame for its beautiful Sarees, hand-crafts, textiles, toys, ornaments, metal work, clay and woodwork and other crafts.

Music, drama, and entertainment are all synonymous with Varanasi. Benaras has long been famous for its music, both vocal and instrumental and has its own dance traditions. Ghunghroo, also known as Tinklebells are strewn

together to create this musical feet ornament that adorns the feet of Indian classical dancers. It sounds and weighs differently based on the composition and size. They have a dual purpose of providing music according to the beats and also add grace to the dance.

Banaras also flourished as a commercial and industrial center famous for its sculpture as well as for wooden toys and bangles made of glass and brassware. The wooden toys and puppets of Varanasi have always been popular with pilgrims and travelers. They are either hand-carved or turned on lathes. Among these figures are those Hanuman, and other deities and demons on animals. The sets of birds, animals, orchestras, soldiers and dance ensembles are made of wood and painted in bright colors. These toys have thousands of mythical and religious stories behind them. This is a dying art with less than ten artisans left behind in Benares still making these hand-crafted pieces of art.



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