

Fulbright Recipient Sue Rees Documents Kattaikkuttu Theater

MARCH 23, 2018

Sue Rees returned to India in December 2017 to continue her Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Research Award (Flex Grant).

Rees has been [maintaining a blog](#) and [posting video](#) about her Fulbright experience with Kattaikkuttu theater.

Rees's research took place primarily at the Kattaikkuttu Sangam and Gurukulam, in Punjarasantankal, just outside of Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, India. She observed, documented, and analyzed how this traditional theatrical form has adapted to changes occurring in India while both interacting with other performance styles and retaining its traditional structure.

A notable collaboration, *Karnatic Meets Kattaikkuttu*, occurred in Mumbai on December 16, in which dialogues took place between the two forms of performance through singing, speaking, music, and physical gestures.

There were lines of communication set up by this performance, which even for a non-Tamil speaking viewer, were understandable and steeped in mutual respect. I left feeling that if there were more communication between seemingly disparate groups, the world would be a better place.

Sue Rees

Rees's work will culminate in ***A Portrait of an Actor***, a documentary about Kattaikkuttu theater and prominent actor Perungattur P. Rajagopal.



Original post from August 9, 2016:

Rees Awarded Fulbright

The Fulbright program, which celebrated its 70th anniversary this year, has awarded faculty member Sue Rees a Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Research Award (Flex Grant).

Sue Rees will be researching at Kattaikkuttu Theatre in Kanchipuram, India as part of a project to investigate by documentation, interviews, and observations the way Kattaikkuttu theater, which is indigenous to northern rural Tamil Nadu, can be adapted and integrated into new forms reflecting the influences occurring from urban centers and changes in India as a whole. Rees has been documenting the theater since 2002.

Recipients of Fulbright awards are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement as well as record of service and demonstrated leadership in their respective fields. The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to build relations between the people of the United States and the people of other countries that are needed to solve global challenges.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Fulbright Program's establishment in 1946 under legislation introduced by U.S. Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. Since then, the Program has given more than 360,000 students, scholars, teachers, artists, and scientists the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas, and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

Fulbrighters address critical global challenges—from sustainable energy and climate change to public health and food security—in all areas, while building relationships, knowledge, and leadership in support of the long-term interests of the United States and the world.

Sue Rees has exhibited her set designs, animations, installations, and video works worldwide and has worked collaboratively with choreographers, directors, and musicians in the United States, Europe, and India. This semester, she will be teaching courses on the History of Animation and Animation in a Created World. See the fall [curriculum](#) for a full list of her classes.