

What's your spin? Art shows that invite you to view art differently

An eclectic mix of works are up on display at galleries and spaces across the city.

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Hindustan Times



Notorious Rowdies, a series of photographs by Clare Arni, feature petty thugs, sinister sari-clad madams, shady patrons breaking into fights in Goa bars, and leaping ninjas.

INDIA RE-WORLDED: 70 YEARS OF INVESTIGATING A NATION

- WHERE: Gallery Odyssey, One Indiabulls Center, Lower Parel
- WHEN: September 11 to March 31, 11 am to 7 pm
- CALL: 03368-5424
- ENTRY IS FREE

A simple installation, which puts together a photograph of Mahatma Gandhi, a trowel, stone beads, a rosary and laminated marine frame, tries to see 1947, the year of Independence and Partition, from the view of a disappointed and dejected Mahatma Gandhi.

The leader didn't participate in celebrating the country's freedom. Instead he spent time in Calcutta helping solve problems between Hindus and Muslims, praying and fasting for a wounded nation.

The installation, by Atul Dodiya, is part of India Re-Worlded: 70 Years of Investigating a Nation, a mammoth show that features the work of 70 artists and aims to examine each year since Independence. It includes works from Akbar Padamsee, Bharti Kher, Gulam Mohammed Sheikh, Krishen Khanna, NS Harsha, Jitish Kallat and others.



Artist Pushpamala N revisits old, found images from her 1985 trip to Naya village in West Bengal. The difference between the lifestyle of the artist students and villagers is stark.

The show takes its title from literary theorist Gayatri Spivak's concept of worlding - a process of violence against colonised territories that emerges during imperialism. "By extending Spivak's provocation, I suggest that Indian artists after independence have 'de-worlded'," says curator Arshiya Lokhandwala. "They liberate themselves from the earlier colonial position, dismantle their British colonial legacy, and instead chose to be 're-worlded' within the post-colonial context."

Artist Pushpamala N revisits old, found images from her 1985 trip to Naya village in West Bengal to reflect upon how she experiences the photographs now. Those casually clicked pictures now take on a different meaning and context. "The visual difference in the pictures between us and the villagers mimicked records of old European colonial anthropological expeditions, and yet the photographs possessed the familiarities that we could have as insiders," says Pushpamala.

The difference between the lifestyle of the artist students and villagers is stark. It almost looks like they are from different worlds, but the ease of the body language suggests the connect of being and experiencing the same nation.

Shakuntala Kulkarni's performative works, which invite viewers to look and gaze at their bodies takes from 2012 Nirbhaya rape case. The work was prompted by the artist's conversations with peons, electricians and carpenters in Mumbai on how men should change the way they look at women, so women are safe.

COMBO DEAL



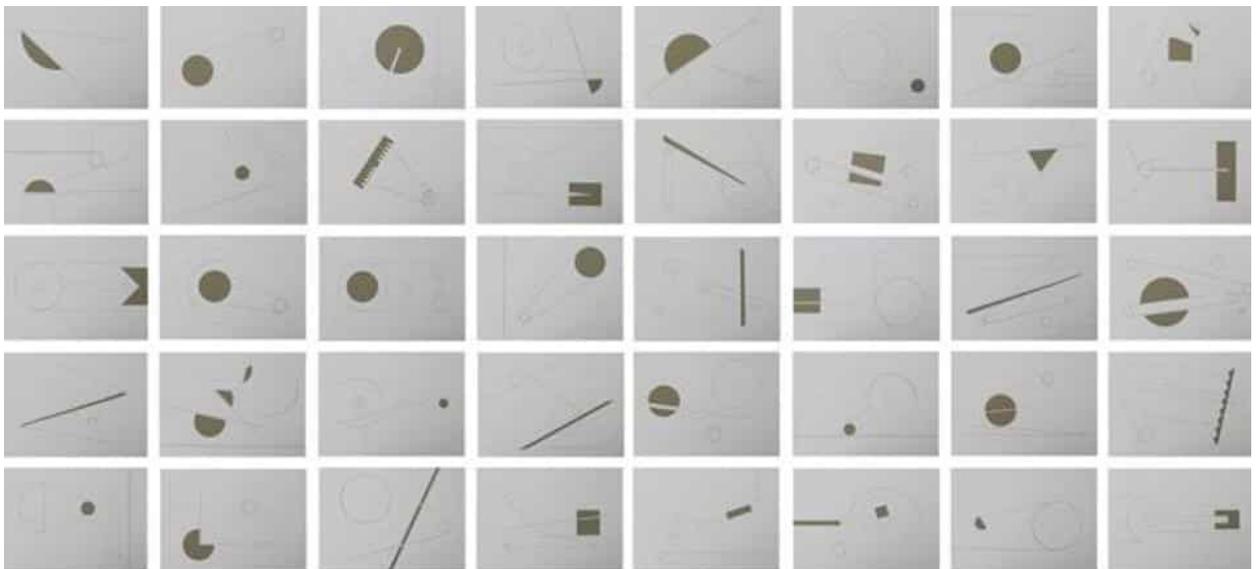
Jeetander Ojha, In the memory of others, Human hair, shells, calcium, wire, glass jar, 2017.

- WHERE: Sakshi Gallery, Arthur Bunder Road, Colaba
- WHEN: September 14 to October 6, 11 am to 7 pm (Closed on Sundays)
- CALL: 6610-3424
- ENTRY IS FREE

In *The Sacred and the Profane*, two young artists present an eclectic mix of works, prompting a new examination of images and visuals around us.

Jeetander Ojha is interested in looking at darker side of objects, which is often ignored. In his installation of the Taj Mahal, he shows some kind of an over growth from below the structure. “People always talk of the magnificence of the wonder of the world, but hardly anyone discusses the apparent brutality the labourers had to undergo to create the world heritage site,” says Ojha.

Ankush Safaya, an engineer-turned-artist, looks at the world differently.



Ankush Safaya, an engineer-turned-artist, looks at the world differently and his art plays with movement. This untitled piece is an assembly of 50 works.

When working with electronics, technology exposed him to complex interconnected devices like circuit boards. It made him see an abstract world of imagery within them, which led him to discover his artistic

language. Hence, perhaps like in a machine, he arranges his images in such a way that they assume a rhythm, movement and a meaning of their own.

“My works play with movements,” says Safaya. At first glance they appear still, but as the eye trains itself on the picture, the flat surfaces seem like activated linear whispers, with kinetic energies that suggest poetic missives of human experience. “Time and space resonate as elements within my work. And in the chaos of a disorderly world I create spaces of harmony and balance.”

Viewing these together could be either a sacred or a profane experience for the viewers. You got to decide for yourself.

WHEN THE BAD GUYS WIN



Clare Arni's friends and family were roped in to invent, develop and build elaborate backstories for villainous alter-egos, as Arni photographed.

NOTORIOUS ROWDIES, PHOTOGRAPHS BY CLARE ARNI

- WHERE: Tarq, F 35/36, Dhanraj Mahal, Near Gateway of India
- WHEN: 11 am to 6 pm, until October 19
- ENTRY IS FREE

For two decades, walking into an exhibition of Clare Arni's photographs meant you could be sure of a few things. The works would have a documentary quality (like her 2008 series on India's disappearing professions or her architectural photos), they'd present India differently (like her shots along the Kaveri river) and they'd find the intimate within the expansive (like her images of a Belgian woman who lives in a cave in Hampi).

Notorious Rowdies, however, will make you check twice to see if it's really Arni's work.

The UK-born, Bangalore-based photographer switches from reality to fantasy. Friends and family were roped in to invent, develop and build elaborate backstories for villainous alter egos, which Arni then photographed. The resulting images feature sinister sari-clad madams (you can't tell it's a man under that pallu); shady patrons breaking into fights in Goa bars (one local even joined in!); leaping ninjas; petty thugs; masked bandits; bulb-lit gangsters; and macabre Morticia Addams-types.



Creating a dark side, however imaginary, ended up being surprisingly liberating for Arni's subjects - shoots would go on and on as people came to terms with their new selves.

“It’s good, every now and then, to break you own stereotypes and try something new,” says Arni. “But right from the start I wanted a level of authenticity to it, so it was not fancy dress, but a cathartic experience for the person involved.”

Arni’s work is a foil for today’s selfie age, when we’re all very aware of the images of ourselves, and the brighter persona we create on social media. Creating a dark side, however imaginary, ended up being surprisingly liberating for her subjects - shoots would go on and on as people came to terms with their new selves. Her soft-spoken sister, Oriole

Henry, “literally transformed into another creature,” as Arni shot. “How often do we get to become somebody else?”