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BAMBAR

Harper's

INDIA

DIGITAL
FLIPBOOK

The Alluring

KALKI

KOECHLIN

INTERVIEWED BY
PARTNER
GUY HERSHBERG

**BEAUTY &
STRENGTH**

THE JOYS OF
GOING NATURAL

The Spirit of

FASHION

BOLD BROCADE, SCULPTURAL STYLES,
AND DELIGHTFUL DETAILS

Shot on OnePlus 8T 5G

THE SAFE HAVEN

*Five young artists invite
us into their studios from
where they create,
get inspired, and dream*

By Radhika Bhalla

Creative Direction by Zunaili Malik



RITHIKA MERCHANT

MIXED MEDIA COLLAGES, MUMBAI & BARCELONA

"Art has been my companion since I was a child—it's my catharsis, my relaxation, my way of understanding the world. I am much better at expressing things visually than verbally. Similarly, I think that people need art to be able to make sense of everything that is difficult in this world. It is a medium through which society is able to increase empathy and awareness about what is going on in the world. I create art from home—my husband and I took the master bedroom and converted it into a studio-office. I find joy in being really close to my work, and it's nice to walk down the corridor and literally jump into it. If I am working on a large-scale piece, I'll place the work on the floor or put it up on the wall, but for the most part, I work on a large desk. My studio is my haven—it's quiet, full of art, very sunny, and has good vibes. If I had to describe myself with a work of art, I would turn to *Madre* by Savia Mahajan. This powerful work represents my belief in the cyclical nature of existence and the eventual return to the womb of the earth"



(From top)
Rithika Merchant
In her studio in
Barcelona;
Alter II by the
artist, mixed
media collage
with gouache,
ink, and marker
on paper, 2019;
Madre by Savia
Mahajan, iron
oxide based
paper clay, cotton
rags and threads,
and calcium
based glaze,
2013-2014.



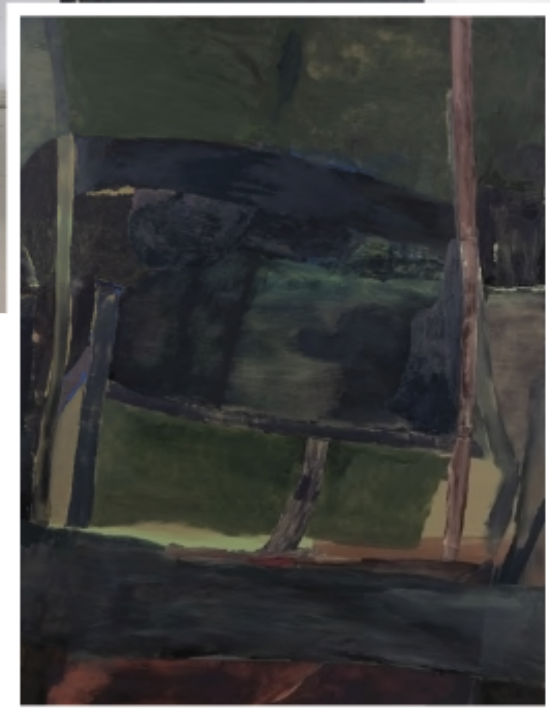


BIRAAJ DODIYA
OIL PAINTINGS & MIXED-MEDIA
INSTALLATIONS, MUMBAI

“I am a messy painter, but I also draw and write, so I like having a clean desk. I create abstract paintings and sculptures made from found and personal objects—childhood memorabilia, bicycle chains, knee braces, rubber tubes...as a result, the studio is often both horizontally and vertically active. My current studio is in an office building in Mumbai, and I’m lucky to have a quiet, well-lit, open space with a view of treetops.

I always return to the work of David Hammons and Giorgio Morandi when I need to be reminded of the reason why I do what I do. They are from different worlds and yet, in my mind, they overlap in their austerity of purpose, which is extremely inspiring. I think great art takes us one step closer to feeling free. Free minds are always open to truths.

Making art makes me feel like an alert, young, Sisyphus from Greek mythology who rolls an immense boulder up a hill, only for it to roll down every time it reaches the top. He continues doing this for eternity, and so will I.”



(From top)
BiraaJ Dodiya in
her studio;
Untitled by the
artist,
watercolour,
gouache, and
dry pigment
on paper, 2019;
*Meditazione
Mattutina* by
Giorgio
Morandi, 1912.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE CONTRIBUTORS AND WIKIMEDIA COMMONS; MEDITAZIONE MATTUTINA: COURTESY COLLEZIONE RICCARDO JUCCER.



(From top)
Subrat Kumar in his studio; *Let's Go Back To Our Home* by the artist, lithography and watercolour, 2020; *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch, oil on oak panels, 1503-1515.

SUBRAT KUMAR
FOUNDER OF LITHOLEKHA
PRINT STUDIO, VADODARA

“There is a saying, ‘If you want to know an artist, you should visit their studio’. My studio is my safe space where I can become a child again, where I experiment, practice, and learn many new things. It’s filled with artworks that, in turn, inspire me. It is also the sanctuary that heals my anxiety, at times.

My work questions how myths turn into mythology, and I often reference epics like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in my artworks (or directly pick up from them). I create my own stories by highlighting or eliminating events, characters, or monuments. I believe that art helps shape opinions and generate dialogue on almost all topics. Since the medium is primarily visual, it has the ability to communicate across languages.

There are two artists that I keep turning to: Hieronymus Bosch and Bhupen Khakhar. *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Bosch is a favourite—I view it as a symbol of curiosity and the desire to move beyond ascribed labels of society.”





UTKARSH MAKWANA
MIXED MEDIA & PERFORMANCE
ART, VADODARA

"My work space is a very private one. It's where I can pour out all my ideas and thoughts without placing a label of 'good' or 'bad', and dissect, accept, or reject them without any outer influence.

Since my work intersects the mundane with an imagined world, inspiration comes from everywhere. It could be a character from a story, mythology, movie, a scene on the road, or the Internet. My technique is influenced by miniature paintings, and I also take a lot of references from scientific illustrations.

The joy of creating something is a meditative process for me; it gives me immense satisfaction to translate my experiences and feelings into a painting. I think an artwork that could describe me is *Isle of the Dead* by Arnold Böcklin because it's calm, quiet, and mysterious.

I also count Hieronymus Bosch as one of my favourite artists; his works are timeless.

For me, it's very interesting how he blends mythology and his immediate surroundings to create a world that's magical and surreal."

IMAGES COURTESY THE CONTRIBUTORS AND WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

(Clockwise from above) Utkarsh Makwana in his studio; *Isle of the Dead: Third version* by Arnold Böcklin, 1883; *Dawn* by Utkarsh, watercolour, dry pigment, and gouache on paper, 2020.





TANYA GOEL
MIXED MEDIA ART, NEW DELHI

“In many ways, art helps me see the world—it’s as if I’m almost blind when I’m not creating. I’m deeply interested in the study of colour and light, and how it changes with time. I work with a great team, and every day we try to explore and create new pigments. Many of our pigments are made from architectural demolitions in and around Delhi, with materials like charcoal, aluminium, concrete, glass, graphite, and foils. So my art studio functions more as a research space.

I have a long list of artists I keep returning to for inspiration; art can speak to you differently at different stages of your life. Among my favourites are Nasreen Mohamedi, Mahirwan Mamtani, Anni Albers, Hilma af Klint, and Hokusai. If I had to pick an artwork to describe my current state, I’d choose *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* by the Spanish artist, Francisco Goya.” ■

(From top) Tanya Goel in her studio; *Fractal 2* by the artist, digital drawing for lenticular print, 2020; *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* by Francisco Goya, etching and aquatint, 1799.