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## Mumbai Gallery Weekend showcases the depth of Indian contemporary art

From new solos by artists like Jayasri Burman and Atul Dodiya to a showcase of neo-futuristic art, the new edition of the Mumbai Gallery Weekend highlights new turns in contemporary art



Detail from Raja Ravi Varma's 'Kizhakke Palat Krishna Menon and Family'. Courtesy: DAG

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The Mumbai Gallery Weekend, a regular fixture in the city's cultural calendar, is back with new shows that explore the depth of contemporary art. The event started nearly 11 years ago, and today has expanded in scope and size. According to Shireen Gandhi, creative director, Chemould Prescott Road, contemporary art had taken a big hit in 2008-09 and the weekend started as a collective thought to bring back interest in the genre. "It started as a small thing in Bandra and, over time, has become something that people look forward to," she says. Besides a showcase of experimental and conceptual art, spanning painting, sculpture, photography, installation and design, the upcoming edition also features dance performances and pop-up exhibitions. *Lounge* lists highlights from the event.

*A solo exhibition by Jayasri Burman*

'Dhara' features a set of ideas that has kept the artist absorbed over the last several years—ranging from birth and nature to the sacred feminine. Over a period of time, Burman has developed an iconography that is saturated in the aura of nature's nurturing, sustaining, maternal capacities. The archetypal figure is of the Great Mother, manifested as the devi. "The earth carries in her soul the power of regeneration, ensuring the return of spring every year, the return of sleep, of rest, of peace—only she feeds all the joy into the streams of tireless toil of living. She makes sure the world carries on. That is what is essentially feminine," states the writer in a note.

On view at Art Musings, Colaba till 28 February

**Dr Banerjee in Dr Kulkarni's Nursing Home and other paintings**

*A solo exhibition by Atul Dodiya*

The artist revisits his love for cinema with 24 oil paintings depicting frozen moments from popular Indian films of the 1960s-70s such as *Anand*, *Padosan*, *Ittefaq*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, *Mahanagar*, and *Anupama* among others. "Each of these 'frozen moments', carefully chosen, shot on his iPhone—sometimes depicting the back of the actor, at times walking from one room into another, or a bending woman reaching for something in a drawer—all became pictorial possibilities with the subjects imbued with a new mystery," mentions the curatorial note.



'Dr Banerjee in Dr Kulkarni's Nursing Home' by Atul Dodiya at Chemould Prescott Road

Dodiya translates his fascination with images from one medium onto another. The title of the show comes from the 1971-film, *Anand*, where Amitabh Bachchan essayed the role of Dr Bhaskar Banerjee. “He meets Anand Sehgal (Rajesh Khanna) for the first time at Dr Kulkarni's nursing home. The captions of the paintings are taken from the characters the actors have played in the movies. It would be interesting to see how people from different generations relate/not relate to them,” says Dodiya

*On view at Chemould Prescott Road, Fort till 25 February*

## **Kizhakke Palat Krishna Menon and Family**

*By Raja Ravi Varma*

In 1870, the artist painted his first-ever commissioned portrait of a family which changed the course of Indian art practice. This work about the Menon family can be considered the first work of modern art to emerge from India. And for the first time ever, this work will be on public display as part of the Mumbai Gallery Weekend. According to Ashish Anand, CEO and managing director, DAG, Raja Ravi Varma was at the crossroads when he was offered the commission to paint a group portrait of the Krishna Menon family.

“Returning from a pilgrimage, he took this to mean he had goddess Mookambika’s blessings in this endeavour. Accepting a fee for painting meant taking a step forward, abandoning aristocratic pursuits in favour of professional ones. The painting marks this moment of transition,” he adds. If any one work tells the story of the big leap taken by Indian artists towards modernism, it is this. The 1870-painting remained with the family over the decades and there was no occasion for it to be shown publicly. Its acquisition by DAG has facilitated a public showcase for the first time in its existence. The artist has also had a very strong association with the city of Mumbai, as he first set up his colour printing press there. It is only apt that Ravi Varma’s painting should be part of the Mumbai Gallery Weekend.

*On view at DAG, Taj Mahal Palace, Colaba till 15 January*

## Interdimensional Hypnosees

*By J Demsky*

Spanish visual artist and pioneer of the burgeoning neo-futuristic art movement in Europe, J Demsky's first show in India is a selection of works from across his career. The self-taught artist's artistic influences find their roots in the graffiti movement and in his travels across 50 countries. "[He now feels a need] for a new approach to develop a more conceptual side where he tries to bring new art forms around the interconnected relationship of space and time array with a strong focus on finding the glitch and animating static compositions," mentions the curatorial note. Sculptures such as *LITRED/2* and *LENS 92/1*, made of aluminium composite panels look like slivers of light and colour, coming at us from a different time and space. For Demsky, art is a means to heal himself. By creating abstract shapes, he tries to make sense of a chaotic environment.

*On view at Method Kala Ghoda till 12 February*



Apnavi Makanji, 'P.H.A.N.S.T.R.O.M.A.K', at Tarq; copyright Apnavi Makanji, 2022

### **Psychopomp**

*By Apnavi Makanji*

In the past, the artist's drawings and installations have added meaning to archival material. They have drawn ideas from botany, memory and displacement. Makanji's new exhibition—which comes at a pivotal time in the artist's life and practice—takes these ideas forward.

“Featuring drawings, collages, mixed media sculptures and a video, the works in the show are about post-colonial extractivist histories, queering the future, human connection and navigating the current Phallogocratic Heterotopia,” states the curatorial note. A portion of the body of work also explores what is termed by the artist as “the possibilities of a post anthropocentric world through a queer lens”.

*On view at Tarq Colaba till 11 February*

## **The Night the Writing Fell Silent**

The acclaimed artist, whose career spans over five decades, has been widely acknowledged as the master of the unbroken line. Some of his masterpieces will be on display at the Mumbai Gallery Weekend accompanied by a handbook of poetry by Dr Srajana Kaikini. The poems have been written as a response to this body of works.

*On view at Kathiwada City House, Worli, till 15 January*

## **KK Trove**

*A group exhibition*

A site-responsive exhibition curated by Charlie Levine, it features new works by artists from India and the UK such as Dawn Beckles, Dilip Chobisa, CJ Mahony, Sukhdev Rathod, Liz West and Alice Wilson. "These artists have been commissioned as they make work that celebrates architecture, with all installations inviting audiences to look at the venue a little differently. From how the light floods through the windows and around the vast space, or the 'frames' that exist within the space in its current form. KK Trove will consist of a mixture of installation, prints and interventions," says the curatorial note.

*On view at KK Chambers, Fort, till 15 January*