



The artists to place your bets on

India's leading gallerists each identify one artist likely to make an impact on the way we view art. By Gayatri Rangachari Shah

The past two decades have seen India's art scene grow exponentially: new galleries, auction houses, private museums and collectors, a turnover of ₹880.9 crore in 2021 in auction sales by Artery India's State of the Art Market report (versus ₹559.7 crore in the 2019-2020 financial year) and solid sales during the recent fraught years. 2022's

India Art Fair further demonstrated that buyer sentiment is strong. Globally too, the art market has rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, generating \$65.1 billion in sales, according to the latest Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market report. A roster of gifted artists, increased public engagement through programming at institutions and more arts coverage have helped drive interest with a new demographic: millennials and Gen Z. But for many, navigating this world can be complex. How do you start? Spot new talent? Build a robust collection? Take the advice of Roshini Vadehra of Delhi's Vadehra Art Gallery: "Focus on educating yourself. There is no replacement for conversations in person, viewing exhibitions on-site and reading real books." Keeping that in mind, we speak to nine leading gallerists across the country and ask them to pick the artist whose works they are most excited about.

< ROSHINI VADEHRA,
VADEHRA ART GALLERY,
NEW DELHI
ARTIST: SHRIMANTI
SAHA

"In Shrimanti's paintings, a combination of expressive dreams and literary narratives create landscapes with organic forms and fragmented architecture inhabited by both humans and animals. The works take inspiration from sources like history and art history, literature, mythology and comic books, science fiction, philosophy, miniature paintings, architecture, film and news reports, as well as memory, conversations and personal experiences. She works like a writer, exploring themes of identity, gender, violence and exploitation, focusing on symbolism and storytelling. Yet the significance of the narrative remains open-ended, lending itself to the viewer's own story and interpretation as well."

@vadehraartgallery; @Wshrimantisaha



^ SREE GOSWAMI,
PROJECT 88, MUMBAI
ARTIST: AMOL K PATIL

"I am intrigued by how Amol's practice traverses visual, conceptual, kinetic, and performance art, each seamlessly building upon the other. Amol carefully deconstructs layers of labour, seen through the lens of caste. He engages with materials from construction sites, machines and cranes in the Mumbai harbour. I am very excited about his project at Documenta 15 in Kassel, Germany, a performance which strives to continue the legacy of powada, an inherited tradition amongst the lowest castes of India over the past 300 years, a Shahiri tradition that evolved to become a unique protest against social injustice, a work of contemporary art in and of itself. Amol engages with his family archive through old cassette recordings of his father, a theatre activist, and handwritten songs by his grandfather, a powada poet."

@project88mumbai; @amolkpatil

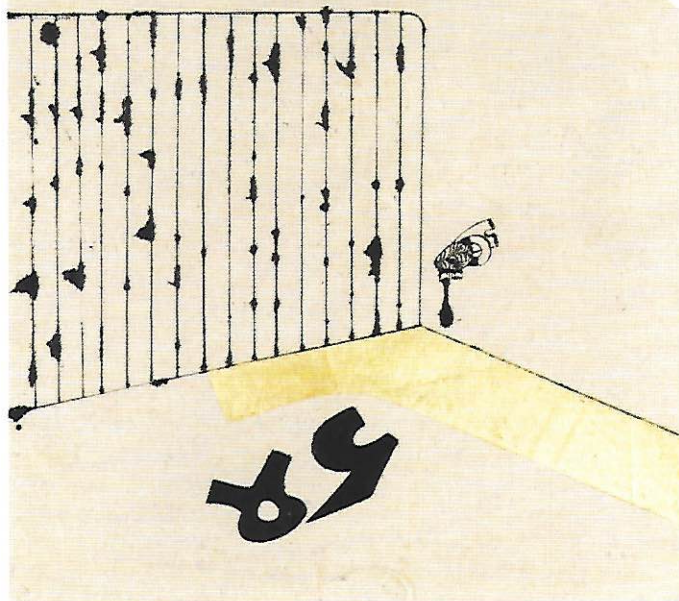


< HENA KAPADIA,
TARQ, MUMBAI
ARTIST: SOGHRA
KHURASANI

"Soghra has been working extensively with printmaking as a medium since completing her Master's degree from Baroda in 2011. The Lalit Kala Akademi award-winning artist works with landscape as a metaphor for the urgent issues that preoccupy her. Her current series is a testament to her technical skill as a woodcut printmaker. Soghra's works are a sensitive and an exacting commentary on contemporary India—how the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns have affected all aspects of our lives, from the way we eat to the way we dissent—as the artist perceives it." >

@tarqmumbai; @soghrakhurasani





< MORT CHATTERJEE,
CHATTERJEE & LAL, MUMBAI
ARTIST: ARSHI IRSHAD AHMAZAI

"We first came across Arshi's work when she became an INLAKS Fine Art awardee. It was immediately obvious to us that she possessed a unique artistic voice: her art presents urgent themes articulated with an economy of line and colour. Viewers are invited into the intimate inner world of the artist as she moves between small-scale and monumental works. We have found that Arshi's works attract a large range of viewers and are able to function at multiple registers. This may be because the artist herself has lived in numerous cities and countries and has had to make herself understood in many different social contexts."

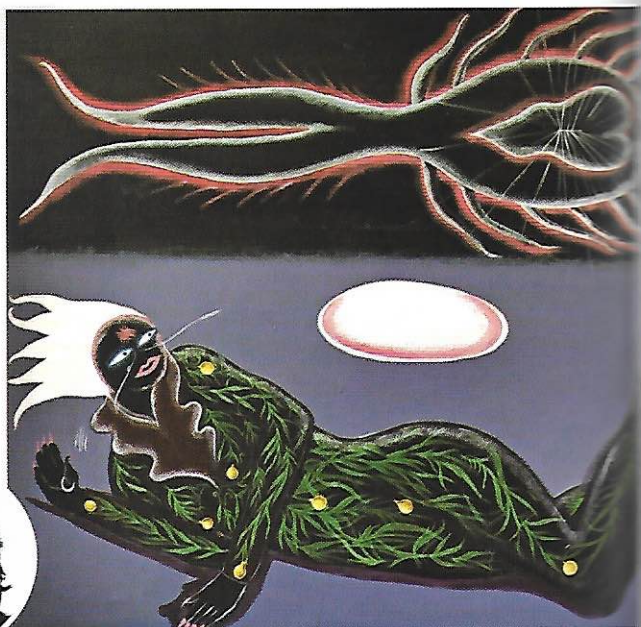
@chatterjeeandlal; @arshi_ahmadzai

> ATYAAN JUNGALWALA,
CHEMOULD COLABA, MUMBAI
ARTIST: RITHIKA PANDEY

"Rithika caught my attention with her use of saturated colours and references to mythological characters. The recurring theme of fictional characters in her works of the Bloomdidos, reflect varied emotional states. She makes these characters come alive through body language, motion and depth on a canvas where figures appear two-dimensionally.

Her practice draws from the personal, mythological and scientific to navigate the mystical spaces within our human entanglements. Her painted worlds become sacred spaces, holding events where boundaries are transgressed and transformations are imminent. Rithika's work highlights the nature of companionship and recovery, and opens up allegorical possibilities of a future that goes beyond apocalypse as an end point."

@chemouldcolaba; @chashmishkahiki



< ASHWIN THADANI,
GALERIE ISA, MUMBAI
ARTIST: IAN MALHOTRA

"I find the practice of Ian's work most intriguing. Ian is a British-Indian artist whose work explores the transmission and translation of visual information, often mimicking digital methods of reproduction through labour-intensive analogue processes. At first glance it looks like a digital print, until you go closer and see that every line and dot is drawn painstakingly, mimicking digital methods. Some works drawn by hand parody that of an inkjet printer, while others use systems mimicking scanners, photocopiers or digital cameras and are performed as timed exercises in self-testing. Ian's work challenges norms and is fresh and enticing."

@galerie_isa @ian.malhotra





< ISHETA SALGAOCAR,
SUNAPARANTA, GOA
CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
ARTIST: AFRAH SHAFIQ

"Afrah is a multidisciplinary artist based in Goa. I find her work inspiring and thought-provoking in its ability to push viewers to question the reality around them. Her work emerges from deep, long-term engagements with archives, stories and other fugitive material across collections, both institutional and informal. Her practice often involves investigating the expansive nature of women's cultural history: her works are richly layered and sourced from a variety of material that include lithographs, oleographs, paintings, folk art, oil paintings and photographs. The visual material she accumulates is then stitched together and transformed into interactive web experiences. Historical study plays a big role in her work. Afrah is interested in the rupturing of existing narratives, 'searching' for the invisible, and creating subversive, speculative new ways of looking at the familiar."

@sunaparanta_goa;

@loveandotheroutdoorgames

> ASHISH ANAND,
DAG, NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, NEW YORK
ARTIST: MADHVI PAREKH

"Some artists have to wait a lifetime to get their due, even though their talent is acknowledged early in their careers. Madhvi, a self-taught painter with a unique voice that recalls folk modernism, has remained true to her practice for over five decades. Her retrospective, organised by DAG, and the recent Christian Dior haute couture show in Paris, where her paintings were transformed into tapestries for a runway backdrop, have renewed focus on her work.

@dag.world

