

#HGEXPLORE

## Visual Artist Sameer Kulavoor's 'Edifice Complex' Intersects Urban Architecture & Identity



Edifice Complex Sameer Kulavoor

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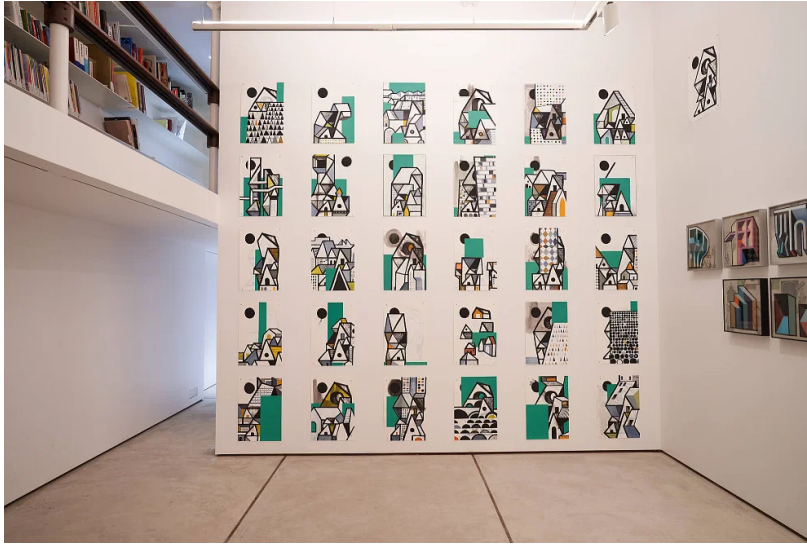
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Amidst the urban sprawl and towering skylines, my eyes roam, captivated by the interplay of spaces, structures, and geographies that paint the canvas of our cities. Each street corner tells a tale, a tapestry woven with diverse threads of [human existence](#). From the labyrinthine alleyways that breathe whispers of history to the gleaming glass facades reflecting the dreams of tomorrow, I am drawn to the pulsating energy that permeates

these concrete jungles. Every nook and cranny holds secrets, whispers of forgotten stories and dreams whispered into the night.

Cities inhabit people from all walks of life with intricate mosaics of culture and contradiction, where past and future converge, and where one seeks familiarity amidst the din of existence. These are the thoughts that swept through my mind when viewing renowned homegrown visual artist, [Sameer Kulavoor](#)'s latest exhibition. I was also reminded of Italo Calvino's famous novel *Invisible Cities*, The story consists of a conversation between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan in which the former describes a series of beautiful surreal cities in the Khan's territory where each city is qualitatively and conceptually unique.

A recurring feature of Kulavoor's oeuvre is his unique observation of spaces, structures, and geographies. In his latest exhibition, *Edifice Complex* the intricate [architecture](#) of cities is once again the protagonist of his creative canvas. The city depicted remains nameless, an embodiment of ubiquity, where design and construction emerge organically, driven by adaptability and resourcefulness rather than meticulous pre-planning. In this realm, conventional design principles are cast aside, and edifices become living entities, evolving and adjusting to the desires and necessities of the city's inhabitants.



A still from the exhibition 'Edifice Complex' Sameer Kulavoor

The exhibition's title, *Edifice Complex*, derives from a phrase coined by Filipino activist Behn Cervantes during the autocratic reign of Ferdinand Marcos. It signifies the phenomenon in which individuals, organizations, or governments become fixated on erecting grandiose structures to project power, status, or progress, often at the expense of more pressing needs. Kulavoor's artworks delve into this theme, particularly within the context of [post-independence](#) ambitions materializing as structures in 'tier-one' and 'tier-two' towns across India. Within these new post-modern edifices, he discovers a distinctive visual language reminiscent of the works by the Milan-based group, Memphis Milano—a vibrant rebellion against the seriousness of Bauhaus and Modernism. Interestingly, Ettore Sottsass, the group's founding member, drew inspiration from his visits to Tiruvannamalai, India in the 1960s and 1970s before establishing Memphis Milano in the 1980s.



A still from the exhibition 'Edifice Complex' Sameer Kulavoor

The exhibition unveils a comprehensive body of work across six series. *Drawn Timelapses* captures the essence of condensed time through a series of sequential drawings presented alongside a video, showcasing the perpetual state of flux experienced by these architectural structures. By zooming in, Kulavoor provides an intimate exploration of the intricate components that form these complex **urban** landscapes, emphasizing their temporal progression. Each drawing on a single page is intricately linked to its predecessor, resulting in a dynamic visual narrative.



A still from the exhibition 'Edifice Complex' Sameer Kulavoor

Additionally, Kulavoor ventures into new artistic territory with the series *Dense City*, *Tech Park*, *Retrofits*, and *Outside The Gated Community*, experimenting with reverse painting techniques using acrylic and oil markers on glass sheets. These works serve as a poignant reminder of the prevalent glass sheet cladding enveloping numerous [contemporary](#) structures, highlighting their transformative nature from opaque mirrors during the day to transparent windows at night.

Housed within [TARQ Mumbai's](#) new premises, this body of work firmly situates urban structures at the forefront, shifting the focus from the inhabitants to the cities themselves, allowing viewers to witness their profound significance. Kulavoor's exhibition showcases a remarkable visual treat that highlights his deep [connection](#) to cities and their intricate layers of identity.

## **Edifice Complex**

**Venue:** TARQ, KK (Navsari) Chambers, Ground Floor, 39B AK Nayak Marg, Fort Mumbai 400001

**Time:** 6pm to 9 pm

**On view till:** 10 June, 2023

Find out more about Sameer Kulavoor [here](#).