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Uma Nair

Critic and Curator Uma Nair has been writing for the past 34 years on art and culture. She has written as critic for Times of India and Economic Times. She believes that art is ... [MORE](#)

From Indian gallery TARQ, *An Indian Wedding in May 1980* and a slew of International masters came together at Art Basel Hong Kong to unveil a carnival of compositions that opened Thursday and ran till yesterday.

Hauser & Wirth with Louise Bourgeois

Hauser & Wirth (Paris, Hong Kong, Monaco, Menorca, Gstaad, Saint Moritz, Zurich, London, Somerset, Los Angeles, New York) presented two iconic works by the legendary genius Louise Bourgeois.



Emotional resonance Cell (Choisy Two)

Louise Bourgeois' remarkable and highly personal installation 'Cell (Choisy Two)' (1995) confronts her feelings towards her childhood, confinement, fear, voyeurism and self-reflection.

"Cell (Choisy)" is a work "Cells" which was dedicated between 1991 and 2010. This installation, is a statement about emotions and psychological aspects. The device sheltered in the steel cage looks like a room within a room. Within that small space, Bourgeois placed selected diverse items together with her own artworks and personal things.

Behind the bars "Cell (Choisy)" looks like an open window through which the viewer can see the intimacy of the artist's private space. There are certain materials which have been used from paintings and fabric sculptures to symbolic objects to make the work

immersive and evocative to the viewer. Through the title “Cell”, which could symbolise confinement or imprisonment, one sees emotional sensations like the ones which Bourgeois wanted to manifest in her art. Art lovers in Hong Kong were milling around this fascinating installation of one of the greatest artists of the millennium.



Fernando Botero

Ora-Ora highlighted Colombian master painter and sculptor Fernando Botero, whose famously rounded forms, joyous carnivalesque paintings, and sheer zest for life made him an unstoppable international force. The artist drew inspiration from the sun-soaked imagery, traditions and fiestas of his native Colombia, and his unique style of boterismo is celebrated worldwide.

The presentation builds on Ora-Ora's highly acclaimed 2022 Botero solo show, "Living with Botero", now at Art Basel Hong Kong 2025 exhibiting the first major show in Asia of the maestro Botero since his death in 2023. A key exhibition highlight, a beautiful large-scale portrait of a dazzling woman titled 'The Saint' (2014), exemplifies Botero's fascination with the female form. The artwork is simultaneously an elevation of the human form and a gentle satire, at the meeting point of the earthly and the divine. The painting depicts a voluptuous woman in an elegant yellow dress, red gloves and halo above her hat, a prime example of boterismo in vivid hues and generous dimensions, which is sure to attract great interest from collectors and visitors. Botero's son, Fernando Botero Zea, said: "Asia and Hong Kong had a special place in my father's heart, and it is with great happiness and emotion that I see his work taking centre stage with Ora-Ora at Art Basel Hong Kong in 2025."



Chirico and Morandi

Mazzoleni (Turin, London) returned to Art Basel Hong Kong with a presentation of works by key international and Italian figures of the 20th century, including Giorgio de Chirico, Giorgio Morandi, Lucio Fontana, Agostino Bonalumi and Salvo.

Giorgio de Chirico the Italian artist still occupies a prominent and unsurpassable position in the history of western modern art. De Chirico remained fascinated by traditional painting techniques throughout his career and worked in the style of old masters while creating a unique visual language that became one of the most recognisable expressions of Modernism.

In *Gli Archeologi Amore Musica* 1930s Chirico depicts a delightful duet of two human figures. They lend an enigmatic air to hidden identity and expression. Their pose is both active in movement, animated by both hands, yet literally set in an immobile fashion which provides an uncanniness to their presence. The repetition of motifs in differing configurations add an interesting dimension when viewing de Chirico's work throughout his career as he returns back to each scene, as if they represent new moments from a recurring dream, new information in an investigation or different stills from the same film, emanating suspense through their dramatic staging.



Giorgio Morandi and his still life

The painting of Giorgio Morandi expresses his love for still lives as an apparent humility of means underwritten by a life of seemingly total dedication to art. His work at the Art Basel Booth was both searching, as well as unassuming and small. His subject is imbued with a muted passion and appears in a calm and contemplated idiom. Bottles were his favourite subject and simplicity his leitmotif.

Morandi invariably titled his painting *Natura morta* if it was a still life or *Paesaggio* if it was a landscape. Between pastel shades of white and muddy brown, sometimes a grayish brown, everything was rendered in slightly distorted perspective. The beauty of his work is the art of silence.



Klimt's sinuous nudes

Richard Nagy Ltd. (London) will be presenting an overview of Gustav Klimt's career, spanning from his early historicist period (1880s–1890s) through his celebrated golden period to his later, more experimental erotic works. Klimt's nude drawings set to rest the debate between what is naked and what is nude. Clarity of composition and the beauty of lithe lines and minimalist moorings all come into play in this suite.

Indian Wedding in Kerala

Amongst Indian galleries TARQ brings Saju Kunhan to Art Basel Hong Kong, Booth 1C42, Saju has been shortlisted as one of the three nominees for the **MGM Discoveries Art Prize**. And this is a huge honour for TARQ as well as for the artist who hails from Kerala.



Saju Kunhan's charming quartet of monumental quadriptychs titled '11th May 1980 Wedding Day' delves specifically into familial archives and ancestral histories. They feature black and white family photographs taken from a wedding album, the frozen stillness of which is animated by adding a layer of painted colour which in the artist's words is to "try to add some colour to their existence."

Process and digital print

The paint is applied to a digital print of the photograph, and subsequently transferred onto wood panels. This results in a complex, reverse layered image which is arranged consecutively across the walls of the booth, making it a host of painted memories brought to life. The revisitation of collective memories and myths are presented with care and dexterity for the viewers to pay attention to family histories that survive in splintered recollections and images. The base of each wooden panel features a grid of inlay brass. For Kunhan, brass inlay is often associated with recollections and historical representations through various temple or domestic objects.

Furthermore, his use of inlay in these works generates grids and patterns that are linked to

maps, locations, and divisions, tracing back to his larger body of work. The strategic use of these structures that are metaphorical references to the issues of migration and displacement are apparent in Kunjan's visuals. The nature of recycled wood that has been subject to change, corrosion and decay over time adds another layer of felt time and the passage of it.

Kunhan is a master of narratives and with his use of materials he creates a surreal signature that is bound to engage viewers in Hong Kong.

Images: Art Basel HK