

Art Market

Meet 14 Women Shaping India's Booming Art Scene

Shreya Ajmani

Jan 26, 2026 2:30PM

Over the past two decades, the Indian art market has undergone a profound transformation into a sophisticated ecosystem of galleries, auction houses, biennales, and art events.

Many long-standing art spaces have remained at the forefront of this transformation, bolstered further by the arrival of pivotal new institutions and market players. Amid this rapidly changing environment, several women are shaping the scene both at home and by sustaining the country's representation internationally.

What sets them apart is a collective vision for an India that holds space for its art. Some emerge from storied family legacies, while others have built institutions and communities, often from the ground up. Over time, their presence has become integral cogs in the growth of the Indian art ecosystem.

With the [India Art Fair](#), founded in 2008 by Neha Kirpal, set to enter its 17th edition next week, this list shares 14 of the women shaping the country's art market today.

Nita Mukesh Ambani

Founder and chairperson, Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre



Portrait of Nita Mukesh Ambani. Courtesy of Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC).

Nita Mukesh Ambani has played a transformative role in shaping India's cultural landscape by integrating art, heritage, and public access at an unprecedented scale. Through the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC), launched in 2023, she has created a landmark institution that brings together visual art, performance, and design under one roof. "When I envisioned an interdisciplinary space like the NMACC, my intent was to not only spotlight India's vibrant art history, but also offer a global platform to the existing cultural zeitgeist of the country," she told Artsy in a [2024 interview](#).

Since its opening, the institution has introduced Indian audiences to major international presentations, including Yayoi Kusama's *Infinity Room*, shown in India for the first time. Its four-story Art House has hosted a series of large-scale exhibitions, among them, "Sangam/Confluence" curated by Ranjit Hoskote and Jeffrey Deitch, which brought together leading voices of the East and West in a notable cross-cultural dialogue.

The centre has equally placed emphasis on the performing arts by hosting popular musicals such as *Mamma Mia!* alongside opera, theatre, and dance, reinforcing its interdisciplinary mandate.

Ambani's patronage of the arts has extended far beyond the country with recent exhibitions such as "Tree & Serpent: Early

Buddhist Art in India, 200 BCE–400 CE" at the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), which traced the origins of Buddhist art. This outlook was further reinforced by her daughter, Isha Ambani, who most recently chaired the [British Museum](#) gala, positioning Indian patronage within an international institutional context.

Jaya Asokan

Fair director, India Art Fair



Portrait of Jaya Asokan. Courtesy of India Art Fair

Jaya Asokan has served as the director of India Art Fair since 2021. Under her leadership, the fair has strengthened its position as the region's premier platform for modern and contemporary art from the Indian subcontinent. In 2024, she notably added a design section spotlighting a burgeoning South Asian scene.

Asokan is known for her commitment to inclusive programming and expanding public engagement, making the fair a crucial site of critical discourse and cultural exchange. "I see the fair as a living platform, one that evolves through collaboration, experimentation, and sustained dialogue across communities," she said.

The fair is set to return for its 17th edition next week, bringing together a record total of 135 exhibitors, including 94 galleries. The Indian market, as Asokan shares, "is at a moment of consolidation and growing confidence."

"We are seeing a more informed collector base, greater transparency, and stronger alignment between primary-market growth and institutional validation," she said. "Looking ahead, I see the market moving toward measured, thoughtful, and sustainable growth: fewer speculative spikes, stronger networks across the region, and a clearer articulation of South Asian artistic narratives within the global context."

Shireen Gandhy

Director, Chemould Prescott Road



Portrait of Shireen Gandhy. Courtesy of Shireen Gandhy.

Shireen Gandhy grew up alongside a gallery. Gallery Chemould was founded by her parents in 1963, a year before she was born, their “fifth child,” as she put it, “their fourth being the gallery.”

When Gandhy later stepped into its stewardship in 1988, she inherited “something that had no past and a future that came ambling along as they groped somewhat in the dark.” In 2007, she led the gallery’s relocation to a historic loft on Prescott Road in Mumbai.

The gallery is one of the oldest commercial spaces in Mumbai. It has played a crucial role in launching the careers of artists such as S.H. Raza, Tyeb Mehta, and Bhupen Khakhar, among many others. Over more than 35 years in the art world, Gandhy has built a life shaped by enduring relationships.

Her role has rarely been limited to that of a dealer. It is, instead, a constant negotiation between professionalism and “oftentimes counsellor and the conduit between the artist and the world outside of it.” If she had to define it, she says, it comes down to responsibility—“to the artist, to the collector who buys, and to the world that looks at what you present.”

Looking at the art world today, Gandhy sees India as “its own bubble—of immense faith in what is familiar.” Beneath the noise of auctions, she finds reassurance in the primary market’s quieter rhythms, shaped by restraint, care, and long-held trust.

Feroze Gujral

Founder and director, Gujral Foundation



Portrait of Feroze Gujral. Courtesy of Feroze Gujral

In 2008, the philanthropist, collector, patron, and businesswoman Feroze Gujral founded the Gujral Foundation with her husband, creating a vital platform for art at a time when the market had collapsed and private support was scarce.

The foundation nurtures talent across art, architecture, and design throughout and beyond the Indian subcontinent. “People often think patronage simply means purchasing something—and yes, buying is also a form of support, and it’s important—but that alone is not patronage,” Gujral said. “It’s about creating a consistent structure of

support and helping in a sustained, meaningful way."

Recently, Gujral supported her father-in-law's exhibition, "Satish Gujral: A Century in Form, Fire, and Vision" at the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi. The exhibition traces the artist's trajectory to his centenary, including his pioneering 1952 journey to Mexico.

"We're always looking to the West, but we shouldn't. We have nearly two billion people—this is where buying, selling, enjoying, and understanding art should happen, on a Friday night at home," she said. "Just like Hindustani music or Indian cinema, success has to happen here first."

Aparajita Jain

Director and co-owner, Nature Morte



Portrait of Aparajita Jain. Courtesy of Aparajita Jain

Aparajita Jain has introduced innovations and long-overdue public interventions to the Indian public. She's the founder of India's first blockchain-powered art platform, *Terrain.art*, and co-founder of India's first international sculpture park with the government of Rajasthan. But she is best known for her role at *Nature Morte*, one of the country's leading commercial galleries.

"At *Nature Morte*, I see my role as a catalyst: supporting artists, connecting them with audiences and institutions, and contributing to the larger history of contemporary art," said Jain. "I want to contribute to the expansion of the voice of Indian artists and establish them firmly on the global map."

Jain bought into the gallery, founded in New York in 1982 by Peter Nagy, in 2012. Today, it champions experimental, conceptual, and

installation-based practices by acclaimed South Asian artists such as Bharti Kher, Asim Waqif, and Jitish Kallat.

Jain has been a driving force behind the country's market trends, generating momentum around blockbuster shows and propelling Indian artists globally. Most recently, Nature Morte partnered with international mega-gallery Hauser & Wirth to open Kher's solo show "Mythologies" at the Thorvaldsens Museum in Copenhagen.

She also brings international names to India: The gallery recently opened Ai Weiwei's first Indian solo exhibition. "I feel a shift in how the world is looking at India, and we're more ready than ever to share our voices, ideas, and practices globally," she said. "Today, art is about building a sustained cultural legacy, not just the present moment."

Amrita and Priya Jhaveri

Founders, Jhaveri Contemporary.



Portrait of Priya Jhaveri. Photo by Derry. Courtesy of Jhaveri Contemporary.



Portrait of Amrita Jhaveri. Photo by Matthew Cole. Courtesy of Jhaveri Contemporary.

Amrita and Priya Jhaveri have been paving the way for South Asian

art on the global stage long before they founded Jhaveri Contemporary in 2010. In the mid-1990s, Amrita established Christie's presence in India, helping shape the country's early engagement with the international art market.

Through their partnership at the gallery, the duo have continued to expand the contours of South Asian art history, organising Anish Kapoor's first exhibition in India the same year they launched their Mumbai gallery. Since then, the sisters have positioned their gallery as a critical platform for original scholarship, realised through meticulously researched exhibitions. It's shown contemporary artists such as Rana Begum, Harminder Judge, and Ali Kazim, while also stewarding estates of seminal figures such as Mrinalini Mukherjee and Anwar Jalal Shemza.

"What is compelling is the sheer optimism and energy in the art world, which is in stark contrast to the rest of the Western world," the pair said of the current market mood. "The curiosity which drives general audiences towards art, as evidenced by the large numbers that attend Mumbai Gallery Weekend or the art fairs in India, is also striking."

Sangita Jindal

President, *ART India* Magazine; chairperson, JSW Foundation



Portrait of Sangita Jindal. Courtesy of Sangita Jindal.

Sangita Jindal has spent more than three decades shaping India's contemporary art and heritage landscape, continuing a legacy of patronage from her mother, Urmila Kanoria, founder of the Kanoria Arts Centre. As chairperson of the JSW Foundation, one of the country's leading philanthropic organisations, she supports initiatives across social development, heritage conservation, sports and the arts.

In 1996, she founded the pioneering *ART India* magazine, seeking to articulate a critical discourse around contemporary and modern art in South Asia. To mark the publication's 30th anniversary this year, Jindal held an open call for 30 artists aged 30 or under. On the soon-to-be announced cohort, she said, "I am genuinely excited by this list. The works are poignant, thoughtful, and deeply attuned to the complexities of our times. They fill me with immense hope for the future of art. It holds tremendous promise."

In February 2024, Jindal established Hampi Art Labs near the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hampi, India, creating a space for emerging and established artists. The initiative has held exhibitions of works by artists like Dhruvi Acharya and hosted residencies for artists, including Arpita Akhanda and Bhasha Chakrabarti.

Hena Kapadia

Founder and director, TARQ



Portrait of Hena Kapadia. Courtesy of Hena Kapadia.

Hena Kapadia is one of the most exciting young gallerists in the Indian scene. She founded TARQ in 2014, and the Mumbai gallery has distinguished itself by championing emerging and mid-career artists such as [Rithika Merchant](#), [Sameer Kulavoor](#), and [Nimra Sikander](#).

"The work we do at TARQ is, first and foremost, community building," Kapadia said. "Art thrives only within a vibrant and diverse discourse."

The gallery maintains a regular presence at art fairs in India and abroad, including [Art Basel Hong Kong](#), where its artist [Sajju Kunhan](#) was nominated for the [MGM Art Discoveries Prize](#). Reflecting on the contemporary scene, she noted, "The region has a phenomenal number of contemporary artists, each grappling with different issues in unique ways. I'm excited to see how the scene evolves as viewers become more discerning."

Kiran Nadar

Founder and chairperson, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art



[Skip to Main Content](#)



Search by artist, gallery, style, theme, tag, etc.



Related Stories



India Art Fair announces exhibitors for its largest edition yet.

By Pallavi Rishi

Nadar. Courtesy of Kiran Nadar Museum of Art.



10 Indian Modernist Artists from the 20th Century You Should Know
India's most prominent collectors, Kiran Nadar is a pioneer in

the country's institutional standing.



India Art Fair 2010 marked the opening of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) in 2010, and

the museum has since charted a new course for modern and

contemporary art in India. As the country's first private museum of

its kind, it offers free access to world-class exhibitions, bringing

post war & contemporary art
eckert fine art
at art palm beach



Advertisement

more meaningful with my collection."

The museum—which is set to launch a new space spanning 1 million square feet—has mounted seminal shows of artists including Gulammohammed Sheikh, Vivan Sundaram, and Nasreen

presence on the
share my collection
India had no
" she told Artsy.

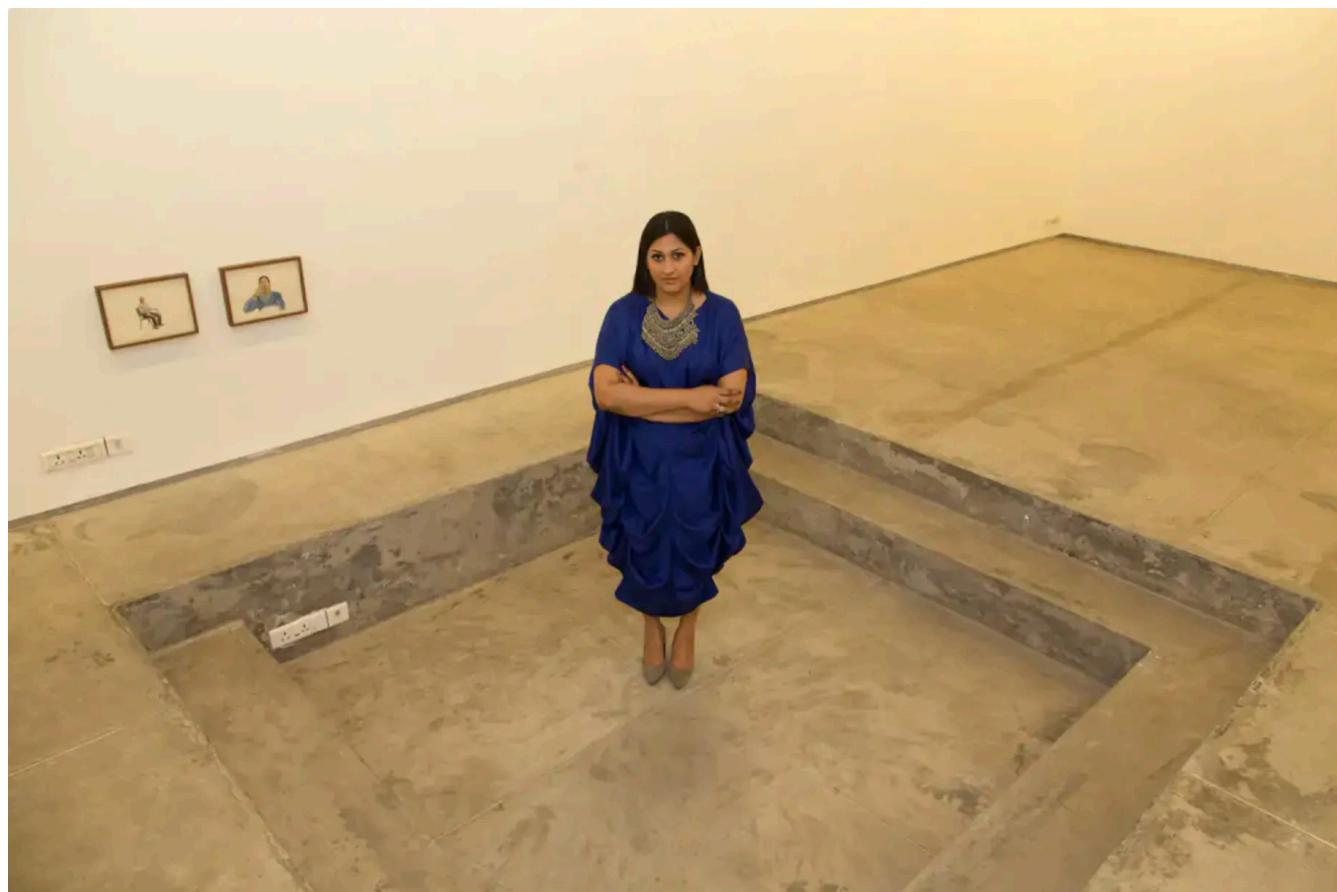
or her house,
M.F. Husain,
she recalls, "I had
ould do something

Mohamedji. Nadar's support has also extended far beyond the New Delhi museum: At the 2024 Venice Biennale, the museum presented "The Rooted Nomad: M.F. Husain" at Magazzini del Sale. It is set to return to the upcoming Venice Biennale later this year, supporting a new exhibition by Nalini Malani.

"It brings me immense joy to help democratize art, transforming it into a shared cultural experience rather than an exclusive privilege," she said. "What's particularly encouraging is seeing young collectors enter the art world—not just as buyers, but as an interactive audience engaging meaningfully with the art."

Priyanka Raja

Co-founder and director, Experimenter



Portrait of Priyanka Raja. Courtesy of Priyanka Raja.

Priyanka Raja has been at the forefront of shaping India's contemporary art conversation for over a decade. As co-founder of Kolkata gallery Experimenter, she has helped build a gallery model that privileges ideas, dialogue, and long-term commitment to artists. Launched in 2009, the gallery has been instrumental in providing a space for contemporary and experimental practices, representing artists such as Ayesha Sultana, Sohrab Hura, and Bani Abidi. It also operates the annual curatorial intensive, Experimenter Curators' Hub.

Raja moves between custodian, collaborator, and cultural producer, positioning the gallery as both a public-facing institution and a critical engine within the market. "At Experimenter, we see ourselves as custodians of our artists' voices," Raja said.

"Our responsibility is to create fearless, unbound platforms where the most urgent practices of our time can be seen and debated." She describes the gallery as "an active space of learning rather than a passive space of viewing."

Sana Rezwan

Founder, Public Arts Trust of India



Portrait of Sana Rezwan. Courtesy of Sana Rezwan.

Sana Rezwan represents a new generation of Indian patrons and collectors shaping the country's contemporary art landscape from the ground up.

She started collecting in New York, focusing on South Asian women artists whose practices spoke to her personally, such as [Rana](#)

Begum and Zarina. After returning to India in 2022, she founded the Public Arts Trust of India (PATI), dedicated to expanding access to art and embedding contemporary practices within lived, local contexts through artist residencies, the PATI learning centre, and their arts education initiatives in collaboration with Government museums and schools.

“I aim to enable wider audiences to engage with art thoughtfully, while fostering dialogue between contemporary practices and local crafts,” said Rezwan. Through initiatives such as Jaipur Art Week and Jodhpur Art Week, she has helped build meaningful art ecosystems outside Delhi and Mumbai.

Rezwan emphasizes the need for platforms that support emerging voices. “We need more platforms that surface emerging artists,” she said, pointing to Jaipur Art Week’s open-call model and focus on solo presentations.

Roshini Vadehra

Director, Vadehra Art Gallery



Portrait of Roshini Vadehra. Courtesy of Roshini Vadehra.

Roshini Vadehra has been a steady force in the Indian art world since joining her father Arun's eponymous gallery in 2004. Founded

in 1987, the gallery has staged foundational shows for modernists such as M.F. Husain, S.H. Raza, and Tyeb Mehta. Under Roshini's guidance, it has become a platform where historical masters and contemporary voices coexist. In 2005, she opened the gallery's second space, giving early support to artists including Atul Dodiya, Anju Dodiya, and Shilpa Gupta.

"Working within the art world for me has always meant building bridges between artists and audiences, both within India and internationally," she says. Vadehra also co-founded the Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art (FICA) to foster contemporary Indian art via education, residencies, public initiatives, and funding.

Roshini has continued to guide the gallery forward, bringing in voices such as Ashfika Rahman and Zaam Arif. Several recent international milestones include its Art Basel Miami Beach debut in 2025 and supporting Arpita Singh's first international solo institutional exhibition at the Serpentine.

"There is a growing maturity among collectors," she noted of the current scene. "The market seems to be on a strong trajectory to continue this evolution of solid and meaningful growth and patronage," she added, highlighting the increase in large-scale platforms like the current Kochi Biennale, India Art Fair, and India's forthcoming return to the Venice Biennale.

Minal Vazirani

Co-founder, Saffronart and Art Mumbai



Portrait of Minal Vazirani. Courtesy of Minal Vazirani.

Minal Vazirani is the co-founder of Saffronart, the country's largest auction platform, and the co-founder of [Art Mumbai](#), the city's first major art fair, which launched in 2023. "When I conceptualized and founded Saffronart in 2000, it was in response to a need I felt as a young buyer—to create greater access to high-quality works of art and pricing transparency," said Vazirani, who founded both

endeavours with her husband Dinesh.

Saffronart quickly expanded internationally and beyond art to include jewellery, textiles, and other collectables. “Building Saffronart turned a personal passion into a decades-long effort that is now a global platform spanning Mumbai, Delhi, New York, and London,” she said.

Saffronart has set multiple auction benchmarks, including the \$7.46 million sale of Amrita Sher-Gil’s *The Story Teller* (1937) in 2023, then the most expensive work by an Indian artist. In 2025, Saffronart’s 25th Anniversary Evening Sale became the highest-value South Asian art auction globally, totalling INR 355.77 crores (\$40.2 million).

“What excites me most today is seeing global interest in South Asian art grow,” Vazirani reflected. “Through Saffronart and Art Mumbai, we are creating spaces where artists, collectors, and audiences can meet, explore, and engage with one another. It’s about building a vibrant, sustainable ecosystem that nurtures creativity and fosters dialogue—right here in India, while connecting with the world.” ■



Shreya Ajmani

Shreya Ajmani is a writer and arts professional focusing on art from Asia and its diasporas. She has contributed writing to Artnet, Artsy, Frieze, Ocula, Vogue, and Bonhams, among others, as well as to exhibition catalogues.

Further Reading in Art Market