

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO ROBB REPORT INDIA
 WHERE LUXURY COMES WITH NO SURPRISE, FROM THE BEST IN EXPERIENCES AND PRODUCTS ACROSS TRAVEL, MOTORING, STYLE, DINING, HOME AND LIVING.

ART

Nikhil Chopra, Subodh Gupta and the Visionaries Featured on the Masters of Luxury Art List

From durational performances and surrealist drawings to collectible design and craft, India's luxury art vanguards place time, emotion and integrity above spectacle and market trends.



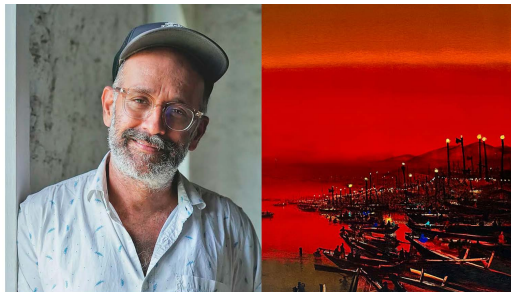
A curated list of India's masters of luxury art highlights how true luxury lies in time, depth, and authenticity. From Left to Right

Ela Das

Updated on: 07 Jun 2026, 10:00 am



Nikhil Chopra



Chopra came to art school later than most, deciding to begin his formal training at 25. Nikhil Chopra

Time, for Goa-based artist Nikhil Chopra, is one of the last remaining luxuries. He sees it in the simple act of being able to give yourself over to an experience fully—whether that means sitting with an artwork, following a performance as it unfolds, or being present enough to let something move you.

Chopra came to art school later than most, deciding to begin his formal training at 25. "It sounded insane," he says now, laughing at the memory. But it remains, by his own admission, the best decision he could have made, and the uncertainty that came with it has never left him. "That is perhaps the one consistent feeling when it comes to being an artist," he says. Moves across continents—from India to the U.S., from Berlin back to Goa—only deepened that uncertainty, but also kept reconfiguring his relationship to practice, place, and community.

His work, which unfolds through performance, drawing, theatre, and endurance, asks for time in a world that rewards speed. He is heartened by how many younger people are showing up for art today, entering exhibitions and experiences by him and HH Art Spaces with real curiosity. What troubles him, however, is the need to mediate that experience through a phone. "The moment that device comes in, there's this feeling of consuming as opposed to experiencing the artwork. There's a need to validate the experience that's just been had, and I find that problematic," he says. "Artworks are meant to make people forget about their phones!"

That became especially clear during his turn as curator for the recently concluded edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, where he hoped to create an environment that could hold conversation, difference, and feeling without collapsing into a parade. What stayed with him most was the quality of response—people moved, overwhelmed, spending entire days with single works.

Strip away market value, trend, and noise, and what remains, for Chopra, is simple. "Authenticity," he says. "That is what I'm always looking for."

Paresh Maity



Maiti's practice often unfolds in a single sitting, working alla prima, holding onto light and atmosphere before they slip away. Paresh Maiti

"True luxury will lie in rarity," observes the New Delhi-based artist Paresh Maiti. "The number of genuine masters and significant artworks is gradually becoming smaller, and truly meaningful works are becoming rare." Pointing to a world that rarely slows down long enough to take anything in, he believes, the act of making something meaningful is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. He shares how his impulse to create begins in passing moments—a sunrise that lingers a little longer than expected, the pull of moonlight, a sudden rainbow.

"That immediate response, that moment of contemplation, is important for me to paint," he says. His practice often unfolds in a single sitting, working alla prima, holding onto light and atmosphere before they slip away. Often, the subject and the nature of an idea determines the medium he chooses to paint with—watercolours allowing for softness, oil and acrylic bringing weight and presence, and sculpture and installation offering a more multidimensional experience. However, at the heart of his work is a constant search for the unfamiliar. "I always enjoy discovering the unconventional," he shares. "Works that are rooted in emotion, deep passion, and careful observation become timeless." He says that technology may alter how art is produced and circulated, but it cannot replace emotion, passion, or love. "Art is deeply connected with emotion. When someone listens to beautiful music or looks at a powerful artwork, it creates an emotional experience that goes beyond market value and commercial aspects."

Prateek Raja and Priyanka Raja



Experimenter, for Prateek Raja and Priyanka Raja, was always meant to push beyond the framework of a conventional gallery. Prateek Raja and Priyanka Raja

Experimenter, for Prateek Raja and Priyanka Raja, was always meant to push beyond the framework of a conventional gallery. "Being fearless is ingrained in our core ethical value system," says co-founder and gallery director Priyanka. What that has translated into are spaces—two in Kolkata and one in Mumbai—that actively build a culture of dialogue, learning, and exchange. It has also defined how they think about luxury in contemporary art today. "Pure luxury has to be early access, options, and time," says Priyanka. "If you discover the right artists early in their career, acquire their works from the start, and continue to support them as they go through their careers, especially with contemporary art, it is a deeply rewarding and satisfying experience," shares Prateek.

At the heart of the gallery is a close-knit relationship with its artists. "We are the extension of our artists' minds, their ambitions, and their studios," says Prateek. This often means committing to ideas that are complex, long-term, and at times logistically daunting, simply because they believe in what the work is trying to express. That same instinct guides how they recognise practices that will endure. "It's a feeling, really," says Priyanka. Time spent with artists—inside studios, in conversation, in shared moments—becomes essential to understanding the depth of a practice beyond its immediate visibility. While technology has expanded how art is accessed and discovered, they remain unequivocal about its limits. "Viewing art in person cannot be replaced," says Priyanka. "The joy of seeing art every day for the rest of one's life and reliving that momentary feeling of excitement, flutter, realisation, joy, and even repulsion that one saw and felt for the first time when encountering a particular work... There is immense value in these experiences. Art is transformative and something that touches our core."

Richa Agarwal





Richa Agarwal's journey in the arts began in an unconventional way. Richa Agarwal

Richa Agarwal's journey in the arts began in an unconventional way. Trained in commerce and shaped by years within her family's business, she entered the cultural space with a lens that combined structure with instinct, and vision with execution. What drew her in was not just the art, but the ecosystem around it: how it is experienced, who it reaches, and what it makes possible over time. As the chairperson of the Kolkata Centre for Creativity and CEO of Emami Art, her focus has consistently been on access, making art a part of everyday life rather than something to be approached with hesitation. Initiatives such as Art for All, along with programmes that include a Braille library and broader DEAI (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion) efforts, reflect a belief that engagement matters as much as presentation.

In Emami Art's programming, Agarwal brings together emerging, mid-career, and established artists, with a particular attention to voices from the east and north-east India—regions that have often been overlooked in mainstream discourses. Exhibitions are paired with research, residencies, and open calls, creating a structure that supports artists beyond a single show. Over time, this has built a more sustained way of working that values continuity over momentary visibility. Beyond the gallery space, with initiatives like the Emami Art Experimental Film Festival, Agarwal has created platforms that invite audiences to engage more deeply with art. As she explained to Robb Report India in a recent feature on India's evolving art ecosystem, such programmes are about "creating the right infrastructure, so these initiatives can flourish and reach global audiences," while also opening up "completely new ways of seeing that go beyond the ordinary." What stands out, she adds, are the conversations these spaces generate—moments where audiences begin to question, reflect, and return with a renewed curiosity.

Rithika Merchant



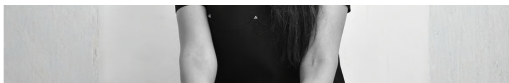
When you look at Rithika Merchant's work, there's a sense of stepping into a surrealist landscape with echoes of her Malayali heritage. Rithika Merchant

When you look at Rithika Merchant's work, there's a sense of stepping into a surrealist landscape layered with echoes of her Malayali heritage. The Mumbai-born, Barcelona-based artist's drawings, often rendered in watercolour, are dense with symbols, creatures, and fragments of narratives that gather meaning the longer you observe. Merchant's practice sits at the intersection of mythology, nature, and speculative fiction, drawing from a wide visual vocabulary, such as Kalamkari prints, Mughal miniatures, botanical drawings, Art Deco architecture, and cartography. "I am drawn to rich symbolism and a strong element of storytelling," she says.

That openness extends to the way her work moves across disciplines. A collaboration with Dior, where her other-worldly drawings became the scenography for their Paris Haute Couture Week Spring/Summer 2025 show, points to a growing fluidity between art, fashion, and design. For Merchant, this cross-pollination feels natural. "There is a lot of fluidity between creative spheres, and visual art and fashion will always be in conversation with each other. It's a dynamic and growing community and the opportunities for interdisciplinary practices are multifold, presenting new oceans for exploration." Yet, her own practice remains contained. She continues to work alone, reinforcing the intimacy of her work. "The value of an artwork is the joy it brings the artist to make it, and the audience who views it."

Roshini Vadehra





Roshini Vadehra recognised early in her career that a gallerist's responsibility is not simply to sell art, but to build an artist's legacy. **Roshini Vadehra**

The role of a gallery extends far beyond transactions for Roshini Vadehra, who recognised early in her career that a gallerist's responsibility is not simply to sell art, but to build an artist's legacy. That shift, from dealing in objects to nurturing practices, continues to shape the way she runs Vadehra Art Gallery in New Delhi as its director. This means working across generations to support established artists, as well as those in their formative stages, often long before market validation enters the picture. It's a position that prioritises continuity over immediacy, allowing for a deeper, more authentic dialogue between artist, gallery, and collector, and echoing what Vadehra sees as the future of collecting.

"True luxury will be depth of engagement," she says. "It lies in the time spent understanding an artist's practice, the history it sits within, and the ideas it carries forward. The narrative within a collection will become equally important." This long-view approach also informs the relationships the gallery builds with artists, collectors and curators. For Vadehra, these are shaped by ongoing conversations that evolve over years, even decades. The gallery becomes an anchor within that ecosystem, shaping what is seen, and how that is understood and contextualised over time. In identifying artists whose work will endure, Vadehra looks for a similar kind of integrity. Practices driven by inquiry, by commitment, and by a certain fearlessness in making that's free from the pressure of immediate market response. It's this emphasis on process over product that often signals longevity.

Sameer Kulavoor



Much of artist Sameer Kulavoor's work begins with looking—really looking—at the city. **Sameer Kulavoor**

Much of artist Sameer Kulavoor's work begins with looking—really looking—at the city. The unpolished version of it, the one that reveals itself in fragments: hand-painted signs, crowded streets, construction sites, the constant push and pull between order and chaos. His drawings and paintings sit within these tensions, and his practice is shaped by the rhythms of urban India.

For him, the city is a living system shaped by everything from policy and aspiration to inequality and improvisation. "All these factors are contingent on the human condition," he says, describing an environment that is constantly shifting. His work moves through these layers; his canvases are observations on how these layers manifest in the built environment and in everyday life.

In 2010, after years in design (Kulavoor founded one of the earliest specialised design studios in India, Bombay Duck Designs) and at the edge of burnout, Kulavoor began shifting towards selfinitiated projects, which led to selfpublishing and eventually into a solo art practice. "A friend said, 'Do what makes you happy and content.' That has been the single most important framework through which I look at my practice. I had to unlearn, recalibrate myself, and turn down things that got in the way of what I like doing."

Kulavoor is also wary of how easily art gets folded into conversations around luxury. "I don't think of contemporary art as luxury at all," he says. And yet, in the way he observes, records, and reconsiders the everyday, there is a different kind of value at play—one that asks you to pay attention to the world as it is, rather than as it is presented.

Subodh Gupta



Subodh Gupta's work begins with objects most people would overlook. **Subodh Gupta**

Subodh Gupta's work begins with objects most people would overlook. A steel tiffin, a thali, a milk pail, bartans and pieces found in almost every Indian home. In his hands, these everyday items are brought together, repeated, and transformed into large, striking sculptures. What the artist captures through them is a changing India—its aspirations, its movement, and the tensions between tradition and modern life.

Born in Bihar, Gupta's early years were far removed from the global art world he would later come to inhabit. He travelled with a small theatre group, working as an actor for several years, while also designing posters for their performances. That instinct to move between roles—actor, designer, painter—has stayed with him through his career. Even after formally training as a painter in Patna, he continued to experiment across mediums, eventually working with installation, video, photography, and performance. His shift to

using stainless steel in the mid-1990s marked a turning point; and the material, so common in Indian kitchens, became his signature. By using objects already loaded with meaning—linked to labour, migration, food, and faith—he began to build works that speak across contexts. For some, these objects carry nostalgia; for others, they reflect a rapidly changing economy. Gupta doesn't separate these readings, instead allowing them to sit together, much like the layered realities they come from.

Over time, his work has appeared in museums, biennales, and public spaces across the world. Yet, there is always a sense of where these objects come from, and the lives they are tied to. What makes his work stay with you is its simplicity. There's no need to decode it immediately—it draws you in gently. And in that moment, something shifts. The everyday begins to feel more expansive than it first appeared.

Tarini Jindal Handa



Jindal Handa brings together that legacy with a more contemporary instinct. Tarini Jindal Handa

For Tarini Jindal Handa, design begins long before an object takes shape—it starts in the meeting point between material, maker, and idea. With *Æquo*, the gallery she founded in 2022, in Mumbai, that intersection becomes the core of the practice: a space where global designers enter into dialogue with Indian craft traditions, producing works that sit somewhere between design, art, and cultural artefact.

Raised in a family deeply embedded in patronage and the arts, Jindal Handa brings together that legacy with a more contemporary instinct. Techniques like dhokra or bidri, once tied to traditional forms, are reinterpreted through contemporary design, creating objects that feel informed by heritage yet forward-looking. “These works are not simply pieces of furniture,” she points out. “They become future relics.” What distinguishes the gallery is its deliberate pace. From the outset, *Æquo* chose to grow through relationships, experimentation, and sustained collaboration. Designers are encouraged to engage deeply with materials and processes, while artisans are invited into a more exploratory, less fixed mode of making. The result is a collection of objects that echo a series of conversations between past and present, between technique and interpretation. That emphasis on process is also what defines her understanding of luxury today, which lies beyond exclusivity, in “the depth of craftsmanship and the integrity of the process”

Increasingly, she observes, a younger generation of collectors is responding to this shift, approaching design with curiosity and a desire to understand the stories behind what they acquire. Stripped of branding, what remains, she suggests, is “an object [that] feels truly luxurious when you can sense the time, skill, and care that have gone into making it.”

Vikram Goyal



Vikram Goyal began his career on a structured corporate path, working in finance at Morgan Stanley. Vikram Goyal

Armed with a degree in engineering, Vikram Goyal began his career on a structured corporate path, working in finance at Morgan Stanley. Then, he co-founded the beauty and wellness brand Kama Ayurveda, “which introduced me to the world of entrepreneurship and building a brand from the ground up,” he recalls. Two decades ago, he left it all to pursue design without any formal training, founding Vikram Goyal Studio and Viya in the early 2000s, where he would begin drawing from India’s metal-working traditions to create collectable, limited-edition furniture pieces and sculptural objects that reinterpret specialist artisanal techniques in a contemporary context.

“That unconventional path shaped the way I approach my work today,” he says. “It has allowed me to remain curious, experimental, and unbound by rigid definitions of design, while constantly learning through the process of making.” Goyal defines luxury in collectable design by its authenticity and depth of narrative, pointing to a growing appreciation for pieces that push the boundaries of traditional craft. “In the years ahead, I believe the most compelling collectable design will be work that is intentional, where the process, the story of the artisan, and the integrity of the material are as important as the final form,” he explains. “The most interesting work today treats craft as a living language that can evolve. And collectors have become incredibly curious. They’re no longer simply acquiring beautiful objects—they’re willing to embrace pieces that are more sculptural, conceptual, or unconventional in their use of material. Design is increasingly being appreciated as collectable art that holds emotional and cultural value.”