

Home > Lifestyle > A Look Inside The Inner Worlds And Walls Of India's Young Art Collectors

A Look Inside The Inner Worlds And Walls Of India's Young Art Collectors

By Payal Mohita
Published On Aug 13, 2026, 13:27 IST

Meet the young Indian art collectors shaping a new era of collecting, driven by instinct, personal stories, identity and a growing interest in contemporary art.

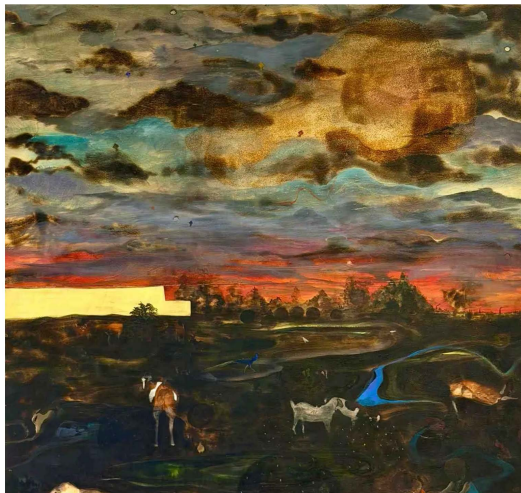
These collections are shaped by beauty, storytelling, and a desire to document time

In fashion's global calendar India continues to grab the spotlight. Now Indian art has entered the scene too. Earlier this year, India made waves in the international art scene: Mumbai-based Saffronart's Spring auction saw a historic win when Raja Ravi Varma's masterpiece *Yashodha and Krishna* sold for an astounding INR 167 crore, while global auction houses – Sotheby's and Christie's saw a 100 per cent sell-through rate for South Asian artists and many Indian artists set historic auction records. A recent report by Art Basel reveals that in this current Indian "art boom", an "overwhelming" majority of buyers are Indian or based in India and 60-80 per cent are new to the market.



Siddharth Somaiya

In search of the Indian art world's new energetic pulse, we spoke to six young Indian art collectors on their buying fixations. Guided by instinctual beauty, a love for stories, a need to document time, commemorate personal histories and give expression to their identity, the philosophies that shape these private collections form an eclectic mix, as the works of art themselves.





Hasanali Kachwala, *Gulshan*

"I still don't consider what I'm doing as being a collector," says Mumbai-based Siddharth Somaia, the chairman of the Board of Studies at Dr Shantilal K. Somaia School of Arts. "Collecting is consumption, and what I'm trying to do is support an artist's voice and practice," explains the 36-year-old. "I need to ensure that what I'm supporting is a bookmark in time and what it represents for the larger narrative of the country," he adds. This belief led Somaia to buy several works of Dhiraj Rabha – an Assamese contemporary artist and photographer whose work is deeply rooted in his personal history of growing up in a United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) settlement camp. Some of Somaia's favourite pieces also come from works produced by artists at IMMERSE – a Mumbai-based art residency, supported by the Somaia School of Arts. One such contemporary Indian artist is Umesh Singh; whose work focuses on the erosion of agricultural heritage, the disappearance of vernacular wisdom, and themes of migration and memory.



Anila Govindappa, *Mother's Dream*

"I'm just buying emerging artists, not really looking at any dead artists. If you're out of college, email me, and if I like your work, I'll buy it," says Somaia. His way of selecting art is deeply influenced by his grandfather, who, he says, didn't differentiate between "good and bad art" but bought art to support artists. "He passed away 15 years ago and still many artists come up to me and tell me that they started their career because of him. To me, that's been very inspirational; it's my life mission to see that the definition of a struggling artist should not exist."



Hemali Vadalia, *Three Girls*

For Delhi-based Teesta Bhandare, an art advisor and director of the Knowledge Convergence Foundation, connecting with the artist and understanding what led to the creation of their work – an

"intellectually rigorous process" – is what becomes critical when adding a piece to her growing collection of 200 artworks. "That's what is special about contemporary art, you get to hear everything from the horse's mouth," says the 32-year-old. Some of the first art pieces she acquired came from conversations with Indian contemporary artist Rithika Merchant and British-Bangladeshi artist Rana Begum. She admits that her current favourite piece is the one she bought most recently: A mixed media artwork by the multidisciplinary artist Mithu Sen. "I bought it for myself this year to commemorate my first Mother's Day," says Bhandare. "The warm colours, rocking horse, and the embrace [in the painting] were perfect for my emotional state."



Teesta Bhandare

Two other cherished pieces are art on her namesake; the Teesta river which flows through West Bengal and Sikkim before joining the Jamuna in Bangladesh. Bhandare picked works inspired by the transboundary river from contemporary artists: Reena Saini Kallat from India and Yasmin Jahan Nupur from Bangladesh. While the former used electric wire, graphite and pigmented ink in her piece, the latter shaped it through tapestry.



Rithika Merchant, Apparitions

"A lot of the works that I am particularly drawn to now are also works that are contemporising traditional Indian practices. There are a few artists I'm collecting who work with traditional textiles, but are making it more modern, like Jayeeta Chatterjee, or there are some who employ a contemporary take on miniature, which is something that I'm really drawn towards," says Bhandare.

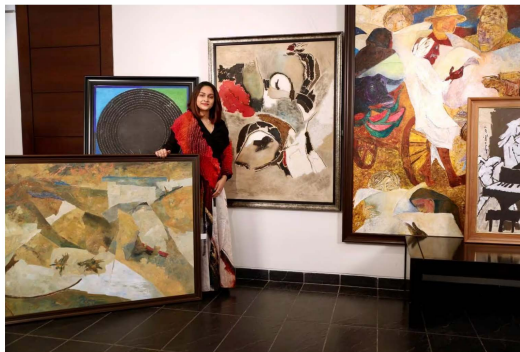


Sanket Viramgami, Untitled



Mithu Sen, *Between the Visible and the Unseen, Before Meaning, Beyond Language*; via Chemould Prescott Road

For Sanjana Shah, creative director of Mumbai-based Tao Art Gallery, it's the story behind the art that gets her "hooked" to buy. Shah considers her private collection a "mixed-bag", from sculptural pieces to extreme figurative political works, abstracts, mood-oriented oil paintings to textile art. "My collection showcases the scale and the scope of what the art world in India today is doing," says the 31-year old second-generation gallerist and curator.

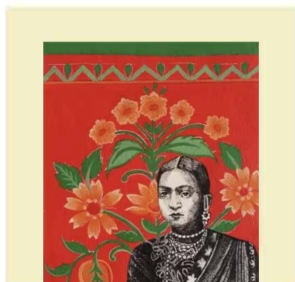


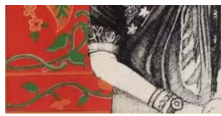
Sanjana Shah



Mohd. Imtiyaz, *Protest 5*

"Personally, I buy pieces based on instinct; what the art evokes in me and how it makes me feel. I'll find out what the artist is trying to convey, more than how many exhibitions the artist has done or their market potential," she adds.





Mohd.Imtiyaz, *Protest 1*

One of her favourites in her collection is a "futuristic sculpture" by Sri Lankan artist Kumkum Fernando, made up of "junk materials collected from broken and rejected structures" in his homeland. "It looks a bit robotic and alien, made from elements of the past, so it represents a beautiful transition from the past to the future, and I love it," she explains.



Kumkum Fernando, *Untitled*

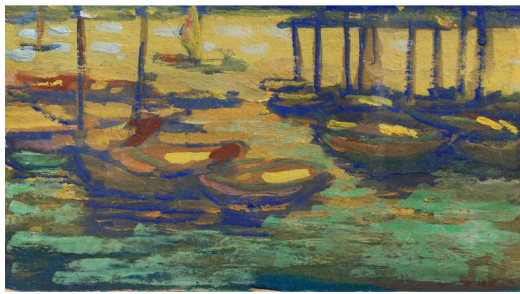
Dubai-based Niharika Kapur, an independent art consultant, has some contemporary art pieces but admits that she tends to lean more towards modern masters. "I just have more knowledge there", says the 33-year-old, who has a decade of experience with Sotheby's auction house in New York and Mumbai. One of her favourite pieces in her collection right now is a Jamini Roy landscape; boats at harbour, chrome yellow and navy blue dominating the outlines as storm clouds gather in the sky. Like Bhandare, Kapur too has commemorated this painting to motherhood; buying it as a gift for her daughter's first birthday. "I really loved the piece, but I also do think the work has potential because you don't see that many Jamini landscapes, you see more figurative," explains Kapur. "Now similar works [of Roy] are selling for triple the price, so I think I made the right decision – it's definitely one of my favourite pieces, very close to my heart." Kapur tends to buy pieces that resonate with certain periods in her life, while keeping "values in mind" in a maturing South Asian art market.



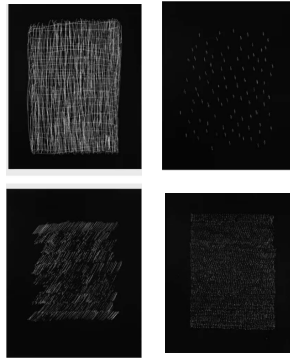
Niharika Kapur

When her husband and her both lost one of their grandparents to COVID-19, she found herself bringing home a piece from Bangladeshi artist Ayesha Sultana's *Breath Count series*, where marks inscribed on clay-coated paper record time through the rhythm of inhalation and exhalation, examining both the fragility and resilience of human life.





Jamini Roy, *Untitled*



Ayesha Sultana, *Breath Count Series*

For Chennai-based Jaiveer Johal, director of the Johal Logistics Group, collecting has been a long love-affair which began with art prints as a teenager. As his budget grew, he moved on to silver and antiques (his first love), then moderns, and now he's been "seriously" collecting contemporary

South Asian art for the past eight years; a growing collection that is "very well into the late three digits". His pre-buying checklist: "So, first and foremost, a work of art needs to move you. The feeling can be one of awe, wonder, happiness, disgust, sadness, whatever it is. After you've seen it and you've gone back home, and it's not haunting you, then maybe it's not the right work for you to acquire," says the 39-year-old. Currently, the art pieces on his mind are the ones that will be displayed at an upcoming show at the Avtar Foundation for Arts, founded by Johal in Chennai. The artworks presented – curated from Johal's collection – will explore the body as it interacts with the state. "There are these sculptures by Vivan Sundram, which are absolutely fantastic and Shilpa Gupta's work of 100 hand-drawn maps of India, which explores what it means to be a citizen," says an impassioned Johal.



Jaiveer Johal

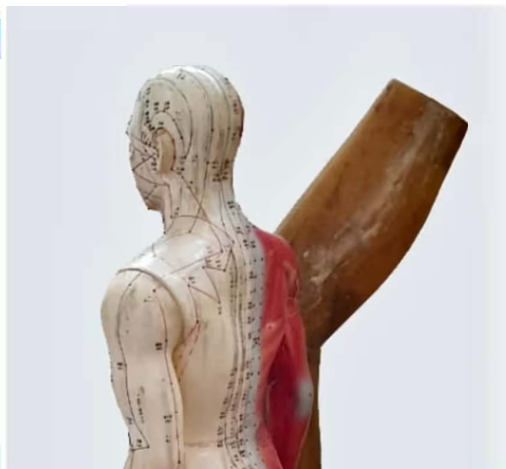
He also often finds that the art he ends up acquiring have echoes of his own lived experiences. "I live in the South of India, but I grew up in the North. So, there is a sense of displacement early in my life; those have reflected in the Zarinas [Hashmi] I have collected," says Johal, speaking of the late Indian-American artist renowned for her evocative work that explores themes of home, memory and displacement. "I'm queer, so I collect queer art as well; like Sunil Gupta. But I'm not collecting them because he's queer, but because the moment speaks to me," he clarifies. "So there are various conversations that lead to your collecting, which are not really conscious, but in the subconscious, and affect the way you react to [art] work."



Shilpa Gupta, 100 Hand-drawn Maps of India



Zarina, 8 Shibli Road (1990)





Vivan Sundaram, *Man with Numbers*

Gallerists, curators, and art consultants feel access around art through information, growing art festivals in India, and even Instagram has dramatically risen over the past few years; giving way to a young collector base that acquires art driven by relatability and connection. While many newlywed Indian millennials become the first generation to move out of their parental homes, there is also a rise in buying art to fill empty walls with shared meaning with your partner as well, explains 33-year-old Mumbai-based Dheeya Somaia, who last led the NMACC Art House in Mumbai before becoming an independent art consultant.

Dinesh Vazirani, co-founder and CEO of Saffronart says that unlike older collectors, who often buy from "impulse", younger buyers make far more "educated" choices. "Young collectors as they grow collections, they spread the word as well; bringing a sense of stability and maturity to the art market," says Vazirani. "They have an important role because they become the so-called tastemakers of today," he adds.

Young Indian collectors will invariably create new benchmarks for artistic value, but what is clear is that a growing number of them are drawn towards contemporary and emerging South Asian artists; Dheeya sees this as a greater win for the art world. "It gives these artists a lot of confidence in their work. It uplifts the whole ecosystem from the ground up by making sure that artists continue their practice," she says.

Tags - [Indian art collectors](#) | [art collectors](#) | [art](#) | [artists](#) | [Indian art](#) | [Indian artists](#) | [young Indian art collectors](#) | [Indian art market](#) | [contemporary Indian art](#) | [South Asian art](#) | [emerging Indian artists](#) | [art collecting](#) | [Indian art trend](#) | [Indian collectors](#) | [art collectors India](#) | [contemporary art collectors](#) | [Indian contemporary artists](#) | [art market India](#) | [young collectors](#) | [Saffronart](#) | [Indian art scene](#) | [Grazia India](#)

NEXT STORY : [Horoscope Today, August 19, 2026: Are The Stars Aligned In Your Favour?](#)