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True to name, the third edition of Contemporary Now—Edition III showcases leading Indian artists and galleries in a shared presentation of contemporary art



INTO THE MIRROR: 'East Asia to West Asia', by Saju Kunhan; below: 'Custodian', by Chanakya School of Craft



Bindu Gopal Rao

ISSUE DATE: Aug 31, 2026 | UPDATED: Aug 21, 2026 16:47 IST

Venues across Chennai are abuzz with Contemporary Now—Edition III, a citywide showcase of art built around the curatorial theme 'Practices in continuum: tracing the present', featuring 66 artists across 10-plus venues and more than 15 events over 20 days, with the main exhibition at the Lalit Kala Akademi. For the team, the contemporary is not a break from the past; it is an active conversation with it. The show looks at how artists carry ideas, materials, anxieties, memories and ways of seeing over time. "The exhibition is a continued study of gallery programmes, allowing Chennai audiences to follow artists and galleries across editions," says Priyanjali Basu, director, Contemporary Now.

Several threads have emerged strongly—the body as a site of memory and identity, material as a way of thinking, ecological and urban change, borders and displacement, personal and collective archives, and the use of myth, ritual and regional histories. Featured artists include Jitish Kallat, Atul Dodiya, Shibu Natesan, Paresh Maity, Jayasri Burman, Madhvi Parekh and many more. "What connects these artists is not style, but urgency. They come from different geographies, experiences and artistic ecosystems, and together they offer a national conversation rather than a single metropolitan viewpoint," says Basu.



Memory is central to this edition. Many works draw from lived experience, family histories, oral traditions, place, community, faith and personal vulnerability. "Archives appear not only as documents but also as emotional structures, things remembered, lost, inherited, reconstructed or questioned. In that sense, the present is not isolated; it is shaped by what we carry with us," says Basu.

—The show is on till August 25, with the main exhibition at Lalit Kala Akademi

- Ends ■

Published By: Mansi

Published On: Aug 21, 2026 16:47 IST