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Five Indian Galleries That Tell Mumbai's Story

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Art Mumbai opens to the public this weekend. From a nineteenth-century antiques dealer to a gallery that opened last year, five exhibitors trace Mumbai's art history

Zara Khan · 13 November, 2026



Marine Lines Mumbai by Dr Vikramjit Kakati. CC BY-SA 4.0, Via Wikipedia.

Every November, the Mahalaxmi Racecourse stops being a place for horses and turns into an art fair: Art Mumbai, which runs until Sunday 15 November.

Much like the Indian art market, Art Mumbai has grown quickly. When it launched in 2023, the fair brought together 48 Indian galleries and five international ones. Its fourth edition has 94 exhibitors – 73 Indian and 21 international – with six international galleries making their Art Mumbai debut.

Five of those – Perrotin, Richard Saltoun, Night Gallery, Rizq Art Gallery and Niru Ratnam – are all participating in an art fair in India for the first time. This year, 11 Indian galleries are making their Art Mumbai debut, several of whom are based in the city.

To mark this year's edition, we look at five galleries which tell the story of contemporary Mumbai.

Phillips Antiques

Phillips & Co was established in 1860 as a pharmacy and purveyor of luxury goods, back when the coastal metropolis went by its former English name of Bombay. In 1920, the business was bought by the merchant Issa Haji Soomar. Four generations of the Issa family have run it ever since.

Phillips is among the 11 Indian galleries making their Art Mumbai debut.Its presentation leans into the material history of the subcontinent through maps of India, hand-painted portraits, early photographs and embroidered textiles. A highlight is a 1883 Rainfall Map of India, which Faisal Issa says feels as current as the day it was made, in a year marked by low rainfall across the country.



The 1883 Rainfall Map. Courtesy of Phillips Antiques

Chemould Prescott Road

Gallery Chemould opened in 1963 on the first floor of the Jehangir Art Gallery. It was founded by Kekoo and Khorshed Gandhy, whose framing business had already made them fixtures in Mumbai's modernist circles. It is generally credited as the city's first commercial art gallery. Shireen Gandhy, the youngest of their four children, has directed the gallery since 1988, taking over from her parents and pushing the programme towards more experimental works and emerging artists, which are exhibited alongside more established names.

The gallery returns to Art Mumbai alongside Chemould CoLab, its extension programme founded in 2022 by Atyaan Jungalwala — Shireen's daughter. Chemould Prescott Road is showing work by 17 of its artists across a range of media.

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One particular highlight is Varunika Saraf's *The Grove* (2026), a watercolour on *wasli*, a layered handmade paper traditionally used in Indian miniature painting. In Pahari painting, the miniature tradition of the Himalayan foothill courts, the same secluded grove recurs across centuries: in some pictures, it shelters the doomed lovers Layla and Majnun, the subjects of an early-medieval Arabic love story., In others, Saraf frames scenes of sati — the rite of a widow burning on her husband's funeral pyre. In her painting, Saraf depicts the same grove, but fills it with women intent on deciding their own fate.



The grove, 2026 Watercolour on Wasli 80 X 100 in. Courtesy Chemould Prescott Road

Gallery Maskara

Abhay Maskara's gallery opened in 2006 and, since 2008, has operated out of a restored pre-independence cotton warehouse in Colaba, one of Mumbai's most vibrant neighbourhoods. For two decades, the gallery has built a reputation for giving artists their first solo shows and then staying with them: Prashant Pandey's debut, titled *Shelf-Life*, opened there in 2010, and T. Venkanna, whose work the gallery is exhibiting at the fair, has had 16 solo exhibitions at the gallery.

Its booth gathers seven of its artists, including Pandey, who builds sculpture from marble blast stones, cigarette butts and industrial scrap, and Madhu Das, who also appears in the fair's sculpture Park.



Prashant Pandey's debut, Shelf-Life. Courtesy Gallery Maskara.

TARQ

TARQ launched as a laboratory for young contemporary artists in 2014 and has since become one of the city's key spaces for emerging practices.

The gallery returns to Art Mumbai with works by 13 artists.. Among them is Parag Tandel's *Ancestors* (2026), which casts oil pipes and marine creatures in fossil-bearing Habur stone from Jaisalmer that was once an ocean floor and sets that extraction against the shrinking coastline of Mumbai's Koli fishing communities. Meanwhile, Pratap Morey's *Brink of Supernova – II* (2026) takes the form of a mushroom cloud for a drawing of urban redevelopment, mourning the vanishing sky and asking whether Mumbai's building boom amounts to self-destruction.



BRINK OF SUPERNOVA - II, 2026. Courtesy Pratap Morey, 2026.

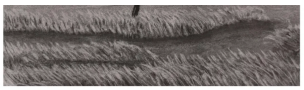
Fulcrum

Opening only last year, Fulcrum is an interdisciplinary cultural space that brings together art, film, history and politics instead of a conventional commercial gallery programme. Its founder, Ayesha Aggarwal, formerly worked at TARQ and ran Experimenter's Mumbai space from 2022 before launching Fulcrum. In an interview with *ARTnews* she said she identifies 'less as a gallerist or a dealer, and more as an arts worker'.

For Art Mumbai, Fulcrum gathers six artists who take the city as their subject, one of which , Chetan Kurekar, grew up in the mining belt of Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, where his father operated mining equipment. His work for Art Mumbai, titled *Archeology of Tomorrow* (2026), comprising four drawings and two sculptures, is rooted in his village, one which was so disrupted by the industry that employed his father. The works show an altered rural landscape as a record of the upheaval that urban growth brings.



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Untitled Charcoal on Paper by Chetan Kurekar. Courtesy Fulcrum

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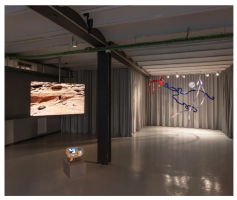
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