



PRESS RELEASE

Gallery XXL presents

Hanif Kureshi

صبر، گھر، سُرور

sabr, ghar, suroor

Opening: Sunday, October 12, 2025, at 5 PM

Venue: Gallery XXL, A-277, Defence Colony, New Delhi – 110024

The first solo exhibition in India of the late Hanif Kureshi — Artist, Artistic Director, and Co-Founder of St+art India Foundation, Guerrilla Art & Design, XXL Collective, and Gallery XXL — titled ***sabr, ghar, suroor***, opens on **Sunday, October 12, 2025, at 5 PM.**

This **posthumous exhibition** honours the artist's life and legacy, presenting a selection of works from the four series he developed since 2020. The **opening coincides with Hanif's birth anniversary, October 12** and marks the **launch of Gallery XXL's new permanent space in Delhi.**

About the Artist

Born in Palitana, Gujarat, in 1982, Hanif Kureshi was celebrated for his innovative approach to typography. A graduate of MSU Baroda, his practice spanned over two decades across advertising, art direction, and public art interventions, including murals, installations, and site-specific works created both independently and collaboratively. His contributions as an artist and cultural leader earned immense respect across disciplines. Hanif's works have been exhibited at the London Design Biennale, Venice Biennale, Centre Pompidou Paris, Triennale Design Museum Milan, and Sikka Art Fair Dubai, among others. In 2016, GQ India named him one of the 50 Most Influential Young Indians.

In 2020, Hanif relocated from Delhi to Goa, reigniting his studio practice and exploring new materials, scales, and conceptual depths. Whether conceived for the streets or the studio, his work remained deeply informed by urban spaces, reflected in his use of neon-coloured frames, reflective details, and industrial surfaces. Preferring aerosol over acrylic and metal or aluminium composite panels over canvas, Hanif drew on his early apprenticeship at age 16 with Painter Saleem, a sign painter in Palitana, where he learned to work with radium stickers, fluorescent lights, CDs, and steel plates to create license plates — early signs of his fascination with type as a living and kinetic form.

For Hanif, letters were never static; they floated, vibrated, and moved, becoming visual energies in motion.

More than an artist, Hanif was a visionary who transformed the streets into accessible and immersive art spaces. His conviction that art could dissolve barriers between artist and audience, institution and public, intimacy and monumentality, shaped not only his own practice but the organizations he co-founded.

Address

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New Delhi – 110024

Website

www.galleryxxl.com

Contact

info@galleryxxl.com
+91 9324857354
[@xxl.gallery](https://www.instagram.com/xxl.gallery)

About the Exhibition

sabr, ghar, suroor presents 42 works spanning his final five years, including selections from the *Painter Kureshi*, *Tetris*, *Untitled*, and *Urdu* series. From the Urdu series, the exhibition features three seminal works — *Sabr, Ghar and Suroor* — continuing the series first showcased at *OUTSIDERS*, Gallery XXL's inaugural Mumbai exhibition in 2023.

Giulia Ambrogi, Chief Curator and Co-Founder of Gallery XXL and St+art India Foundation, observes:

"Suroor, Ghar, and Sabr seem to slip away from the eye even as they enter it — rhythmic scripts oscillating between calligraphy and abstraction. Ghar (home), Suroor (joy), and Sabr (perseverance) embody Hanif's approach to creation: rooted in joy, guided by belief, and sustained by perseverance. This is how he became a prolific creator across multiple fields — always remembering where he came from."

The *Painter Kureshi* series, rooted in hand-painted street typography, builds on Hanif's HandPaintedType Project, which documented and digitized vernacular Indian typefaces. Rendered in aerosol and acrylic on canvas, the works oscillate between decipherable and abstract letterforms, inspired by both Roman and Devanagari scripts.

Curator Veeranganakumari Solanki writes:

"In this series, geometric forms move into abstraction that suggests Hanif's many pasts — from architecture to signboards — while carrying play and pensiveness. Viewers can lose themselves in folds of thought and memory. The maze-like structures evoke narrative rabbit holes."

Each geometric panel from *Painter Kureshi* became the foundation for the *Tetris* series, showcased in the artist's final exhibition at Wildstyle Gallery, Uppsala, Sweden, in June 2024, created shortly before his passing. Painted in enamel on MS sheets, these works transform letters into dynamic building blocks in motion. Named after ancient Greek city units, the compositions invite viewers to envision and construct their own landscapes of colour and form.

This exploration extends into the *Untitled* series, where Hanif investigates the materiality of metal and redefines linear perspective. Using red and blue hues, he distorts architectural angles evocative of brutalist structures, layering space, depth, and meaning in a play between surface and perception.

Legacy and Invitation

sabr, ghar, suroor invites audiences to experience the breadth of a practice that bridged the streets and the studio. As one of the early pioneers of India's street art movement, Hanif viewed the city as both laboratory and muse — a place where ideas, materials, and communities converged. The exhibition stands as a proposition for artists and creative practitioners to continue his vision: imagining art and art spaces that are inclusive, diverse, and accessible to all.

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Artist Bio

Hanif Kureshi was an Indian artist and designer celebrated for his work with typography. He focused on reviving India's native languages graphically, abstracting their scripts to create impactful text-based and mixed-media installations. Hanif spearheaded the Handpainted Type Project, an initiative dedicated to preserving and archiving vernacular typography, a form of street-based expression in India that is gradually disappearing.

His contribution as a Co-Founder, Artistic Director and Artist within St+art India Foundation, Guerrilla Art & Design, XXL Collective and Gallery XXL has garnered immense appreciation from creatives from various disciplines. St+Art, in particular, has been a driving force behind the street art movement in India. As part of **Guerrilla Art & Design**, Hanif developed iconic visual identities for major brands, most notably **SOCIAL**.

Riyaaz Amlani, CEO of Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality and long-time collaborator, recalls:

“Hanif created a strong, bold yet minimal brand by using the stencil font Montana and introducing bilingual type — a first, fourteen years ago, when Indian design still carried colonial hangovers. It reflected a new, confident India embracing its roots. #thandibeer, #paani and #davadaaru became instant cult classics, now widely imitated. This bilingual approach — flaunting Devanagari script with pride — was Hanif’s innovation.”

Hanif’s extensive oeuvre as an independent street artist included widely acclaimed murals, installations, and mixed media projects. Notable examples include the Swarovski Mela in Austria (2017), featuring a HandPaintedType installation curated by Manish Arora; Chakraview at the First London Design Biennale (2016), presented in collaboration with Sumant Jayakrishnan and the India Design Forum at Somerset House; the Pavilion Design for India at Grand Palais, Ephemera, Paris (2021); Les Extatiques : La Défense in Paris (2018), curated by Fabrice Bousteau; Triennale Design Museum, New India Designscape, Milan (2012); and COMMERCIAL BREAK, Garage Projects, 54th Venice Biennale (2011). In recognition of his impact, GQ magazine named Kureshi one of the 50 most influential young Indians in 2016.

The artist’s works were last exhibited at Wildstyle Gallery in Uppsala, Sweden in June 2024 before his passing in September 2024.

About the Gallery

Established in 2023, Gallery XXL is an urban contemporary art gallery that has recently relocated to New Delhi. This move follows a successful two-year period in Mumbai, where the gallery hosted nine exhibitions. Gallery XXL represents and showcases a roster of Indian and international artists whose practices are rooted in a variety of disciplines that broaden the understanding of established categories and catalyse diverse exchanges through processual exhibitions, treating the gallery as a fluid institution which presents dynamic negotiations to the idea of a ‘white cube.’

With its name echoing Jean-Michel Basquiat’s city walk from Downtown 81 (Dir. Edo Bertoglio,) when he described his medium as “extra large,” Gallery XXL extends a desire for imaginations to be XXL, an abbreviation for ‘extra, extra,

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large' and brings it to the city of Mumbai in order to examine the ambitious scale of visuals and conversations prevalent in urban art.

Arjun Bahl, Giulia Ambrogi, Thanish Thomas, and the late Hanif Kureshi, the founders of St+Art India Foundation (established in 2014) came together to initiate the space-time for Gallery XXL. St+Art India has been supporting street art in the country through public art projects for over a decade. Leveraging this engagement and experience of creating artistic interventions in public as well as private spaces in order to widen engagement with urban art, aesthetics and culture work in the Indian context, St+art extends its vision to facilitate institutional representation for urban contemporary artists through exhibitions and events at Gallery XXL.

XXL Shop

Gallery XXL envisions incorporating various elements of the urban contemporary art movement and developing a knowledge system for artists, writers, experts, creative practitioners, and culture workers to work with, showcase and contribute their works. A core component of the Gallery will be its XXL Shop which will consist of limited edition prints, publications, zines, stickers, apparel, stationary, merchandise and other collectible items keeping in mind affordability and accessibility to reach a wider audience interested in engaging with art objects. Led by Asif Kureshi, Hanif's younger brother, XXL Shop will work with emerging artists to create limited edition prints and collectibles to cultivate a network of collectors who wish to support young artists.

Team XXL

Adhya Singh, Aaria Bharadwaj, Akmal Shaik, Al Zahra Hanif, Anoushka Sanjiv Rabha, Aarti Jain, Archana Khurana, Arif Alam Khan, Arjun Bahl, Ashu Khanna, Asif Kureshi, Avantika Jain, Chandni Jain, Deepak Kumar, Dinesh Kumar, Faraz Khan, Giulia Ambrogi, Jay Jayanti Bhai Dhandhukiya, Johnson Kshetriyum, Kopal Kumar, Mangan Sah, Maria Talib, Navisha Sogani, Niveditha Narendran, Pragyesh Parmar, Rajan, Ravi Patel, Ritesh Sharma, Rohan Kamble, Rutva Trivedi, Sarah Malik, Sethuraman Harikrishnan, Shweta Rathaur, Shruti Katiyar, Thanish Thomas, Vidur Sethi, Vikas Nagrare, Zarnush Porbunderwala.

Annexures

For additional information please contact sarah@galleryxxl.com or info@galleryxxl.com. The attached drive link contains artist portraits, photographs of public installations, images of projects art-directed by the artist, and artwork captions and credits as image titles, along with the invitation and high resolution artwork images.

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