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Mumbai Art Scene Boosted by Gallery Weekend, New Galleries

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Mumbai
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The city's stock as a contemporary art hub has risen with the arrival of a new art fair and spaces including Gallery XXL and Nature Morte.



CAMP, *Bombay Tilts Down*, 7 (2022). Channel environment, 13 minutes, on loop with two alternating soundtracks. Presented in Sassoon Docks, Mumbai by Experimenter in collaboration with St+art India and supported by Mumbai Port Authority, 2024. Courtesy CAMP, Experimenter and St+art India.

Energy is gathering behind Mumbai's contemporary art scene following the arrival of [Art Mumbai](#) in November, new galleries, and a successful Mumbai Gallery Weekend (MGW) from 11 to 14 January.

Led by Shireen Gandhi, Director of [Chemould Prescott Road](#), for the Mumbai Gallery Association, the 12th instalment of MGW was the biggest yet. Thirty-four galleries from Colaba to Juhu took part.

While the event is spread across pockets of Mumbai, the majority of galleries are gathered in the southern part of the city.

[Gallery XXL](#) opened their permanent space at Arsiwala Mansion in Colaba during the event. Inspired by the urban contemporary art and post-graffiti phenomena, the gallery's name riffs on a [Jean-Michel Basquiat](#) quote from the movie *Downtown 81* (2000): 'I'm an artist. When you tell people that they usually say, "what's your medium?" I usually say, "extra large".'

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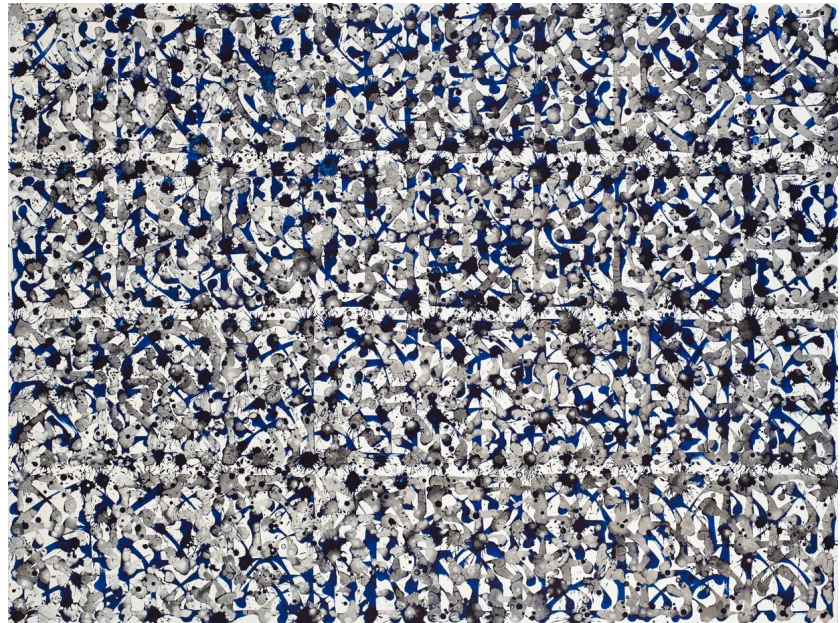
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True to its mission, graffiti by ZERO engulfed visitors as they entered XXL's inaugural group show *sans sentense*. Following their hugely successful launch show *Outsiders* in April 2023, XXL recognized the positive reception for this category of art. 'We felt it deserves a permanent space where regular programming can be done,' says Joe Cyril, CEO and Gallery Director. Their inaugural exhibition had an accessible price range with works ranging from U.S. \$300-18,000, appealing to a diverse collector audience.



Sowat, *And the Lord said go to the Devil* (2018). Ink on canvas. 150 x 200 cm. Courtesy the artist and Gallery XXL.

Just down the street from XXL is [Anupa Mehta Contemporary Art](#). Founded in 2008, the gallery was initially located in Lower Parel. Now it is housed in a new permanent space in Colaba, which was inaugurated by art patron [Sangita Jindal](#) in December 2023.

While the majority of the participating galleries focus on contemporary art, [DAG](#), [Akara Modern](#), and Taj Art Gallery focus on modern art from India. Akara opened their second space, Akara Contemporary, at Amarchand Mansion in Colaba in May 2023. This edition marked Akara Contemporary's first time participating in MGW.

Mumbai's art community will soon be joined by [New Delhi's Nature Morte](#). Their new space will open on 19 January at Colaba's Dhanraj Mahal, a palatial 1930s art deco building that previously served as a residence for the princely Dhanrajgir family.

Peter Nagy, Nature Morte's founding director said, 'Aparajita Jain and I had been thinking about opening a gallery in New York, but that is a big project. So, the thought of opening in Mumbai came up. Since the beginning of Nature Morte in Delhi in 1997, we have always sold more art to collectors in Mumbai than Delhi, basically because of the nature of works we show and collectors in Mumbai are more adventurous and more



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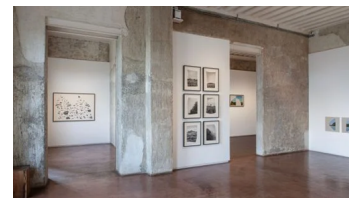
interested in experimental art.'



Courtesy Nature Morte, Mumbai. Photo: Ashish Kumar.

Some notable exhibitions from MGW 2024 include Sohrab Hura's first solo show at Experimenter in Colaba titled Ghosts in My Sleep. The walls of Experimenter came alive with Hura's generous use of colour and expansive display of gouache and soft pastel works.

Muhanned Cader's serene yet thought-provoking works in Island in the Sky at Jhaveri Contemporary and Ashwini Bhat's philosophical and poetic sculptures in Her Nature at Project 88 were well-received by visitors.



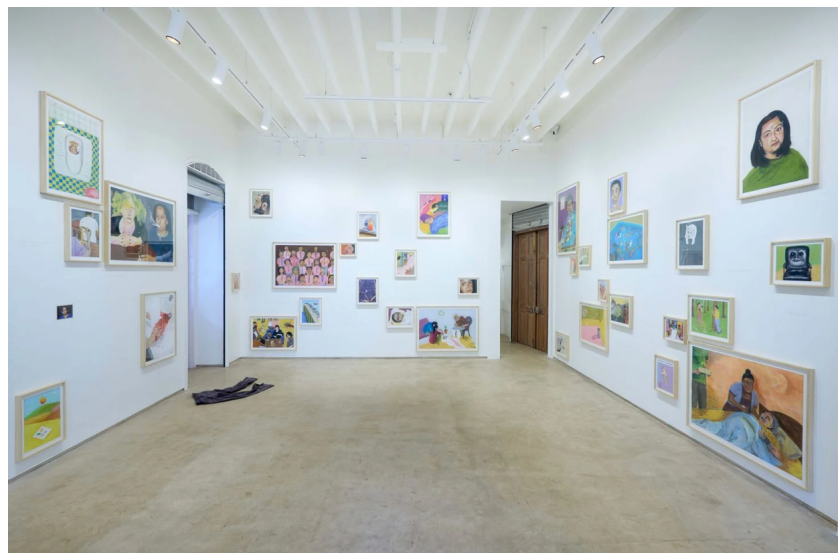
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Muhanned Cader

Island in the Sky

Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai

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Exhibition view: Sohrab Hura, *Ghosts in My Sleep*, Experimenter – Colaba, Mumbai (11 January–16 March 2024). Courtesy Experimenter.

Attendees expressed admiration for Areez Katki's illustrative and revelatory works in *As this chin melts on your knee* at TARQ and Anant Joshi's complex and multi-layered large canvas paintings in *Raised*

Eyebrow at Chemould Prescott Road. [Nikhil Chopra](#)'s contemplative and impressionist landscapes in *Line of Fire* at [Chatterjee & Lal](#) also resonated favourably with audiences.

Among the younger galleries, Chemould CoLab's Kuldeep Singh took centre stage. Singh, an artist and Odissi dancer, presented several large and small-scale works for his solo exhibition *Nakhra: Towards sacred sensuality*. The gallery reported positive sales among young collectors with works ranging between U.S. \$250-12,000. The multi-hyphenate performed on two occasions captivating audiences with the sound of his ghungroos—bells worn around the ankles of classical Indian dancers.

Kuldeep Singh, *Cuddling the land in Raag Bhimpalasi* (2023). Oil on canvas. 55.9 x 71.1 cm. Courtesy Chemould CoLab.

Perhaps the most noteworthy off-site programming was CAMP's monumental seven-panel video installation *Bombay Tilts Down*, which showed for the first time in its home city of Mumbai. Presented by Experimenter in collaboration with St+ART India, the installation is on display at the Sassoon Docks until 21 January 2024.

The emergence of new galleries and artists during MGW is undoubtedly contributing to the city's dynamism. Nawar Al Qassimi, Vice President at Sharjah Art Foundation and panellist at this year's event says, 'MGW has been a key part of evolving the local arts landscape in Mumbai and has provided so many South Asian artists a prominent platform. I see it as an example of the role that galleries play in supporting local and regional artists' careers.' —[O]

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