

CULTURE

11 art exhibits not to miss at Mumbai Gallery Weekend 2024

The latest edition of Mumbai Gallery Weekend is set to take the city by storm from 11 to 14 January 2024. Here's what to watch out for.

By Sridevi Nambiar

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Twelve years ago, nine leading art galleries from across Mumbai came together to launch Mumbai Gallery Weekend, a promising new art platform that would bring the best of contemporary Indian art to the city. In 2024, the four-day-long art festival is returning with its 12th edition, with 34 participating galleries and design venues spread across the city, as well as off-site exhibits, talks, pop-ups, gallery hops and more. Some highlights include a series of talks at the CSMVS museum held in association with India Art Fair, a Young Collectors Program at Kathiwada City House, an off-site exhibition, *Bombay Tilts Down* by CAMP, presented by Experimenter Gallery, which celebrates 15 years, a performance by Kuldeep Singh, and more. But the best part of MGW? The art shows, and the crowds! As pointed out by Priya and Amrita Jhaveri, founders of Jhaveri Contemporary, "It's the most inclusive art event and the general bonhomie and lack of hierarchy make it special." Here's our round-up of shows not to miss.

Experimenter – Colaba: Ghosts in my sleep

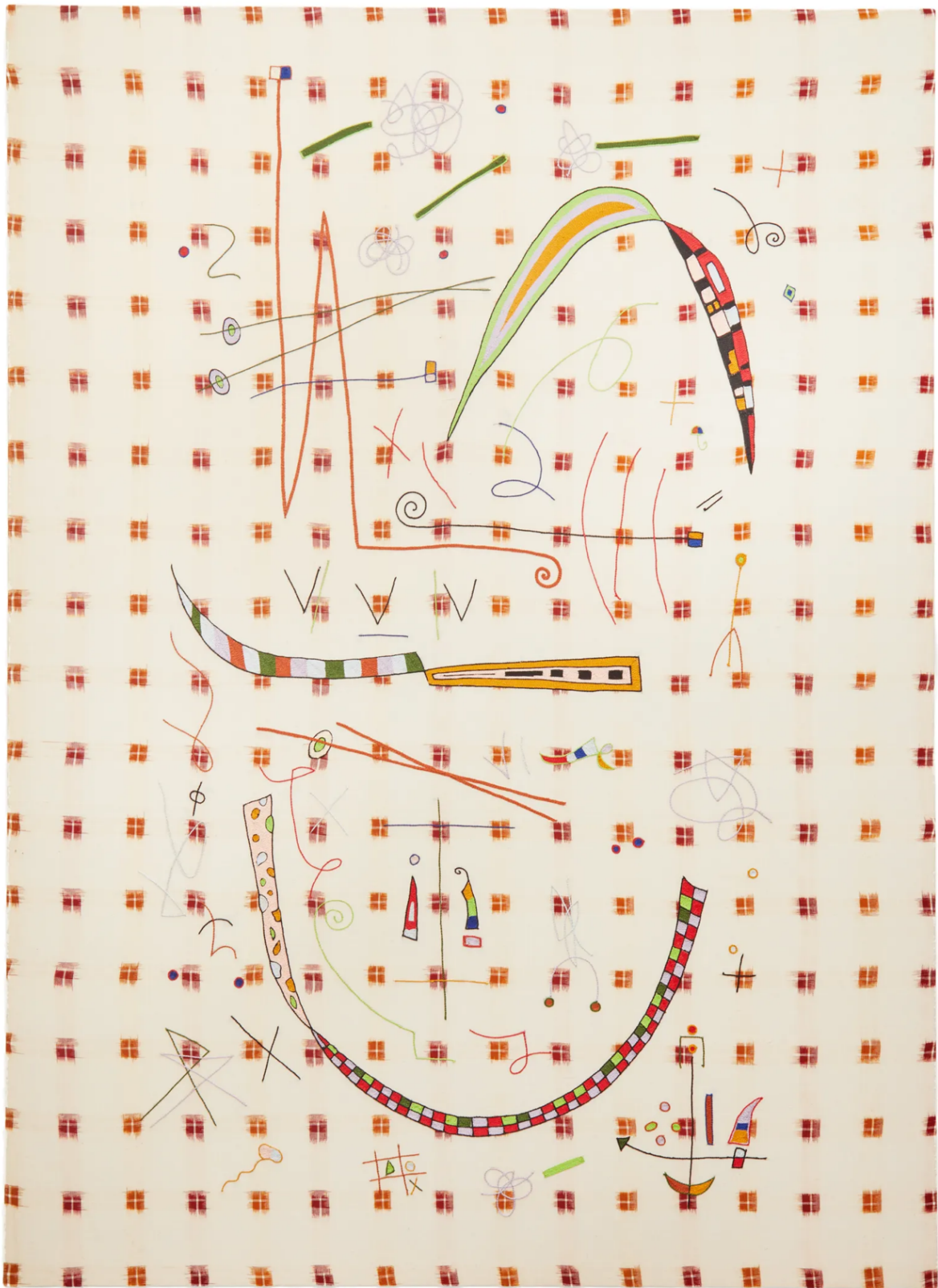


My grandfather's ghost in Chinsurah-1980's, 2023, gouache on paper, 20 x 26 cm. Courtesy the artist & Experimenter

On show at Experimenter – Colaba is a new body of gouache and pastel on paper works from photographer Sohrab Hura. These works reference many of his memories - such as that of the silhouette of a tall figure who he remembers to have visited his bedside every night during one of his annual holiday visits to his grandmother's home in Chinsurah. The memory, which he once associated with his late grandfather, but continues to be haunted by, finds reference in one of the leading works in the show. "Imagine this work as a cluster of fragments; of unexplained events from the past, of dreams, of unresolved memories, of regrets, of secrets, of loss, of choices made, of opportunities lost, of heartbreaks, of expectations and all those other registers that don't always count in the immediate make-up of life," notes the artist. These works will be on display along with drawings from another ongoing series, as well as a short film, and other image

and sound notations displayed across the gallery. “As one of the leading photographers of his generation, Hura has a way of seeing things, and these works on paper go beyond the image and reveal a sensitive and passionate mind,” Prateek and Priyanka Raja, directors and co-founders of Experimenter.

Tarq: As this chin melts on your knee



Small Vessel/Big Container, 2023, cotton embroidery on found cloth, total: 60.2 x 45.2 in, stretched: 53.9 x 39.3 in. Courtesy the artist & Tarq

Areez Katki's solo show at Tarq brings together a new body of embroidered works on cloth created between 2022 and 2023. Even as he

has worked with paper and sculpture, textile has been the focus of Katki's practice, with past works having relied on repurposed old, found or new textiles to make various associations - at times deeply personal, and at other times, political or historical. The works exhibited in this show stem from Katki's study of The Epic of Gilgamesh, an ancient Mesopotamian epic, but extend much further to reference his own anxieties. "I think this show is a completely refreshing look at how we can engage our own personal histories and mythologies with a wider historical discourse." says Hena Kapadia, founder and director at Tarq.

Jhaveri Contemporary: Island in the sky



Night sky #2, 2023, oil on cut and unstretched canvas, 43.2 x 43.2 cm. Courtesy the artist and Jhaveri Contemporary

Sri Lankan artist Muhanned Cader is among the few associated with the '90s Trend, an art movement marked by a more critical response to the country's civil war. Cader's solo show at Jhaveri Contemporary - his first in Mumbai - brings together a selection of his recent works, notably his landscapes known for their irregular, non-rectangular shapes that fragment the natural world. "His close observation of nature and unusual framing, while not overtly political, is embedded with metaphor," notes Priya and Amrita Jhaveri, founders of Jhaveri Contemporary. "His works gesture towards an inability to envision what lies beyond sight and call attention to the self-censorship that comes with belonging to a minority group in Sri Lanka."

Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke: somewhere elsewhere



Light peeks. 73 x 78 in. Courtesy of the artist & Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke

“We wanted to present something completely new for Mumbai Gallery Weekend,” says Ranjana Steinruecke, Director at Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, which will be hosting Seattle-based Sangram Majumdar’s first solo show in India. “In this new body of work figurative fragments, redacted passages, and decorative motifs create a place where the everyday and the mythic find common ground,” notes Steinruecke. These works draw from people and memories from Majumdar’s lived experience, and place them against a backdrop of indistinct picture fragments. A sense of double consciousness is characteristic of the artist’s works, as noted by New York-based poet and critic John Yau, in his essay for the exhibition catalogue; “Majumdar’s bricolage approach seems to me to be motivated by the desire to create an identity that unites the many different aspects of his dual identity as an Indian

American. Can he be both? What does that mean?” The gallery will also host a discussion between Majumdar and Yau.

Galerie ISA: New Arcadia; Gallery ISA 9: Just a little while longer



Ricky Vasan, *To See Beyond Everything Our Eyes Closed*. Courtesy of the artist & Galerie ISA 9 SARANG GUPTA

Galerie ISA, as well as the gallery’s second space, Galerie ISA 9, will present debut solo shows by British Indian artist Ian Malhotra and Boston-based artist Ricky Vasan. Titled ‘New Arcadia’ Malhotra’s show brings together a selection of the artist’s recent works, which employs binary and morse code and line drawings with pen and graphite pencils on archival printmaking paper to mimic scenic and highly romanticised landscapes. “Malhotra’s three incredibly special etchings employ the technique of Bidri work, the ancient metal craft, with iridescent silver and gold inlays against black, where white pigment is given a silvery tint, and in other works where bronze ink is mixed with gold pigment on black paper,” notes Ashwin Thadani, founder and director, Galerie ISA. On the other hand, Ricky Vasan’s debut show is an exploration of domesticity and the mundane. The Dehradun-raised artist, now based in Boston, is the gallery’s first artist-in-residence, and created many of the pieces from the show during this time. “The idea of being

ethnographically a ‘foreigner’ is a recurring theme throughout Vasan’s work,” says Thadani. “With this series, the artist is consciously pushing the boundaries of his practice, exploring new direction”

Gallery XXL: sans sentense



Lakshmi Madhavan, i remember it from my womb. Courtesy of the artist & Gallery XXL

A new customary stop in any art tour of the city here onward, Gallery XXL will be opening its permanent new space in Colaba during Mumbai Gallery Weekend this year. Marking this launch, the gallery, which is dedicated to urban contemporary and post graffiti art, is putting forth a group exhibit, showcasing works from nine artists who are both part of urban contemporary visual culture, but also have a graffiti background. “The curation brings together these two art styles for a show which is conceptualised around the idea of language and the body which is hence aptly titled *sans sentense*,” notes Joe Cyril, director of Gallery XXL. The artists include Al Qawi Nanavati, DO, Hanif Kureshi, Khatra, Lakshmi Madhavan, Latheesh Lakshman, Tanya George, and ZERO, as well as renowned French artist Sowat, whose works will be exhibited in India for the first time.

Chemould CoLab: Nakhra

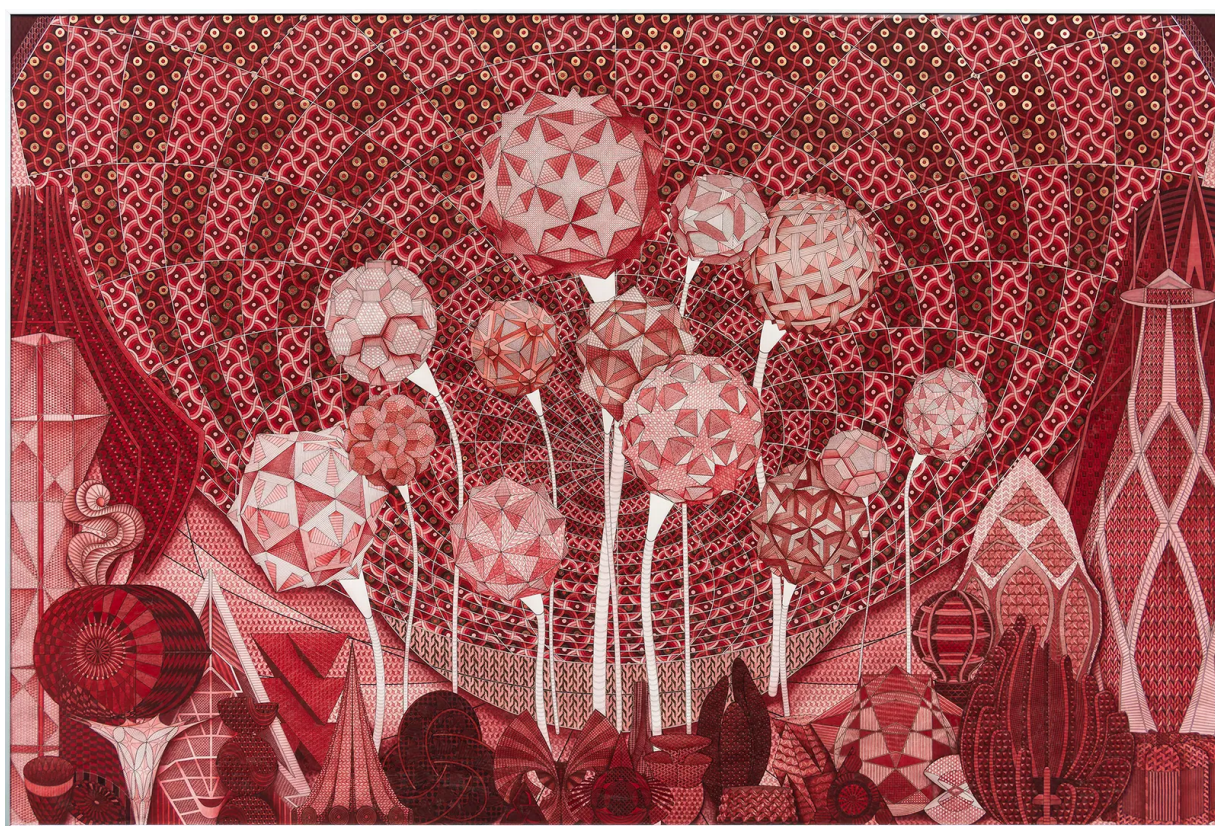


He held his breath when I sang Raag Des, 2023, oil on canvas, 25.4 x 25.4 cm. Courtesy of the artist & Chemould CoLab

Chemould CoLab, an extension of Chemould Prescott Road that is focused on promoting emerging artists will present New York-based artist Kuldeep Singh's first solo exhibition in Mumbai, titled *Nakhra: Towards sacred sensuality*. "This is a coming together of his two central practices: painting and Odissi dance," notes Sunaina Rajan, cofounder of Chemould CoLab. The artist, who is trained in Indian classical dance, particularly Odissi, has a multidisciplinary practice which involves painting, film, performance as well as multimedia installations. The highlights of his painting practice, which primarily includes works in oil on canvas, are a series of works that reinterpret the historic ragamala paintings through a queer and ecological lens. The works being exhibited at Mumbai Gallery Week 2024 were created at the space

during Singh's summer residency in 2023, and Mumbai naturally finds reference in them. "Subjects from his time spent in Mumbai, and colors of the city, its landscape and richness, all come together in this exhibition," adds Rajan.

Akara Contemporary: Suspended Simulacra; Akara Modern: The art of Lancelot Ribeiro



Bhagyashree Suthar, Untitled, 2023, pigments, gouache, pen, ink and copper leaf on paper, 55.2 x 84 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Akara Contemporary

Akara Contemporary, another new entrant in Mumbai's art scene, was founded in April 2023, complementing its sister gallery, Akara Modern. Both galleries are partaking in Mumbai Gallery Weekend 2024 with two "diametrically opposite exhibitions" as stated by director Puneet Shah. While Akara Modern will display an expansive body of work by F N Souza's half brother and expressionist painter Lancelot Ribeiro,

Akara Contemporary will feature a selection of works by Bhagyashree Suthar whose practice involves the creation of intricate fantastical worlds through beeswax sculptures, drawings, and wax paintings. “Her process is extremely painstaking and to see a larger body of work in a solo format is in itself quite exciting, says Shah. “The audience will get to see a range of works in scale and mediums, with an inclusion of gold foiling in her drawings alongside the resin and beeswax works.”

Chatterjee & Lal: Line of Fire



Line of Fire: I, 2023, charcoal and pastel on paper, Triptych 83 1/2 x 48 in. (each). Courtesy of the artist and Chatterjee & Lal

Displayed across the Chatterjee & Lal gallery space in Colaba as well as the 47-A design gallery in Khotachi Wadi, Line of Fire is a multi-part exhibit of Nikhil Chopra’s works. The artist, whose practice involves live art, theatre, painting, photography, sculpture and installations, will be returning to Mumbai after five years with this show. 47-A will host a four-hour performance by Chopra on January 10, 2024, and the space will also feature an installation by the artist. On display at the gallery in Colaba are a selection of Chopra’s recent landscapes - animated, and at

times, volatile - primarily rendered in charcoal and pastel on paper. “The glittering sea and moody landscapes mesmerise in Nikhil’s breathtaking drawings, ranging from the monumental to the intimate,” says Tara Lal and Mortimer Chatterjee, founders of the gallery.

Project 88: Her Nature

Self Portrait, Nagalinga Pushpa, 2023, ceramic Sculpture, 68 x 24 x 24 in. Courtesy of the artist and Project 88 John Janca @ Artbotphotography.com

Self Portrait, Yakshi (Calla Lily), 2023, Ceramic Sculpture, 23 x 6 x 5 in. Courtesy of the artist and Project 88. John Janca @ Artbotphotography.com

Transdisciplinary artist Ashwini Bhat’s ‘Her Nature’, opening at Project 88 during Mumbai Gallery Weekend 2024, makes use of sculpture, installation and video to investigate the relationship between the self and nature. The California-based artist’s body of work, at the core of which are her ceramic creations, draw references from varied sources -

clay seals form early Harappan civilisation, iconographies from temple architecture, pre-Aryan animistic nature-spirits such as yakshis to the feminist poetry of 12th century poet Akka Mahadevi. “With over 18 years of rigorous training in classical Indian dance, Ashwini's practice almost organically found itself within the materiality of clay. Her ceramic sculptures are visceral interventions into the ways we grasp the relation between the human and 'non-human'.” notes Sree Bannerjee Goswami, director, Project 88.

Art and Charlie: Why the f*ck should everything be convenient

Efficient Landscapes, reclaimed steel. Courtesy of the artist and Art and Charlie

“Vyom thinks we focus too much on making things convenient in our lives, without really questioning if it's the right goal,” says Ayesha Parikh, founder, Art and Charlie, elaborating on the title of the show. “He believes we should realise that some people have more advantages than others. His works, like bartering drawings for planted trees or using reclaimed steel for cool landscapes, make us rethink what we know.” The artist, whose practice is anchored in sculpture - using mediums such as metal, terracotta, cement and paper mâché, - seeks a critical re-evaluation of human-centricity, which he associates with capitalism. “Overall, he is asking us to question how much we focus on ourselves and convenience, and to think about our connection with the natural world,” adds Parikh.

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By Rupali
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