

India Art Fair

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Step into the India Art Fair and you could well be a part of the hype, the hubris and the bazaar that the Indian galleries love to load on your senses. But it is the foreign galleries that have added the pulling down and keeping low and focused fare. Look around, some big names who crave for media attention could be highly pretentious, one artist said: "Paresh Maity tried to become Subodh Gupta and failed miserably. Installation art goes beyond the banal, the basic, it must have the aesthetics of a language that attracts and compels. However, it was the great names that had cerebral signatures - the India Art Fair is a cauldron of collective eloquence - with some greatly extravagant excesses.

Here are my favourites:

Henry Moore

Hauser & Wirth—The gentleman at the booth seemed to busy to talk, and waved me off, as if I were no one. The most piquant piece of sculpture at the Art Fair belongs to the czar Henry Moore. This study of the artist's child, reflects his fierce involvement with direct carving. It was important, he believed that the sculptor "gets the solid shape, as it were, inside his head...he identifies himself with its center of gravity". Relating to Moore's philosophy, this tiny delight is the personification of the ethic of truth to materials and its inner vitality. What a pity Hauser & Wirth could not give us this image.

Vivek Vilasini, Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

Among photographic montages - Vivek Vilasini's iconic Kathakali dancers seated at a metaphoric Last Supper after Leonardo da Vinci. Vivek Vilasini's dramatic re-enactment of Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper' brings forth contemporary global concerns on the issues of faith and betrayal-even as he blends western and eastern nuances in iconography .The Kathakali dancers create a choreography of sorts, as sit at the table with the traditional banana leaf and typical Kerala sadya. Vilasini's work takes on epic proportions even as it brings together perspectives and perceptions of a world that has been caught in a time warp.



Vivek Vilasini
Between One Show and Several Others - Last Supper after Leonardo da Vinci
2011
Digital Print on Canvas
12 x 144 inches

Nathan Slate Joseph, Sundaram Tagore Gallery,
New York

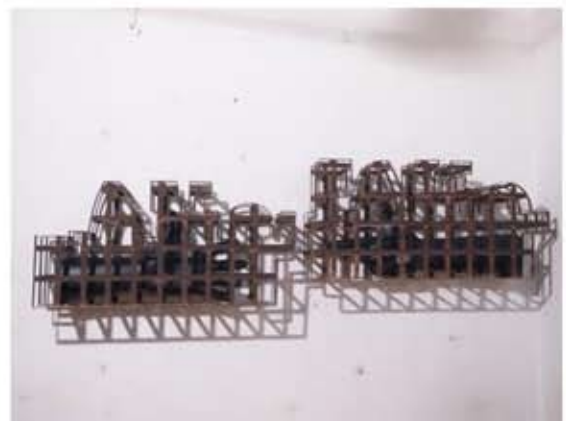
Nathan Slate Joseph, creates raw, tactile works by staining shards of discarded steel with pigment and acid, expands on iconic series from earlier periods. At first it looks like tiles.

Then it reveals eloquent geometric paintings by layering torch-cut metal panels. Blocks of saturated colour reference his roots in the Silk Road hub of Bukhara. The fragments of roughly cut metal also evoke refugee settlements, which Joseph encountered growing up in Israel in the 1940s and 50s. In a similar vein, his narrative of movement recalls travels across continents while exploring more explicitly the three-dimensional qualities of his chosen medium. "When I create sculptures, I go back to the colours and materials I was raised around. It's like an act of arresting memories," said he. Indeed it is as though Joseph is gazing into the depths of his childhood when he constructs his deeply coloured metal works. The Israeli-born artist unveils a new series of stunningly vibrant works. Scouring the streets of the city, he gathers scrap metal which he assembles into paintings and vessels. Intensely coloured, Joseph's art blurs the boundaries between painting and sculpture, East and West, nature and the manmade."



Sumedh Rajendran - Escalators, Vadehra Art
Gallery

Mounted on the wall this work has its own elegance. "I used the idea of skeletons and the connectivity of architectural patterns-to create a work that shows the notion of play and fear where we are either surrendering or conquering-the metaphor of the reality always containing a contradiction—has always piqued me," says Sumedh in an exclusive to The Times of India. "Yes in a way I am addressing humanity-the constant play—of the hunted and the hunter- someone is always a pray...and we are a part of it...in the work I used gloves to give the feeling of -artifice." The real and the virtual—everything is in it together.



Subodh Gupta - Stone

Hauser & Wirth --Take a monolith and give it to Subodh Gupta. He ideates an artistic vocabulary firmly rooted in the vernacular of everyday India. Gupta - the appropriation artist who ironically states, "I am the idol thief," gives us a work that has a million mythic references. His words swing through. "I steal from the drama of Hindu life. And from the kitchen - these pots, they are like stolen gods, smuggled out of the country. Hindu kitchens are as important as prayer rooms. These pots are like something sacred, part of important rituals, and I buy them in a market. They think I have a shop, and I let them think it. I get them wholesale."

The vessels that hang like punctuated possibilities have been stolen from the drama of Hindu life. But these are not pristine, gleaming mass market commodities that symbolise India's struggle for equilibrium between the dichotomies of multiple echoes. Instead they are old, oxidized by the patina of age and time. This is why Gupta stands apart-for his ability to mine the clichés and tropes of India, then taking them out of context, and subverting their meaning. Fibre glass and resin bring about an amalgam of an installation that is stunning and the temple bell that hangs on the side is but one symbol of the vital



Jayasri Burman - Art Alive

A two toned work that speaks in the language of poetry and the lyrical nuances of the past melding into the present. The imagery in Jayasri's works have a dream-like and lyrical quality with a unique sensitivity which, although inspired by the Indian folk element, retain a quality of refreshing candour and reflective honesty, that is



as original as it is endearing. She manages with poetic echoes to weave the decorative and design element of the folk idiom into the intricate patterns of her canvas, without losing the natural charm and naïveté of her work, which is uniquely her own.

From goddesses to women to Durga to the hybrid creatures who swim and accompany the choreography of nature each work in her hands is like an emblematic symbol in transporting the nature of the narrative born of the legends of Bengali literature. A few dozen of the characters peopled and plumed, Tagorean love poems to rural verdant settings anchor the books tapestry of imagery.