

For immediate release

COLLECTORS, GALLERISTS AND THE ART FRATERNITY CELEBRATE THE RETURN OF THE CONTEMPORARY MARKET

As the 2016 edition of India Art Fair comes to an end, we see the positive results of some of the biggest, boldest changes the art fair made till date. Right from its strategic positioning as the prime South Asian art fair, to a very selective mix of local and international galleries with high quality and high potential, to key corporate and institutional partnerships and a strong year round collectors' outreach programme - the cumulative effect of all of these factors resulted in a strong well presented art fair with the highest level of commercial success in recent years.

A key objective for art fair organisers was to deliver a deeper level of commitment and engagement from collectors right across the country, and from NRIs and internationals who act as strong influencers in an art community that is seeking to find what they can't find anywhere else in the world. With the changing nature of business in the art world and a certain global art fair fatigue, there is a compelling case for India and the region to present fresh undiscovered talent at the highest global quality yet to be seen anywhere on the international circuit, and equally a collector base that is growing exponentially, as was clearly evident at the fair this year. Footfall exceeded the previous year, and a much lauded architectural layout combined with a markedly high quality selection of gallery presentations that came together to produce record sales for both the modern and contemporary segments at this historic edition.

Endorsing the results of this strategic approach, here's what a range of some of the most significant collectors, gallerists and art world leaders from across the country and around the world said about this game-changing edition of India Art Fair:

Haro Cumbusyan, Founder of collectorspace, Istanbul

"India Art Fair provides a wonderful opportunity for visiting galleries to show their artists in India, and if the fair can also attract neighbouring countries then it's a win win situation. The new section 'Platform' is absolutely spot on - creating a platform for the emerging scene in South Asia is just the right thing to do."

Vivek Nanda, collector and board member of Victoria and Albert Museum

"India Art Fair reminds me of Frieze Masters. The layout is incredible - it is more spacious and breathes more. For me the best aspect was to see the strong South Asian representation, and the quality of the works and booths. The fair has been extremely well organised, and it is getting much sharper and more professional."

Kamiar Maleki, Collector, London

"As a collector and art advisor, I came with no expectations and was very impressed. This fair is as good as any other art fair around the world."

JD Evans, Collector, UK

"This is my first time to the fair and I'm extremely impressed. I particularly like the programming. The galleries are also impressive and I have bought a number of Indian works that relate to specific works in our collection from Brazil, Germany and Columbia."

Shohidul Choudhury, Collector, Dubai

"The main thing for me is how easy India Art Fair has made the experience for the collectors. I've bought a number of works from Bengal and am generally very impressed."

Marc Standing, Artist and Collector, Hong Kong

"As a visiting artist and collector it's good to see something very Indian orientated. I love the Indian sensibility with use of threads, texture and collage. There is a strong artistic identity coming out of India, and it's good to see it as a whole. I bought work from The Guild gallery that, whilst relating to traditional miniatures, tapping into the Indian vibe, is at the same time really contemporary and fresh."

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Dr. Thomas Girst, Head of Cultural Engagement, BMW Group

"What we are seeing here with India Art Fair and contemporary art in India this year is an amazing development. There are amazing artists on view, I've spoken to a lot of galleries, they're very happy with the turnout of collectors so I think that it's a time to rejoice....there's a momentum that has been created that we can build upon."

Sunil Munjal, Jt. Managing Director of Hero MotoCorp Ltd.

"The fair has been extremely well stitched together. I'm seeing younger collectors as well as the usual Indian buyers. It is especially good to see the new focus of the fair. 'Platform' is a first class initiative, and I would love to see more of this. The fair feels much more comfortable and secure in it's trajectory."

Madhu Neotia

"The fair is such a unique event in India. Through the fair's outreach it is wonderful to be here from Calcutta"

Rajeev Sethi, Founder, The Asian Heritage Foundation

"I like the space, obviously, I'm breathing and my eyes are breathing...I think the art is more focused and the galleries have been careful. I'm extremely happy that the South Asian section has become a theme that will not just be one fair long, this is something that will grow and could become a major stage for this region – keep that going, don't drop that."

Radhika Chopra, collector

"As a collector I would say the fair is tighter and more thoughtfully edited, particularly with regard to the galleries. It is an all round better experience, with considerable thought given to visitors in terms of the layout and overall experience as well as the fun side of fair."

Alessandra Matic, The Chicago Art Institute

"Our 20 members had the opportunity to see a wide variety of work by artists ranging from emerging to established, engage with gallerists and artists, and attend panel discussions at the Speakers' Forum. It was an exciting opportunity to learn more about South Asian and Indian art and how the Fair plays a key role in the current global art market. I look forward to bringing more of our members to the Fair on future trips."

Shanay Jhaveri, Assistant curator of South Asian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

"In terms of visitor experience the fair is very comfortable and inviting. I have been particularly impressed by a number of the solo projects, that interest me personally. The use of space and also the use of material has worked well, and it is good to see certain external institutions represented here"

Barbara MacQuown Tucker, Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh

"This fair is of a very high quality - we've taken groups around the most prestigious fairs in the world and this feels extremely well organised in comparison. We're very impressed with the quality of both the set up and the art. It's our first time in India and we were not sure what to expect, but expectations have been wonderfully surpassed."

Osman Waheed, chairman lahore biennale Foundation

"What this fair, in a really nice way shows, is the depth of art, not just Indian art but South Asian art. I think the conscious attempt to extend beyond India and come to countries like Nepal and Pakistan has been really phenomenal. I was part of the panel today and we were talking about access and integration in the arts through projects like the biennales and fairs like this – and just during the course of that panel discussion we came up with two projects that are going to happen now, one of them between Pakistan and Nepal so I think it is more than achieved what it has set out to do so my congratulations to everyone."

Stuart Comer, Chief Curator of the Department of Media and Performance Art, MOMA

"The fair is very well organised. It's great to be able to walk in and get a sense of what's happening across the different Indian cities. I also like the good mix of both historical and contemporary works."

PRESS RELEASE

Sunitha Kumar Emmart, GALLERYYSKE

"The fair is doing very good things for the contemporary market. We've seen extremely robust sales across our full spectrum of artists. India Art Fair is fantastic at listening to their galleries and year on year they accommodate the requests and the fair just gets better and better."

Ranjana Steinruecke, Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai

"India Art Fair has shown that the market is alive. It has both the edge as well as the endurance. Any sense of fatigue in the market has gone, and the level of energy at the fair is really incredible. Whilst our programme is typically contemporary and unique, it is still finding a market. We have been very happy to see sales across the different price points, and the fact that this has come through over the last few days is very reassuring for everyone. "

Priyanka Raja, Experimenter, Calcutta

"Having exhibited at some of the best fairs in the world, this feels genuinely like a high quality international layout, and it is so important to see art in the right context. We're particularly excited to see is the volume of industry luminaries - leading museum directors, film curators, and not only Indian collectors but also significant international audiences, keen to make a commitment to the region which to me is a much bigger sign of positive change."

Aparajita Jain, Nature Morte

"I feel in my bones that contemporary is back in action. There is a re-emergence of Western interest in India and collectors both old and new who are ready to commit right across price points. We have done phenomenally well and there has been a deeper level of engagement and interest in our full range of artists. We have not had this level of response for the last three years and are very pleased with the sales."

Shireen Gandhi, Director, Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai

"This year, India Art Fair has seen significant global art world influencers, whose presence here is demonstrative of the way the world is responding to the contemporary Indian art scene. The level of sales and new interest throughout the fair on day one, signifies a second life for contemporary art in India. The fair has outdone itself with new introductions particularly to non-resident Indians and international collectors, while also giving me the opportunity to get focussed attention from key local patrons who i only have a remote interaction with in the rest of the year, which has resulted in important acquisitions."

Dr. Arshiya Lokhandwala, Lakeeren Gallery

"There is noticeably more energy than last year, with many new collectors visible. We're very optimistic and it feels good to be back here. We've sold a number of works across a range of prices (from 1-20 Lakh Rupees). People are responding really well to the booth and we have the pick of collectors who are interested."

Jal Hamad, Sabrina Amrani, Spain

"We are really happy to be at India Art Fair for the first time and have sold 4 pieces today to new clients. We are excited to meet new collectors and expand our network in South Asia"

Thomas Erben, Thomas Erben Gallery, New York

"We are very pleased to be back at India Art Fair. The reaction has been really good with both sales and interest. We have already sold several works, and it is clear the market is now taking photography and the value of the medium more seriously in India. The fair has seen a really positive development this year. The overall presentation has improved and the South Asian focus is very well chosen. People can now come to the fair specifically to find out about art from the region."

Todd Hosfelt, Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco

"This is our first year at the fair and we been very impressed, selling work within the first hours. It is better produced than many other international fairs."

PRESS RELEASE

Baudoin Lebon, Paris

"We are engaging younger new collectors across new markets. People are buying and asking and engaging, from the top end of the collectors but also especially from this huge emerging middle market. This year the fair has really improved a lot. It has evolved, and matured, and as a gallery we are really happy."

Hetal Pawani, Director, Grey Noise Gallery, Dubai

"We exhibited at Pragati Maidan four years ago, and it is a huge pleasure to return to India Art Fair. The fair is looking beautiful, and the quality is at a serious international standard."

Dina Bangdel, Nepal Art Council

"The India Art Fair Platform series has been much needed to understand the context of contemporary art in South Asia - both in terms of the local issues as well the broader global contemporary art scene. Many people were amazed to discover Nepal has a contemporary art scene and it is terrific that IAF can play this role, showcasing work the is absolutely 'now' and relevant within the South Asian context."

Rashid Rana, Artist

"In the absence of any major public institutions, the role of of an organisation like India Art Fair is very significant. It's heartening for me to see so many middle class people in large numbers coming here and engaging with art. It is incredible how the fair has evolved over the years. "

Diwan Manna, former Director of Lalit Kala Akademi Chandigarh

"The fair is evolving. Whilst there is much good contemporary work, I'm gladdened to see some of the old masters. There is much high quality, very sensitive work that comes across as very contemporary, still finding relevance and making their presence felt in such a contemporary show. There has been a well thought-out strategy that has brought in much fresh content and interest, keeping the art relevant for its audiences."

Captions for images below (left to right from top):

- Noelle Kadar, Director of VIP Relations, Madhu Neotia and Zain Masud, International Director;
- Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh patrons at India Art Fair
- Nazneed Shafi, Tariq al Jaidah, Haron Cumbusyan, Lu Xun, collector and founder of the Sifang Art Museum and Kiran Nadar at Speakers Forum session on Private collections and Public Engagement
- Neha Kirpal, Founder and Director, India Art Fair with a school group
- Vivan Sundram, artist and lyricist, poet and script writer Javed Akhtar
- The Art Institute of Chicago patron delegation
- The India Art Fair team
- Designer Ritu Kumar
- Osman Waheed, chairman, Lahore Biennale Foundation with wife
- Lu Xun, collector and founder of the Sifang Art Museum
- Lala Rukh and Ayesha Jatoi, artists from Pakistan
- Noelle Kadar and Alain Servais, collector, Brussels
- The BMW Patrons' Dinner in the India Art Fair VIP Lounge
- Zain Masud & collectors Vishal Mehta, India, Khurram Kasim, Pakistan, Aarti Lohia, Singapore, and Shohidul Choudhury, Dubai at Speakers Forum session a new generation of South Asian collectors
- Designer Rohit Bahl
- Philipp von Sahr, President, BMW Group India, Bollywood actresses Soha Ali Khan and Esha Gupta with Frank Schoedler, Director, BMW India
- Neha Kirpal with Sangita Jindal, Chairman, JSW Foundation
- Zain Masud with Martino Stierli, Chief Curator Architecture and Design, MOMA

Images courtesy Manoj Kesharwani



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