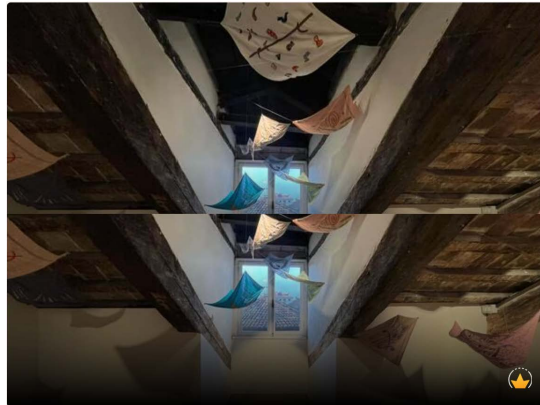


## Artists from the Indian diaspora make a mark at the Venice Biennale

Anindo Sen | 4 min read | 09 May 2024, 05:00 PM IST



An installation view of Areez Katki's 'Pedagogical Drawings Series Z 1'. Photo: Courtesy the artist

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### SUMMARY

Contemporary artists of Indian origin reflect on political and personal histories at the ongoing Venice Biennale

It's come to many as a surprise that the ongoing Venice Biennale, titled 'Foreigners Everywhere', does not feature a national pavilion by India—a country with one of the largest and most widespread diasporas. However, contemporary artists of Indian origin are adding their voice to the discourse at the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia.

### Bringing Indian energy to the global stage

Take, for instance, Vidha Saumya's *To all the Barricades...* *The Rumour Got You* at the Finnish pavilion in the Giardini, which is being presented as an assorted composition of three distinct works.

The primary work is a large ballpoint pen drawing on silk across multiple panels, showing people queued up—symbolising the time spent waiting in a bureaucracy and trickle-down economy. It is accompanied by a series of sculptures, which imitate trash found on urban pavements, and a third plane consisting of cross-stitched textile forms replicating stains. A note accompanying the exhibition states that Saumya's work attempts to challenge the norms of aesthetics, gender, academia and the nation-state, while encouraging visitors to reflect on the shared existence in this evolving world.

Mumbai-bred Saumya, who has been living in Helsinki for the last eight years, is appreciative of the arts ecosystem in the Finnish capital. She acknowledges that independent practice, outside of the restrictions of the market, is valued there. Moreover, the ecosystem is dominated by art practitioner-led spaces, while the state supports cultural production and encourages new possibilities. "It has afforded me time and space to develop new directions of curiosity to carry out a heterogeneity of practice," she says. Though she does miss Mumbai's high-octane work energy and the professional zeal to manifest any imagination into reality.