

DESIGN EVENTS

Highlights from the India Art Fair

The worlds of art and design collided at the 16th edition of the India Art Fair, where a global outlook and women artists were front and centre

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(Image credit: India Art Fair)

BY CRISTINA KIRAN PIOTTI PUBLISHED YESTERDAY IN [FEATURES](#)

An unusually crisp (but thankfully also clear and less polluted than a month ago) Delhi welcomed the queen of all Indian fairs, the [India Art Fair](#), which took place on 6-9 February 2025 at the NSIC Exhibition Grounds in New Delhi and featured, according to the organisers, a record 120 exhibitors. For its 16th edition, the fair was able to condense trends, expectations, and hopes that are no longer limited to the world of art, collectors, and interior designers. With a success measurable by the fact

that, from 2pm on Saturday, the day open to the general public, the entrances had to be closed due to maximum capacity being reached.



(Image credit: Vadehra Art Gallery)

The selection of works exhibited outside made explicit, since the first steps into the black pavilions, the desire for a global gaze (the proof: the first-time Lagos gallery, kó, as well as the long-awaited return of influential David Zwirner and Lisson Gallery, after years of absence). International trends, however, were firmly rooted in the local context. 'As a fair, we are always interested in breaking boundaries between creative disciplines, and facilitating conversations between artists, designers and makers of all kinds,' said Jaya Asokan, fair director.

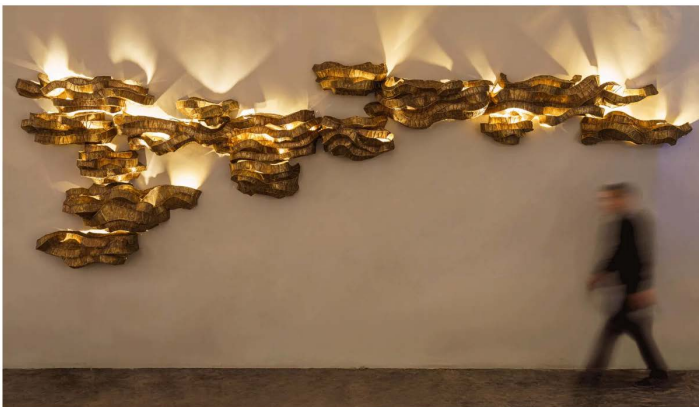


Ashiesh Shah's exhibition space
(Image credit: India Art Fair)

The Design section, which debuted last year, has expanded to 11 pioneering studios and features seventeen emerging Indian designers curated by Alaiia Gujral. Highly creative and masterly crafted pieces included, among others, Ashiesh Shah's wall-mounted sculptures called Poothan Dhokra Wall Sconces, framed by a brass-cast shelf, featuring Dhokra-crafted egg, symbolising the Brahmand, or the universe in its most elemental form. As well as the coloured Silver Naga Library, inspired by the protective totems of the Indian northeastern state of Nagaland. Jaipur Rugs launched Aspura, a new gallery for collectible carpets, which features a triptych by Rashid Rana spanning three opposing but visually related directions: a contemporary very geometric piece, an antique Kashan rug, and a photomosaic unexpected mirroring the antique one.



Gunjan Gupta, *Pot is HER Mother Earth Totem Pole*
(Image credit: Gunjan Gupta)



(Image credit: Vikram Thar)

Indian brass and craft virtuoso Vikram Goyal presented The Shaded Graphite collection, which included a large cabinet, mirror and sconce, their patinated surfaces mimicking shaded graphite and organic textures. 'One of the most pressing questions in contemporary craft discourse revolves around revival its definition, its catalysts, and its implications for both skill and aesthetics. Does craft need to remain static to be preserved? What does revival entail? What is the role of designer and craftsman?' he said. Questions to which other designers responded with

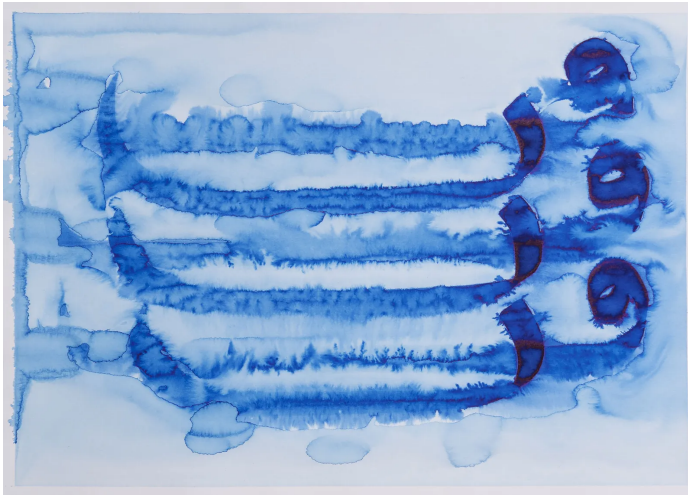
completely different aesthetic approaches: with 'Pot is HER' Mother Earth Totem Pole, Gunjan Gupta made a tribute to Mother Earth with a group of colourful tables honouring the Phad painting, a style of religious folk painting from Rajasthan used by priest-singers to narrate stories.

Rooshad Shroff's Balance collection featured fluid, rounded lines and explorations of new materials such as travertine, cast brass, white onyx, pink onyx, and green onyx crafted in Jaipur and Mumbai. The intriguing Weave collection included a bench with dyed Japanese glass bead upholstery, a hand-embroidery-on-wood cabinet, and a lamp featuring an alabaster shade on a Makrana marble tube.



Martin Baas, *Self Portrait Clock*
(Image credit: Benjamin Baccarani)

In terms of design, one of the most successful presences on the central hall was Carpenters Workshop Gallery, which showcased a selection of historical and contemporary pieces, including Maarten Baas' Close Parity Cabinet with Light, with its pure, implausible shapes. In the Institutions hall, Chanakya Foundation and Chanakya School of Craft, run by the eponymous global textile house, presented an abstract and symbolic work that explored the interconnection between humanity and nature through handwoven textiles and hand embroidery.



(Image credit: Saubiya Chasmawala and TARQ)



Garima Gupta, *Bergenia Ciliat*, 2025
(Image credit: GarimaGupta and TARQ)

Of course, an art fair speaks to us about art, mainly. This year on the fairground, certain trends were evident. For example, a recognition of India's pioneering women artists, with the established Mumbai gallery, Tarq, presenting seven women artists (Nibha Sikander, Apnavi Makanji, Amba Sayal-Bennett, Rah Naqvi, Saubiya Chasmawala, Garima Gupta, and Soghra Khurasani) working on ecology through their individual and personal lenses.

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Photography had a big moment with Delhi-based Photink (who presented IOIOI using AI in photography) and not-to-miss names such as Gauri Gill with Vadehra Gallery and Dayanita Singh with Nature Morte – one of the country's leading galleries, which also presented Subodh Gupta's *Mars Kitchen* and Bharti Kher's *The Watchman* sculpture. The historic Dhoomimal Art Gallery showed heavyweights such as Francis Newton Souza and MF Husain; other big, national players included DAG, Ashvita's, Chatterjee and Lal, Espace, Jhaveri, Esperimenter, Method, and Project88.



Sudhir Patwardhan, *Sunset Acrylic*, 2024
(Image credit: Sudhir Patwardhan)

International must-sees included Galleria Continua, Lisson, Aicon Contemporary, and David Zwirner: 'After three successful years, in 2018, 2019, 2020, and after the Covid hiatus, we were looking forward to come back,' said David Zwirner's senior director, James Green. 'The market has expanded over the years, and this year has seen a significant increase in collectors. The audience is becoming more aware of our program, and there is a growing international interest.'

Scott Gray, CEO of IAF's parent company Angus Montgomery Arts, agrees with this positive viewpoint: 'India Art Fair 2025 has been a truly landmark edition, with a record number of exhibitors, strong sales reported, highly engaged collectors and world-leading international institutions in attendance' he said. 'As the fair closes its 2025 edition we look forward to furthering our footprint across India, looking beyond Delhi to expanded programming in the diverse creative hubs burgeoning across the country.'

indiaartfair.in ★

TOPICS

India

Cristina Kiran Piotti

Cristina Kiran Piotti is an Italian-Indian freelance journalist. After completing her studies in journalism in Milan, she pursued a master's degree in the economic relations between Italy and India at the Ca' Foscari Challenge School in Venice. She splits her time between Milan and Mumbai and, since 2008, she has concentrated her work mostly on design, current affairs, and culture stories, often drawing on her enduring passion for geopolitics. She writes for several publications in both English and Italian, and she is a consultant for communication firms and publishing houses.