

## India Pavilion

### 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia



SHAKUNTALA KULKARNI  
*Photo Performance: Asiatic Library, 2010 –2012*  
*Digital print on rag paper*  
28 x 42 inches  
Collection: Chemould Prescott, Mumbai  
Image courtesy: Artist

## ***Our Time for a Future Caring***

**Exhibition:** 11 May to 24 November 2019

**Pre-opening:** 8-10 May 2019 (opening India Pavilion: 8 May, 12:30pm)

**Organisers:** Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India and Confederation of Indian Industry

**Commissioner:** National Gallery of Modern Art, Delhi

**Principal Partner & Curator:** Kiran Nadar Museum of Art

The India Pavilion presentation *Our Time for a Future Caring* at the 58<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition – La biennale di Venezia opens to the public on 11 May 2019.

*Our Time for a Future Caring*, a group exhibition curated by Roobina Karode, Director and Chief Curator at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, critically engages with the figure and philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi, reflecting on his enduring impact and the contemporary relevance of his ideals. Gandhi acts as focal point for different artistic interpretations, delving into broader issues of India's history and nationhood, as well more conceptual investigations into notions of freedom, nonviolence, action and agency. The exhibition forms part of India's celebrations of '150 years of Gandhi' and showcases artworks spanning from the twentieth century to the present day by **Nandalal Bose, MF**

**Husain, Atul Dodiya, Jitish Kallat, Ashim Purkayastha, Shakuntala Kulkarni, Rummana Hussain and GR Iranna.**

A landmark partnership between India's public and private sectors has enabled India's second national participation at the Biennale Arte 2019. The Pavilion was organized by the **India Ministry of Culture** with the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**. **Kiran Nadar Museum of Art** is the Principal Partner and Curator, the Director General of the **National Gallery of Modern Art** is the Commissioner of the project.

*Our Time for a Future Caring* offers an opportunity to explore the rich artistic production that has occurred in India in response to Gandhi. The exhibition begins with the *Haripura Panels* by **Nandalal Bose**, an Indian 'National Treasure artist'. The *Haripura Panels* were commissioned by Gandhi in 1938, to provide art which was accessible to the public and represented everyday life in India, with portrayals ranging from artisans to musicians, labourers and housewives. The work represents Gandhi's conversations with Bose and his direct engagement with art, to showcase his ideals. The *Haripura Panels* are on display in Europe for the first time, on loan from the National Gallery of Modern Art.

In *Zamin* (1955) **MF Husain** conceptually represents Gandhi's village republics, with subject matter that continues from Bose but uses a modern idiom. The painting was produced at a moment when hope for a new nation was still intact and when artwork focused on the secular, featuring peasants, the laborer, the rural, the artisan and the indigenous. This piece shows how deeply Husain was thinking about the idea of nation and the multiple languages, religious and social practices that uniquely go into it, perhaps alluding to Gandhi's plea for 'unity in diversity'.

**Atul Dodiya** has explored Mahatma Gandhi as a subject throughout the last 20 years of his practice, referring to him as an 'artist of nonviolence', probing the aesthetic qualities of his public image and legacy. *Broken Branches* (2002) features exact replicas of the wooden cabinets used to display relics and memorabilia in the Gandhi memorial Museum in Porbander. These cabinets weave together the personal and political, filled with objects and photographs, disassembled traces of Dodiya's own life and experiences.

*Covering Letter* (2012), **Jitish Kallat's** poignant, immersive video installation invites visitors to step into a forgotten moment in history, a letter sent from Gandhi to Hitler, projected onto fog. The letter sent before the start of the Second World War is addressed 'Dear Friend' and in revisiting this historical document, Kallat reflects on the possibilities of peace and tolerance in a world plagued by violence and like Dodiya, the traces Gandhi has left behind. This work is on display in Europe for the first time.

**Ashim Purkayastha** puts the iconography of Gandhi under a critical lens, his series of postage stamps exploring the meanings of these popular images, which are both monumental and intimate. *Untitled* (2019) is also included in the exhibition, comprised of paintings and sculptures of stones.

Engaging with broader themes and ideas, which hold synergies with Gandhi's ideals, *Our Time for a Future Caring* features sculptures, photographs and accessories from **Shakuntala Kulkarni's** project *Of Bodies and Cages* (2010-2012). The wearable sculpture and photo-performances investigates ideas of freedom and non-violence, particularly for women in public spaces. The armor, inspired by warriors and kings, when adapted to a woman represents power and vulnerability. Kulkarni worked closely with a local artisan to master this traditional Indian craft, learning to use bamboo cane as a material.

**Rummana Hussain, Fragments** (1993) also features traditional materials from India, terracotta, earth pigments and charcoal. As with other artworks in the exhibition, the installation of shards of broken pots explores action and agency, inspired by Husain's experiences of violence and intolerance. Hussain's works were ephemeral in nature, and many have not been preserved, making them even more precious today.

*Panic Garden* (2014) an installation by **GR Iranna** evokes the idea of walking as a performative action, practical but also meditative and spiritual. The installation of padukas, a cheap and traditional wooden footwear, recalls Gandhi, who used to walk twenty miles each day.

Situated in a new location in the historic Arsenale, the India Pavilion is designed to be a meditative space for visitors and create an environment in which new connections and unexpected encounters can be made. The exhibition is accompanied by an English-language catalogue, which includes contributions by Roobina Karode, Curator, Kiran Nadar, Founder and Chairperson of Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Tarana Sawhney, Chair of Art and Culture taskforce, CII and Shri Adwaita Chavan Gadanayak, Director General, National Gallery of Modern Art.

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### Lead Partners



### Notes to Editors

#### **Venue**

Arsenale, Campo della Tana 2169/f, Castello – 30122 Venezia

#### **Press contact**

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#### **About the India Pavilion**

2019 is the second India Pavilion at the International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia. The first India Pavilion took place at the 54<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition in 2011.

A Steering committee and a Curatorial Committee were formulated for the organisation of the India Pavilion at Biennale Arte 2019, bringing together the public and private sectors. The India Pavilion is co-organised by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India and the Confederation of Indian Industry. India Pavilion is curated by Roobina Karode, Chief Curator and Director at Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, the Principal Partner and the Director General, National Gallery of Art, Delhi is the commissioner to the project.

#### **About the Partners**

##### **Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India**

The Ministry of Culture is the Indian government ministry charged with the preservation and conservation of the country's rich cultural heritage and promotion of art and culture.

<https://www.indiaculture.nic.in/>

##### **National Gallery of Modern Art**

The National Gallery of Modern Art is the premier art gallery, under the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. The main museum is located in New Delhi at Jaipur House, a former residential palace of the Maharaja of Jaipur, designed by British architects Sir Arthur Blomfield and Sir Edwin Lutyens. It has an extensive collection, with over seventeen thousand works of Indian modern and contemporary art. <http://ngmaindia.gov.in/>

##### **Kiran Nadar Museum of Art**

Kiran Nadar Museum of Art was founded by art collector and philanthropist Kiran Nadar and is located in New Delhi, India. The Museum opened in 2010 and exhibits modern and contemporary art from India and the subcontinent. It is a non-commercial, not-for-profit organisation and offers an extensive

public programme of exhibitions, publications and education.  
<http://www.knma.in/>

### **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**

The Confederation of Indian Industry is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led organisation, playing a proactive role in India's development process. CII works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the growth of industry in India, partnering with industry and government alike through advisory and consultative processes.

<https://www.cii.in/>

### **About Roobina Karode, Curator**

**Roobina Karode** has been the Director and Chief Curator of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi since its opening in 2010.

Karode has had a twenty-five year career in the arts as a writer, curator and educator and has curated exhibitions both within India and internationally. Selected exhibitions include *Nasreen Mohamedi: a view to infinity*, 2013 and *Is it what you think? Ruminations on Time, Memory and Site*, 2014 at KNMA, *Nasreen Mohamedi: waiting is a part of intense living*, 2015 at the Reina Sofia Museum in Spain, Nalini Malaini's three part retrospective *You can't put acid in a paperbag* in 2014, *Himmat Shah: Hammer on the Square*, 2016 and *Jeram Patel : The Dark Loam, between memory and membrane*, 2016 at KNMA. She co-curated *NASREEN MOHAMEDI* at the MET Breuer, New York in 2016.

### **About the Artists**

#### **Nandalal Bose (1882-1966)**

Nandalal Bose is esteemed as one of the pioneers of the 'nationalist-modern' in Indian art. Bose was responsible for the historic task of adorning the original manuscript of the Constitution of India. Like many of his contemporaries – thinkers and artists, he held strong opinions and actions for India's struggle for independence. One of his most remarkable contributions to the freedom struggle was through the linocuts commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March of 12 March 1930, and designing Haripura Congress posters upon Mahatma Gandhi's invitation. In 1972 he was designated one of India's nine 'National Treasure' artists, which prohibits his work from being exported outside of the country.

Nandalal Bose's work has been widely displayed in India and across the world. His posthumous retrospective exhibition, *Rhythms of India: The Art of Nandalal Bose (1882-1966)* was held at San Diego Museum of Art, California in collaboration with NGMA, New Delhi, and Government of India in 2008. Visva-Bharati University honored him by conferring the title of '*Desikottama*'. The Tagore Birth Centenary Medal was awarded to Nandalal Bose in 1965 by the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

#### **Atul Dodiya (b. 1959, Mumbai, Maharashtra)**

Atul Dodiya was studied at the J.J. School of Arts, Mumbai and later the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris in 1980. Atul developed a unique artistic language because of his longstanding engagement with the works of artists like Bhupen Khakar and David Hockney. The figure of Mahatma Gandhi has featured several times in his oeuvre, exploring the aesthetics that ran through the public image of Gandhi as a popular leader.

Dodiya has participated in seminal exhibitions like *Century City* at Tate Modern curated by Geeta Kapur, and the first edition of Kochi Muziris Biennale in 2012. Of his many solo shows the most recent are *7000 Museums: A Project for the Republic of India*, curated by Tasneem Zakaria Mehta at Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai (2014 -15) and a mid-career retrospective exhibition *Experiments with Truth: Atul Dodiya, works 1981 – 2013*, which was curated by Ranjit Hoskote at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi (2013). Atul Dodiya lives and works in Mumbai.

#### **MF Husain (1915 – 2011)**

Maqbool Fida Husain was born in 1915 in Pandharpur, Maharashtra. A self-taught artist, he came to Mumbai in 1937, determined to become a painter. He learnt the art of calligraphy at an early age and later on apprenticed himself to Bhide, a painter who painted cinema hoardings. He was noticed for the first time when he won an award at the annual exhibition of the Mumbai Art Society in 1947 and in 1948, joined F.N Souza and others to form the Progressive Artist's Group. In the late 1960s, he paint-

ed the two epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, the latter was displayed at Sao Paulo Biennale where Husain was a special invitee along with Pablo Picasso. Besides painting, he made feature films, his first film 'Through the Eyes of a Painter' (1967) won the Golden Bear Award at the Berlin Film Festival. In 1955, he was honoured by the Government of India with the prestigious Padma Shri award and later in 1973 and 1991 subsequently with the Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan Awards. M.F. Husain passed away in exile, in London in 2011.

### **Rummana Hussain (1952–1999)**

Rummana Hussain was born in Bangalore in 1952. Completing her education at the Ravensbourne College of Art and Design, Kent, United Kingdom (1972-74), Rummana moved towards an artistic expression which involved installations, performances, videography and activism. A spontaneous response to the politics of her time led her to interrogate personal identity as a woman and a Muslim and echoing vulnerabilities.

Coming from a family with roots grounded in politics, activism and social welfare, Hussain was an active participant in SAHMAT, a platform of intellectuals promoting liberal secular ideas in India through art and activism. '*Living on the Margins*', performed by Rummana in 1995 at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) is considered among the first contemporary performative works in India. She was artist in residence at Art in General in New York in 1998, where her installation focused on intersections within cultures, ruptured memories and contextualising the present within history. Her last work '*Space for Healing*', 1999 was exhibited at the third Asia Pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art at Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane. Rummana's works were ephemeral in nature, and many have not been archived or preserved, making them even more precious today. Rummana Hussain passed away in 1999.

### **G.R. Iranna (b. 1970, Sindgi, Karnataka)**

G. R Iranna was born in Bijapur district of Karnataka. He completed his bachelors in painting from College of Visual Art, Gulbarga in 1992 and later on, Masters from College of Art, New Delhi in 1994 and Wimbledon School of Art, London in 1999. His artistic explorations are crossovers of paintings and sculptural installations.

Iranna's first solo exhibition was held in 1992 at the College of Visual Art, Gulbarga. Selected recent exhibitions include *The Primordial Ash*; Aicon Gallery, New York, 2017; *And the last shall be the first: G.R. Iranna, Works 1995-2015*; National Gallery of Modern Art Bengaluru, 2016; and *Tempered Branches*; AICON Gallery, New York, 2014. Iranna's works are part of important national and international collections including the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, David Robert Collection, London, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, Chester & David Hurwitz, USA and Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal. Iranna was awarded the National Award from the Lalit Kala Academy and the AIFACS Award, at the show '50 years of Art in Independent India' in New Delhi in 1997. He lives and works in New Delhi.

### **Jitish Kallat (b. 1974, Mumbai, Maharashtra)**

Born in 1974, Jitish Kallat's oeuvre spans painting, photography, drawing, video and sculptural installations. His recent mid-career retrospective *Here After Here* was curated by Catherine David and organised at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi in 2017. It displayed works spanning twenty years of his artistic practice. Kallat's other solo exhibitions at museums include institutions such as the Art Institute of Chicago, Bhau Daji Lad Museum (Mumbai), the Ian Potter Museum of Art (Melbourne), CSMVS Museum (Mumbai), the San Jose Museum of Art and Art Gallery of New South Wales (Sydney).

Kallat also served as the curator and artistic director of the second edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2014. His work has been part of the Havana Biennale, Gwangju Biennale, Asia Pacific Triennale, Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, Asian Art Biennale, Curitiba Biennale, Guangzhou Triennale and the Kiev Biennale amongst others. His works are part of important collections including the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, and the Singapore Art Museum, among others. Kallat lives and works in Mumbai, India.

**Shakuntala Kulkarni (b. 1950, Dharwad, Karnataka)**

Shakuntala Kulkarni was born in Karnataka in 1950. Shakuntala's current artistic practice lies at the intersection of many disciplines though her initial training in visual arts stems from mural painting.

Shakuntala has exhibited extensively with solo and group exhibitions, including "of bodies armour and cages" in 2012 at Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, and CSMVS Museum in Mumbai, "and when she roared the universe quaked", 2007 at Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai, and Dhaka Art Summit in 2016. She is a recipient of many awards and scholarships including Prince Claus Fund for setting up multi-disciplinary project *Reduced Spaces* in 2002, Artist Residency at the Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal, U.K. in 1998, and the Government of India Cultural Scholarship for painting and Printmaking under tutelage of Akbar Padamsee, Prof. Palsikar, Prof. Somnath Hore in 1975-76. Shakuntala Kulkarni lives and works in Mumbai.

**Ashim Purkayastha (b. 1967, Digboi, Assam)**

Ashim Purkayastha was born in Digboi, a town well known for oil refinery in Assam. Drawing from eclectic sources, he voices his concerns around societal reactions triggered by the economy and politics. His exhibitions include solo exhibitions at Anant Art Gallery at the Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi (2006) *Self x Social* at The School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawarhalal Nehru University, New Delhi (2005); *Hindu Moon in Mughal Garden*, *Nature Morte*, New Delhi (2004); *Young Contemporaries* from Santiniketan, Gallery Espace, New Delhi (2002 amongst several others. Ashim has received several awards and fellowships, including the prestigious Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award in 2004. Ashim Purkayastha lives and works in New Delhi.