

PRESS RELEASE | IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VHC at India Art Fair 2025

6 – 9 February 2025

Booth No.: C09

**INDIA
ART
FAIR**
DELHI 6—9 FEB 2025

VHC
VIDA HEYDARI
CONTEMPORARY

India Art Fair: Thursday, 6 February – Sunday, 9 February 2025, NSIC Exhibition Grounds, Okhla Phase III, New Delhi 110020

VHC is excited to return to India Art Fair with a presentation uniting diverse artistic practices from the global East that explore the intersections of memory, identity, and materiality. Featuring works by Aparajita Jain Mahajan, Debasree Das, Harisha Chennangod, M. Pravat, Maryam Firuzi, Monali Meher, Reza Derakshani, Samim Alam Beg, and Zhang Ji, VHC's presentation at IAF unfolds as a conversation between cultural heritage, contemporary narratives, and experimental artistic practices.

Through mediums spanning painting, mixed media, sculpture, performance, and textiles, these artists reimagine traditional techniques while challenging socio-political boundaries. Debasree Das's embroidered and painted canvases evoke stories of resilience, while M. Pravat's architectural abstractions investigate the poetics of constant urban transformation. Monali Meher's performative mixed-media works embody a search for impermanence, and Maryam Firuzi's cinematic imagery navigates personal and collective histories. Reza Derakshani and Harisha Chennangod bring a lyrical sensibility to painting, intertwining nature, mythology, and history. Meanwhile, Aparajita Jain Mahajan, Samim Alam Beg, and Zhang Ji experiment with narrative structures, recontextualizing archival material and cultural symbolism to address contemporary issues.

Together, these artists blur and challenge traditional hierarchies, creating a dynamic platform to examine how art can serve as a vessel for both introspection and resistance. VHC's Booth C09 at IAF 2025 is a celebration of nuanced practices that bridge the past and the present, opening new possibilities for critical engagement and dialogue.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

APARAJITA JAIN MAHAJAN

Aparajita Jain Mahajan was born in 1980 in New York, USA. She earned her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design, majoring in Film, Animation, and Video. In 2007, she further refined her visual language at the Art Students League of New York. Alongside her art practice, Aparajita has been actively involved in social projects. She created animations for the Eternal Gandhi Multimedia Museum in New Delhi and assisted filmmaker Saeed Mirza in his 2004 tribute to Gandhi. While living in Auroville, a universal township, she taught art at an outreach village school and created a documentary about this unique institution.

Since 2009, Aparajita has participated in numerous exhibitions, including “Miniatures Conjure Delights” in 2024 at Garrett Museum of Art, Indiana, USA, “Entwined” at Apparao Galleries, Chennai (2024), “Unveiled Horizons” at Vida Heydari Contemporary, Pune (2023), “Between Interruptions” at Angelica Kauffman Micro Gallery (2023), the Architectural Digest Fair 2023 with VHC, and the Terrain Biennial 2023 with Angelica Kauffman Gallery in Chicago, USA. She was also part of the digital exhibition “Attachment; Abbreviated”, organized under the “Taking Up Space” initiative by the Thrive Together Network (2022), among many others.

Aparajita Jain Mahajan lives and works in Pune, India.

DEBASREE DAS

Debasree Das, born in Guwahati, India, in 1979, holds a Bachelor's degree in Printmaking from the Government College of Art & Crafts, Guwahati (2005), and a Master's in Printmaking from the Faculty of Fine Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (2007).

Working across a diverse range of mediums, Debasree engages with drawing, painting, hand embroidery, and appliqué on silk, canvas, paper, and more. Her mixed media paintings serve as cathartic expressions, allowing her to release sorrow and pain. The process of combining hand embroidery with painting helps her realize and empower her creative vision, imbuing each piece with personal depth.

Debasree has participated in several prominent group exhibitions, including the “Art Tint” group exhibition in Baroda (2024), Alumnus Exhibition at Space Studio, Baroda (2023), "59th National Exhibition of Art" at Lalit Kala Academy, Delhi (2018), "Baroda March Group Show" at CSMVS (2017), and "Behold the Nature" at Gallery Dhi Art Space, Hyderabad (2016). Her work has been recognized with numerous awards and fellowships, such as the Junior Fellowship from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India (2017-2018), the Camlin Europe Art Tour Award (2010), and the Asia Pacific Artists Fellowship at the National Art Studio, Changdong, South Korea (2013).

Debasree Das lives and works in Baroda, India.

HARISHA CHENNANGOD

Born in 1984, Kasaragod, India, Harisha Chennangod did his graduation in Painting from CAVA College, Mysore, and moved to Baroda to pursue a Masters in Museum Studies from the Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU Baroda. In his unique visual language of criss-crossing lines, gaps, and vibrant primary colours, he delves into the netted fabric of cityscapes, childhood memories, and woven handloom patterns. Such an exploration evokes rustic nostalgia draped in vivid hues as well.

Chennangod’s minimal abstract paintings have been a part of many shows across India and his works have found homes in Paris and London. Some of his recent exhibitions include, ‘Home an Irrevocable Condition’, a group exhibition at Pepper House by Kochi Biennale Foundation and Baroda Annuelle 2021 group exhibition at Gallery White Baroda, among several others. In 2016 & 2017 he had two artist exhibitions titled ‘Indian Encounters’ at Lapp Centre, Stuttgart, Germany. He has also been a part of many prestigious residencies in the

past like the Post Graduate Residency at Vagamon organised by Kochi – Muziris Biennale, Visual Art Collective Art Residency in Bangalore and “Niracharthu” Artist Camp at Enkakad, Thrissur, Kerala.

Harsha Chennangod lives and works in Vadodara, India.

M. PRAVAT

M. Pravat was born in 1972 in Kolkata, India. He completed his Bachelor’s degree in painting in 2002 and his Master’s in 2004, both granted by the Faculty of Fine Arts at M.S. University, Baroda. M. Pravat’s art practice examines architectural forms and materials through a fractured lens, using photography, paintings and installations. He believes that our lives are unquestionably shaped by the built environments we inhabit. Along with images and materials, architecture plays a pivotal role in the formation of our sensibilities, and in shaping our experiences and understanding of space and form. His practice is deeply embedded in the manifestations and imaginations of architectural spaces, where he attempts to shed the representational familiarity associated with our built environments, and in doing so, finds himself appropriating, redistributing, and reconfiguring the relationship between images and materials.

Over the years, his works have been presented in solo and group exhibitions, biennales and art fairs in Colombo, Delhi, Dubai, Mumbai, New York, Seoul and Zurich. His recent solo-exhibitions include “Terraform” presented by VHC at STIR, New Delhi (2025); “From Debris, We Rise” presented by VHC at Bungalow Eight (2024); “Liquid States” at 1x1 Gallery, Dubai (2017); “From Today, I Have No Future” at Aicon Gallery, New York (2017); and “Blue Print” at Nature Morte, Delhi (2011). He is a member of the Layout collective along with artists Navid Tschopp, Susanta Mondal, and architect S. Boka. Their projects have been exhibited in the Kochi- Muziris Biennale, 2012, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, 2013, INSERT, 2014, the Colombo Biennale, 2014, and in non- institutional sites in Delhi and Zurich. He was a recipient of the Pro Helvetia artist residency in Switzerland.

M. Pravat lives and works in New Delhi, India.

MARYAM FIRUZI

Maryam Firuzi was born in 1986 in Shiraz, Iran and works in photography and cinema. She is a graduate in Bachelors of Art from the Art University of Tehran in Cinema, and Master of Arts in Film Studies. Born during a turbulent period in contemporary Iran, Firuzi views art as her primary means of self-expression, enabling her to explore and articulate her most profound emotions. Her work often addresses cultural crises, gender issues, and identity, all through a self- reflective lens. She perceives Iran as a crossroads between Western civilization and Eastern heritage, a position that has historically sparked complex dialogues on gender, identity, and culture. For Firuzi, art serves as a critical entry point into these multifaceted discussions.

Firuzi has twice been awarded the Peace Medal of the Global Peace Photo Award (2018 & 2022). Her works have been featured in numerous photo festivals and exhibitions, including the La Gacilly Photo Festival in France and Austria, the 9th Daegu Photo Biennial in South Korea, the "Open Your Eyes" Photo Festival in Zurich, the Art & Folk Craft Museum in the United States. She was also the laureate of the 6th edition of the IWPA Award in 2022.

Maryam Firuzi lives and works in Tehran, Iran.

MONALI MEHER

Monali Meher, born in 1969 in Pune, India, is a multidisciplinary artist who studied at the Sir J. J. School of Art, Mumbai. Her career has spanned several decades, during which she has performed and exhibited at prominent international venues such as Tate Modern, Sinop Biennale in Turkey, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Art Dubai, MAXXI Museum Rome, Guangzhou Live in China, and the Prague Biennale. Her work has been featured in renowned institutions including the Cobra Museum in Amstelveen, Museum Arnhem, and Stedelijk Kunstakademie.

Notable highlights in Meher's career include receiving the prestigious 'Golden Chimera Award' at the ICASTICA Biennial in Arezzo, Italy, in 2013, and her participation in major events such as the 4th Thessaloniki Biennale, the Dakar Biennale, and the Kathmandu Triennale. In 2021, her performance at Arctic Action VI in Spitsbergen and her inclusion in the 'Upcycling' Sinop Biennale 8 exemplify her ongoing engagement with global audiences.

Meher's practice explores themes of identity, time, memory, and transformation, often through performance and site-specific installations. One of her most significant public installations, "The Bridge Is Open" (2011), under the Willem's Bridge in Amsterdam, will remain on view until 2025. Throughout her career, she has been the recipient of several accolades, including LIVE Funds from BKVB Amsterdam in 2009 and the prestigious NN Art Award at Art Rotterdam in 2023. Her works have been supported by institutions such as AFK and Fonds BKVB and have been enriched by numerous residencies, including the UNESCO-Aschberg Residency in Vienna, the Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam, the Casa Masaccio residency in Italy, and KHOJ in New Delhi.

Monali Meher lives and works in Ghent, Belgium.

REZA DERASHANI

Reza Derakshani was born in 1952 in Sangsar, Iran. He pursued his education at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Tehran, under the guidance of prominent figures like Hannibal Alkhas, Marcos Grigorian, and Mohsen Vaziri Moghaddam. Later, he pursued further education at the Pasadena Art School in California. After teaching at the University of Tehran for several years, Derakshani embarked on a period of artistic exploration in the U.S. and Europe, where his work evolved to integrate Iranian artistic heritage with the influences of Neo-Expressionism and Western abstract movements. His work, often described as a modern extension of Persian miniature painting (Negargari), melds intricate symbolism with dynamic, large-scale

compositions that are celebrated for their vibrant colour and radiant surfaces, incorporating materials such as silver and gold leaf.

Derakshani's artistic journey began early, with his first solo exhibitions in the early 1970s at the Ghandriz and Seyhoun Galleries in Tehran, gaining him swift recognition. Throughout the 2000s, Derakshani continued to exhibit widely, with notable solo exhibitions such as “Beyond the Darkness” at Khak Art Gallery in Tehran, and “Migration” at Leila Heller Gallery, New York. His work has also been featured in the 6th Tehran Contemporary Painting Biennial, held at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

Reza Derakshani lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey.

SAMIM ALAM BEG

Md Samim Alam Beg, born in 1998 in Murshidabad, West Bengal, India. He pursued his academic studies at Rabindra Bharat University in Kolkata, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2020 and a Master of Fine Arts in 2022, both in Sculpture. Samim's artistic practice is characterized by a profound exploration of the interplay between cultural and natural landscapes. Driven by an insatiable curiosity, he experiments with objects and forms derived from nature, aiming to establish a thoughtful dialogue between architectural practices and visual art. Photography also plays an integral role in his practice, adding another layer to his exploration of nature's beauty and complexity.

In 2023, Samim's work was featured in the Space 118 Fundraiser Show in Mumbai. He was also awarded the MFA Gold Medal, the Nirod Baran Memorial Prize, and the Bhunath Mukherjee Memorial Prize by Rabindra Bharat University. In 2022, he received the Students Annual Exhibition Gold Medal and the Salma Naqvi Award from Art Family. In 2021, he participated in exhibitions like Abir First Take in Ahmedabad and the Kochi Students' Biennale and received the Kala Sakshi Memorial Trust Art Scholarship.

Samim Alam Beg lives and works in Kochi, Kerala.

ZHANG JI

Zhang Ji was born in 1978 in Shandong, China. He graduated with a Master's in Mural Painting from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2008. Through his works, he attempts to cultivate an engaging dialogue between painting and religious architecture.

Created using a syringe to patiently apply as many as 120 tubes onto the canvas (at 170 millilitres per tube), Zhang's works often resemble bas-relief sculptures, modulating between composition and decomposition, sturdiness and ephemerality. Referencing motifs from religious architecture—specifically mosques, synagogues and cathedrals in Europe and the Middle East—he creates intricate patterns that are replicated across the canvas. Zhang intends his works to serve as an extended meditation to 21st-century viewers of how the visual

vocabulary of religion and religious architecture still speaks to the vast and fertile recesses of our collective imagination.

Zhang Ji lives and works in Beijing, China.

Artist Aparajita Jain Mahajan, Debasree Das, Harisha Chennangod, Samim Alam Beg, Maryam Firuzi and M. Pravat will be present during the India Art Fair.

For interview requests and additional information please contact-

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Interviews can be arranged with the artists and the gallery director, Vida Heydari.

Press Kit:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-VL4Fb2zStL_9rRiHCKqfil7sTCUTDnM?usp=sharing

ABOUT VHC | VIDA HEYDARI CONTEMPORARY

VHC | Vida Heydari Contemporary is an international art gallery in Pune specialising in contemporary art and representing established and emerging artists with diverse backgrounds, across a variety of mediums and genres.

Founded in 2020 with an emphasis on authenticity, quality and innovation, VHC aims to contribute to the cultural fabric of the city. The gallery is committed to fostering the careers of its artists and sharing their work with a global audience, providing a platform for under-represented artists, presenting pioneering museum-quality exhibitions, positive collaborations, price transparency and offering a very hands-on and tailored high-quality experience.

In less than four years from its inception, VHC has mounted significant exhibitions featuring local and international artists. It has also participated in some of the most prestigious art fairs, such as Art Basel Hong Kong, India Art Fair and India Design ID.

In addition to the gallery program, VHC hosts talks, performances, workshops and educational programs to create engaging and enriching artistic experiences that capture the essence of life.

VHC - Marvel Alaine, Lane 8, Koregaon Park, Pune, India.

Web: <https://www.vhc.art/>

IG: <https://www.instagram.com/vhc.art/>

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ABOUT INDIA ART FAIR

India Art Fair is the leading platform to discover modern and contemporary art from South Asia, offering a unique access point to the region's thriving cultural scene.

Taking place annually in India's capital, New Delhi, the fair celebrates modern-day South Asia, combining cutting-edge contemporary visual art with modern masters and vernacular artistic traditions. Positioning art and the artist's voice at its core, the fair's programme draws together galleries and institutions, private foundations and arts charities, artists' collectives and national museums, cultural events and festivals, enabling local and international audience to engage in innovative ways with the cultural history and development of the region.

The fair is committed to supporting arts education and professional development opportunities and runs a year-round programme of events, including education initiatives, artist commissions and pop-up programmes, aiming to increase audiences for the arts within India.

Web: <https://indiaartfair.in/>

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