

It's all about the money, honey: More hits than misses, hardly any new 'discoveries' worth mentioning

By [Francis H D'sa](#)

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It's all about the money, honey: More hits than misses, hardly any new 'discoveries' worth mentioning

The bottom line is, money-wise, the art scene here is booming even in the time of economic slowdown. March had an auction by Saffronart and with V S Gaitonde toplisting, you could smell the moolah a mile away! You got the money, you got Gaitonde, otherwise, your bad!

'Living and Inspired Traditions' was another exhibition on miniatures that grabbed eyeballs. CEO Dinesh Vazirani said, "The collection features works from various schools of Rajput and Mughul miniature paintings and portrays some iconic themes and subjects."

'Touch beyond the surface' was an initiative from Rukshan Arts and noteworthy works were those of Kiyomi Talaulikar.



Jesal Thacker's V S Gaitonde book launch 'Sonata of Solitude' preceded his retrospective at the CSMVS, Mumbai and really had all art connoisseurs, art lovers, collectors, enthusiasts, applauding India's most sought after and expensive artist. Like the celebrated artist once said, "In silence, there is conversation," the conversation among the art fraternity being "How much?"

Auction of the enfant terrible of the art world, F N Souza's works was held in New Delhi and for once, you could hear the clap of the hammer thundering "order order" at the clamouring for his paintings! He once said, "If there is no path, then I will create one." And create, he did! The auction was a sell-out, naturally.

Benitha Percival's exhibition 'Aggregate' was different and daring, where she used burmah teak, resin, fibres, spices, seeds, figwood, powder of coal to create large book shelves, reminiscent of a time that has elapsed. Her Utopia, wonder if it was yours?



Space 118 and Sakshi Gallery celebrated 10 years of togetherness, founded by Saloni Doshi who said, "Making Space is for artists to reinterpret their studios in their own ways, where its usage is personal and intimate."

There was 'Colours of Life', an exhibition organised by the CPAA, the proceeds of the sale would go for the treatment of cancer patients. After 50 years of dedication to this cause the CPAA must be doing something right, specially judging from the jam-packed art frat at the opening! Way to go, CPAA.

Unfortunately Asif Shaikh's exhibition at the quaint Pradarshak Gallery in the suburbs was nothing to write home about when you compare with the current trend in the market. The gallery has held better exhibitions and here young artists could grab a foothold, but they have to up the scale.

The Saffronart Jewellery auction was bedazzling. 'Vintage Embellishments' really lived up to its hype. Craftsmanship of every piece was minutely detailed, pristine quality, even in the smaller pieces. Jamaat Art Gallery hosted 'Divinity and Nature' an exhibition of layered photographs by Gita Kumar. Maybe use of software enhanced the images!



A new initiative by Chemould Art Gallery was '5 artists/5 Projects' where 'group' was the new solo. Five artists showed their 'instruments' while producing their artwork. P R Sateesh's 'Frenetic' was a smash hit, where his 'action painting' might have given the legendary painter Jackson Pollock a complex. Super work! Raj Shahani's white sculptures 'Caesura/Continuum' was brilliantly executed in the ballet genre.

Arzan Khambatta curated 'Champions of Change' at the Tao gallery, where the proceeds of the sale went to the Jai Vakil Foundation and Research centre, that helped for the inclusion of one child at a time. 'Walking Through Soul City', a Sudhir Patwardhan retrospective curated by Nancy Adajania at the NGMA was another sellout where one saw works from the 1970s till date.

Mortimer Chatterjee hosted the works of a 20 century painter after a year's research...Rustom Siodia's fairytale images were like a story board. This writer loved his work; don't know about the 21st century art enthusiasts.

Reena Saini Kallat's 'Blind Spots' exposed the disintegration of borders in democracies, where truth is hidden and borders are a political construct.



If there was one singular grouse about Subhash Awachat's 'Sacred Garden' that concluded recently, was that there seemed to be visually a general sameness in the works. That apart, texture, colour, composition, detailing, was excellent. One could even 'smell' the aroma of the garden, even if the wine was missing — much to the dismay of quite a few of those who attended. If it's 'Sacred' it's apparently 'sacred', so, no wine!

The Pundoles 'Fine Art Sale' and auction previewed some heavyweights like Husain, F N Souza, Ram Kumar, and others. Piece de resistance was '3Ms' by M F Husain, a triptych, where the artist painted Madonna, Mother Teresa, and Madhuri Dixit! Mind boggling! 'Boundless India', Sotheby's India auction, went off with a slight hiccup. Vasudev Santu Gaitonde's work was suddenly withdrawn mid auction because expected price was not met much to the dismay of the owner of the work. For some, the world is not enough!

That's it then...

Shaken, mildly stirred, but sadly art seemed to be more of an investment, a business, rather than pure love of art! Like an auctioneer said, “At the end of the day, it’s all about the money.”

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