

Rubric



gallery-g

ISSUE 10 MARCH 2016

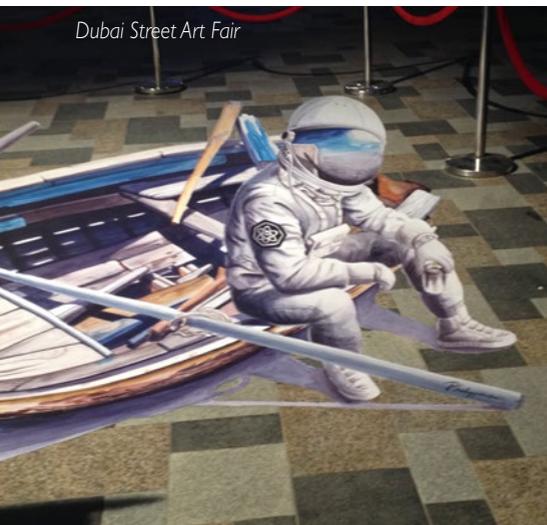
WELCOME TO OUR 10TH ISSUE



Art is in, it's out, and about; its everywhere. In January, for instance, 200 artists rallied around to the cause of Sankey Lake, here in Bangalore; it was a 3D effect astronaut popping up off the Dubai Marina (below left) and it was blooming on a pavilion wall at the India Art Fair to usher winter out in Delhi (below right)



Dubai Street Art Fair



Friendly Fire
Rina Banerjee
India Art Fair 2016

BEYOND THE CANVAS

THE GALLERY AS THINKING SPACE

An art gallery today is a lot more than a viewing space. Its activities have expanded to include doing things that might at first glance seem to have little or nothing to do with art, in a strictly literal sense.

In the most basic terms, when a picture is painted and hung on a gallery wall, its role changes, becoming more than just something the painter's created. It becomes a catalyst and its connection with the viewer or the



collector is another step in the journey. What happens next isn't always directly consequential, but it is part of the chain that began when the artist was motivated to get down to work.

INTERACTION

Historically the creation and display of art would trigger other responses, some direct, others tangential, many consequential. We've always seen our own gallery as interactive: our previews usually included some other form of cultural engagement, different but related. Beyond the usual gallery routine, we work regularly with artists and investors, students and young people looking to make a career in the art industry.

STUDIO X, MUMBAI is an initiative by Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture Planning and Preservation (GSAPP), that seeks to create a global network of advanced research labs to explore the future of cities. This was a conversation with GSAPP alumni working in diverse fields of experimental research in urban issues such as urban transport and mobility and explorations in public space and public art.

The introduction was delivered by Dr. Jyoti Hosagrahar, Adjunct Associate Professor GSAPP (below)



Relevance and legitimacy are things that concern everybody and how **gallery g's** role grows is by freshening the perspectives and varying what we do.

In the past few months, we've staged various events here, with the likes of Thomson Reuters and Studio X, of the Columbia University School of Architecture. The Gallery also became a location for the taping of a BBC



(From left) Matias Echanove founder, urbz.net, Rajeev Thakkar, architect & curator Studio X Mumbai, Gitanjali Maini, Phyllis Fang Savage, event organizer, Columbia University alumni, Sonal Shah Indian Institute for Human Settlements

Talking Business segment.

And since there's always time for a bit of fun especially at year-end we had the Tadpole Repertory from Delhi one evening performing a series of satirical comic skits. The thing we want to share with the community is that this is an alternative space: for meeting for sharing views

and building bridges as part of the human experience. Not that we want to over-think that it (that would be the typical arty thing to do): as Nicholas Bellet of the Thomson Reuters Foundation said, 'Traditional venues are often bland and soulless. A gallery brings an artistic dimension and character to the event. And if you find the talk boring, you can always look at the walls!'

TALKING SHOP

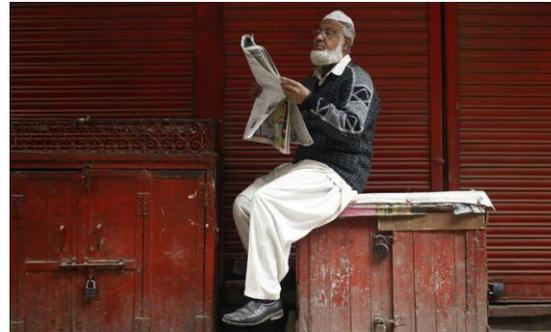
Talking Business is one of the BBC World News flagship programmes, and for the first time, it was taped in India and here at **gallery g** on 6th July last year and aired four days later. The programme took a look at the entrepreneurial and startup climate.

Gratifyingly, they decided on **gallery g** as the location and we were selected as the most successful art entrepreneurial start-up. You can see the programme at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFpx3g0mpqg>.



THE REUTER STUFF

Thomson Reuters had a workshop here, too, which had editorial integrity as its theme. India is the world's largest newspaper market and a rich, diverse media industry in English and local languages. We've also got countless satellite stations, radios and a fast-growing online presence. As this market is expanding, competition and commercial pressures increase, putting editorial integrity at risk.



Apart from Monique Villa, the Reuters Foundation CEO, the speakers represented both online and legacy media and for us at least, it certainly was a window into another world, forcing us to think of how we need, as people, government and country, can best engage with the media.



AND ALSO, LAUGHING

The Tadpole Repertory presented its take on life, relationships and other mishaps in a rapid-fire series of skits, authored by its team and played for maximum belly laughs.





VARMA VIZHA

29th Jan - 4th Feb 2016. The Coimbatore Vizha is the city's annual arts and culture festival, its eighth edition just over. The Vizha (or ceremony) celebrates the city's spirit, supported by corporates and individuals



alike, to foster 'Coimbatoreness' in ways that would draw in everyone who lives there, passes through or visits. Exhibitions and assorted cultural events are held all over town, drawing throngs of all ages including several school excursions.

CIVIC CULTURE

An installation *Coimbatore Through the Ages* at Lakshmi Mills showcased the city's vibrant history, going back over 2,500 years. There was a jewelry exhibition held by Kirtilals, food walks at the Mercantile Bank bungalow, dance, short films and other cultural events at the Brookfield mall.

Culture icon: Film star Karthi

(Left) Ganesh Shivaswamy, TRRVHF (Above) **Autograph Raja:** Narain Karthikeyan at Vizha

Our associate concern, The Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation (TRRVHF), held an exhibition *Original Early to Mid-Twentieth Century Tamil Art* and a sale of Varma's lithographs and those of his contemporaries C. Kondiah Raju, M. Ramalingam, S. Murugakani and MC Jagannath at Coimbatore's Jenney Club.

RARITIES

The exhibition included 60 unframed and 30 framed works and ran for the Vizha's duration. In attendance were local boy, Formula One's Narain Karthikeyan, who inaugurated it, and hundreds of art-lovers getting what was certainly a rare chance to see so many masterworks in one place.

The show was an exploration in five segments of the reciprocal influences between Raja Ravi Varma and Tamil art. The first three segments dealt with his influence on the later Tamil artists. Lithographs were displayed in each segment, according to image, whether of Lakshmi, Saraswati or Rajarajeswari. Apart from Varma's





Jenney Club niche: *The Varma venue*

lithographs, there were rare, original paintings by the Tamil painters mentioned earlier.

A fourth segment displayed lithos from Ravi Varma Press which were influenced by the Tamil style of painting, more particularly the Tanjore. The fifth segment showed ten equally uncommon original paintings of Murugan, Tamil *Kadavul*, or God.

IN PONDICHERRY

After Coimbatore, the show travelled to Pondicherry in March where it was held at the Aurodhan Art Gallery. It was inaugurated by Lt. Gen. A.K. Singh, Governor of Pondicherry. Bertrand de Hartingh, French Cultural Counsellor in India and Phillipe Janvier-Kamiyama, Consul General for Pondicherry came to the opening. As accompaniments, there were music, and a Mohini Attam performance by dancer-actor Gopika Varma.

At both openings, TRVHF Honorary Secretary Ganesh Shivaswamy, who is also a lawyer and an art collector, introduced the show concept, dwelling on Varma's relevance then and now. He placed this against the context of heritage preservation, and how works like these should be preserved in our country.

ABOVE GENRES

This has to do with how Varma and his peers transcended notions of *shudh* art and the more populist variety, in a way unique to their time, one that possibly only resonated much, much later when people like Andy Warhol inverted the trajectory, he by putting paintings of soup cans in chichi surroundings.

Much of their imagery has thus been familiar to older generations from calendars, biscuit and cosmetic tins and the like but it's the first time that all these works have ever been shown together, in this kind of curatorial event that TRRVF will focus on.



The Pondicherry invitation




AURODHAN PONDICHERRY
Heritage Hotels | Art Gallery | Cultural Events

Presents



An Exhibition on the Reciprocal Influences of RAJA RAVI VARMA on Tamil Art

On 8th of March 2016 at 7pm
at Aurodhan Art Galleries 33 Rue Francois Martin, Pondicherry

Inauguration by **Mr. Bertrand de Hartingh**, Conseiller Culturel de l'Ambassade de France & **Mr. Philippe Janvier-kamiyama** Consul General of France in Pondicherry
a presentation by **Ganesh Shivaswamy** (hon secretary rrvhf)

followed by a Cultural evening at 8.15pm
at Krtashraya Aurodhan Gardens, 237, Papamal Koli Street, Vaithikuppam

Carnatic Music by **Tamil Youth** Mohiniyattam by **Gopika Varma**
 Bharatanatyam by **Dr. Rajashree Warier** Surprises...

For Enquiries: **Lalit Verma** Ph: 0413 222795/222449 www.aurodhan.com Email: manager@aurodhan.com
Mr. Lalit Verma, President, Aurodhan, Pondicherry invites you to a dinner after the programme.

ARCHIVING TRUE PICTURES, PAST AND PRESENT

This year we're archiving at **gallery g** and The Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation. We've decided to stockpile our memories which would help us relive the events and memories over the years. This would include everyone and everything who've come the gallery's and the Foundation's (much shorter) way.

KEY

Archiving is crucial in any organisation of course, a key business resource. It can mean an accumulation of historical records or the place in which they are located. The former includes documents from primary sources, that've accumulated over the course of a company's or individual's lifetime. They're kept for their cultural, historical and evidentiary value, statutory and regulatory requirements apart.

Data loss is prevented if it's stored in a relevant, chronological order as recorded and as it happens. The advantages are that you've greater control over the informational process, and security of long-term data preservation and ease of retrieval: as a company grows or becomes more 'eventful', it gets easier to record and classify all data and continually enables a clear picture of how one's business is doing.

MEANINGFUL

For us at **gallery g** and the Foundation, there's all that

Richard Jackson – 5050 stacked paintings – wood and acrylic on canvas – 1980-2014

and of course a whole lot more. Archiving refers to the number of artworks we store for documentary, display and other commercial reasons.

What's different between them is that at **gallery g** there's a wealth of material – more than 13 years of it – and at TRRVHF, while we just started the Foundation last year, the archiving will go back to when Raja Ravi Varma started painting in the 1870s, a good 140 years ago. That's part of what the Foundation will do.

Their scopes differ, but what's important about archiving is when you so wholeheartedly believe in what it's for: It's so meaningful to be able to arrange things: artworks, records, working notes, letters, articles, so they can be found when we or anybody else wants them. Naturally, it makes it easier to share them, too. There also could be a surprise element if in our spring-cleaning we discover some unexpected treasure. That makes it all even more worthwhile.

PICTURE QUALITY

It's also one of the most picturesque – in the truest sense of the word – reminders of the past. Not for nothing, the oft-repeated assertion: art is nothing if not its history.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- PG 1: <http://www.epa.eu/thumb.php/52511407.jpg>
- PG 2: <http://blog.thomsonreuters.com>
- PG 4, 5: <http://www.coimbatorevizha.com>
<https://www.google.co.in/search?q=coimbatore+vizha>
<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-metroplus/art-matters/article8189808.ece>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/narain-karthikeyan-charms-young-hearts/article8181117.ece>
- PG 6: <http://www.securedatamgt.com/blog/what-is-archiving/>
- PG 7: <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online/museums/7>
<https://fireplacechats.wordpress.com/2015/06/05/peggy-guggenheim-dossier>
- PG 8: <http://www.vogue.in/content/3-reasons-why-jehangir-vazifdar-artist-and-visionary-should-be-on-your-coffee-table/>





PORTRAIT OF A LADY

In the flamboyantly headlong world of 20th-century art, Peggy Guggenheim was unique, an art collector and socialite, and an anomaly for her time.

HEIRESS

Marguerite 'Peggy' Guggenheim was born in 1898 into a wealthy New York family (her father perished on the Titanic). At 21 she inherited US \$2.5 million. She had two failed marriages and her daughter committed suicide, but with her passion for great art, she was pivotal in advancing a diversity of modern Western art forms.

Guggenheim collected by instinct, not swayed by popular or critical opinion or, indeed, resale value. She discovered Jackson Pollock, the foremost American Abstract Expressionist, when he was just a carpenter in her uncle Solomon Guggenheim's legendary Manhattan museum, and gave him his first exhibition in 1950 at the Museo Correr in Venice.

BOHEMIAN RAP

Her initial interest in art was sparked

when she worked in an avant-garde New York bookstore, where she became enamoured of the bohemian artistic community. From 1921, Guggenheim lived in Paris where artists Constantin Brancusi and Marcel Duchamp became lifelong friends, and the following year, she married Laurence Vail, a sculptor. Being privy to the era's artistic ferment honed her judgement and confidence in being to eventually call the shots as an art impresario.

In 1938, Guggenheim opened a gallery for modern art in London; after the outbreak of World War II, she started to buy abstract and surreal art. She became known for her group exhibitions of the greats who were then rising stars: Henry Moore, Picasso, Alexander Calder and Max Ernst, who was also her second husband.

She went on to promote American Abstract Expressionists like Pollock and Mark Rothko. In 1947, Guggenheim returned to Europe and in 1948 her by-then impressive modern art collection was exhibited at the Venice Biennale. She bought the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, on Venice's Grand Canal, that now houses her entire collection. Opening her house each summer to the public from 1951, Guggenheim continued to show her art in Europe and New York until her death in 1979. The Peggy Guggenheim Collection is considered one of the most important museums in Italy for its collection of European and American art from the first half of the twentieth century.



If you can, watch the 2000 movie *Pollock* where she's portrayed by the actress Amy Madigan, and the documentary *Peggy Guggenheim: Art Addict* that shows how a fierce love for art and an inheritance created one of the greatest 20th century collections.

The Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, on Venice's Grand Canal, home to Peggy Guggenheim's collection. (Above) An interior view.





So we put in items that would intrigue you enough to go ahead, Google and read up on your own. There's such a sea of information out there that it's sometimes useful to have someone pointing things your way. For instance, you'll find it really interesting to read up on Peggy Guggenheim. We thought of her as our Women's Day salute: she lived as if Women's Day was every day which is exactly how it should be.

VAZIFDAR – ARTIST AND ARCHITECT

Another reading suggestion: buzzing right now is a coffee table book Jehangir Vazifdar – Artist & Visionary by Anahita Contractor. Vazifdar was one of India's most prolific modern artists, though he never sold a single painting — he chose not to. He was also the architect who designed some of Mumbai's most famous buildings: Breach Candy Apartments, to name but one. His paintings hang next to ones by MF Husain, FN Souza, Krishen Khanna, in the New York University's Gallery. Indira Gandhi had one of his paintings and so did Pope Paul VI. Should be fascinating reading.

Gitanjali Maini
gitanjalimaini@gmail.com

ATTENTION

Rubric's ten issues old and, so, a sense of accomplishment. We started with the idea of a little gallery newsletter and were thrilled to see how well it's done. And what's great is that so many of you agree as you've told us after each issue. And some of you are good enough to not just write in, but also write for us, which adds such a dimension. Who's also made it all happen, my dream team: Rajesh Deedwania, Sonny Abraham and Aakash Menon.

We also wanted to share what's going on elsewhere.

DURBAR /DUBAI

ART FAIRS: DELHI

The Delhi Art Fair is a streamlined juggernaut with a funky Darbari vibe, its pedigree all the slicker, and consequently more influential, with each passing edition. Marc Standing, Hong Kong-based artist and collector, 'loved the use of threads, texture and collage. I bought work that, whilst relating to traditional miniatures is at the same time really contemporary and fresh'.

COOL LIKE THAT

He also mentioned 'the strong artistic identity coming out of India'. That's something that we, and the stakeholders concerned have always known of course. The show is what's making the difference, putting the point across very effectively, with its impressive, complex and textured content, its organisation and how its packaged.

Adding dimension were the accompanying events like the heritage art exhibition by Delhi Art Gallery and a fairly irreverent panel discussion on graphic novels – an eye-opener for how extensive and unruly a genre it is.

And how user-friendly it was: the sprawling, well-laid-out

grounds, the wide aisles, the staff and the facilities (there were orderly queues: so we can be like that only). The weather, too, was a great help.

STREET CRED

We got a chance to contrast this with something completely different at the Dubai Street Art Fair on the city's Marina. The artworks were 3D, or anamorphic as it's known, and so might be more nifty, in a Disneyesque way, than creative cutting-edge. It's just one part of the parcel though that Dubai Art Fair is raising the profile of MENASA art and across the way, in Abu Dhabi, the Louvre will settle into its new second home next year. That will be epochal, if it shifts the global balance of power in art: we're waiting to see.



gallery-g

Maini Sadan, 38 Lavelle Rd,
7th Cross, Bangalore 560 001.
Ph: +91 80 2221 9275, 4095 7559
gitanjalimaini@gmail.com
www.gallerygbangalore.com
f galleryg t gallery_g_arts

A Print Brew publication
mainiprintbrew@gmail.com

