

Now, for the big picture!

ART India's first Art Summit has finally taken a concrete shape with the Ministry of Culture and even the famous auction house Sotheby endorsing it.

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So, it's going to be finally here - India's first Art Summit and Fair. To be held for three days, beginning August 22 at New Delhi's Pragati Maidan, it will have participation from both Indian and foreign art galleries. The Summit, being organised by Hanmer and Partners, will have three key components: art exhibition, forum and networking cocktail.

Billed as the largest exhibition of Indian art, it will be spread across 34 stalls and will have 34 galleries showcasing a varied range of Indian art like sculptures, photography, mixed media, video, prints, installations and drawings. There will be a special two-hour collector's preview on the first day of the fair. Besides, there will also be a day-long expert speaker session and panel discussion. Over 200 delegates will be present on the occasion. It will have themes like the state of Indian art today, growth and development of Indian art in the 21st Century, need for space for creative practice and showcasing of art, infrastructure, resources and funding, the relationships between art fairs, etc.

Various known art galleries from India and the U.K. are participating. Works of M.F. Husain, S.H. Raza, F.N. Souza, Anjolie Ela Menon, T. Vaidyanathan, Atul Dodiya, Baiju Prathan apart from lesser known artists would be on display. Says Neha Kirpal, Associate Summit Director, "We have just got the support of the Ministry of Culture apart from Sotheby's. Ambika Soni, Minister for Tourism and Culture, will inaugurate



UNITED WE GAIN Artist Anjolie Ela Menon, critic Keshav Malik (in green kurta), Religare's Mukesh Panika and Hanmer and Partner's Suneel Gautam gear up for the show.

the show while Sotheby's Deputy Director, Henry Howard, will help us do brand building and collaborate with the U.K. collectors and investors." The Summit will have quite a few impressive names as speakers, for instance, Hugo Weihe, International Director, Asian Art, Christie's, Rajiv Lochan from National Gallery of Modern Art, Geeta Kapur, Robert Storr, Dean, Yale University School of Art, Arun Vadehra, owner of Vadehra Art Gallery, Dinesh Wazirani, owner, Saffronart etc., will all be there at the show. Another highlight will be a "Meet the Artist" session wherein participants will get a chance to meet their favourite artist personally. Though the Summit has created a

great deal of interest among many art galleries and art lovers, some are still not convinced of it as a business model. Hence, galleries are participating either for reasons of solidarity or quite simply to give exposure to their artists. Smaller galleries are staying away partly due to the hefty fee of Rs.1.5 lakhs for a stall.

For solidarity

Says Sunaina Anand, owner Art Alive gallery, "This is the first organised art fair in India and we should welcome it. I am showing six contemporary artists and not hiking their prices. I am participating more to support this fair than selling my art works." Adds Vikram Bachhawal,

owner of the prestigious Emami Chisel Art and Aakriti Art Gallery, Kolkata, "I have taken two stalls; one for established artists like K.G. Subramaniam, Ganesh Pyne, Shekhar Roy, etc., and another for lesser known but talented artists like Amitabha Ray and others. I am participating to give exposure to my new artists to international visitors and not for selling my works. I have my own auction house where I will be able to get a few collectors. It will also widen my knowledge base about various artists." Aarti Sarin of Delhi's Ati Art Gallery is not participating. She reasons, "The fair is good for the gallery owners who want to be seen within the gallery fraternity. For participating

artists, it is a matter of being associated with a good gallery. The fair would be good for networking but not as a business model. I have attended many art fairs and realised that art buyers usually choose to remain anonymous as a big purchase attracts taxes. Even in auctions, buyers don't disclose their identities. As an art seller I wouldn't like to invite my clients there as I fear losing them over to other galleries. Personally too, I wouldn't like to show my works in a cluttered place where I am just one among many art sellers. I would prefer an exclusive viewing." Open to all otherwise, the entry for cocktail networking on August 23 is by invitation only.