

'Outside influences', 'security concerns' keep Husain out of India Art Summit

VANDANA KALRA

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 17

WHEN the India Art Summit opens in the Capital on August 22, a conspicuous absence in the three-day festival will be the canvases of MF Husain.

"It was a collective decision taken because of certain outside influences and due to collective security concerns. We respect the legendary artist and his work," says Neha Kirpal, associate summit director,

as she takes care of last minute preparations before an expected 6,000 visitors troop into hall number 8 and 9 of Pragati Maidan.

"We are disappointed on being denied the permission to include MF Husain. But we have to adhere to the decision and exhibit the works by the rest of the artists," says director Ashish Anand.

Anand himself will participate in the summit with two stalls showcasing works of ten

artists, including FN Souza, SH Raza, Sohan Qadri, Himmat Shah and Velu Viswanadhan.

"The fair is an important way to create art awareness and meet different people from the art fraternity," says Anand, "and we are looking forward to that interaction."

With a similar agenda, Ambica Beri of Gallery Sanskriti, Kolkata, will be flying to Delhi with canvases by Jaya Ganguly, Partha Shaw and Prasenjit

Sengupta, among others. "India needs such a forum, and the summit seems planned to be at par with international fairs," says she.

It is Kirpal's team which will be dressing up the venue for the grand occasion — giving the otherwise dull building a brighter appearance with purple canvases suspended at close intervals. While installations by Jitish Kallat and Kriti Arora will be placed near the entrance, inside the halls, false

Your Guide

- The three-day pass for the fair costs Rs 200
- Available at the venue will be a catalogue of participating galleries, artists and the summit schedule. This can be purchased for Rs 200
- Cars will be allowed to drive in till the gate of the hall

walls will help build stalls for 34 participating galleries.

With each gallery given an option on the choice of wall colour and theme, the hues on palette will range from red to black at the Nature Morte stall to an ambience akin to a tunnel created by Palette Art Gallery.

Formal seminars, meanwhile, have also been organised to discuss art-related issues and concerns, with topics varying from "Growth and Development of Indian Art" to "Art appreciation and Invest-

ment" and "Indian art for the global art market".

The panelists will include Rajeev Lochan, director, National Gallery of Modern Art, Robert Storr, dean, Yale School of Art, Pooja Sood, chairperson, Khoj Artists Association and Philip Hoffman, chief executive, Fine Art Fund. "The experts will help provide a holistic view," says Kirpal.

A nod of approval comes from Vikram Bachhawat, director of Kolkata-based

Emami Chisel Art: "There is a need within the community to understand the difficulties faced by the growing trade. Issues relating to fakes and interstate trading needs to be sorted out. This can only happen if trade is united and there are more summits in the country."

But for now, the curtains are still to go up on the first year of the India Art Summit — sans one of the best-known faces of Indian art.