



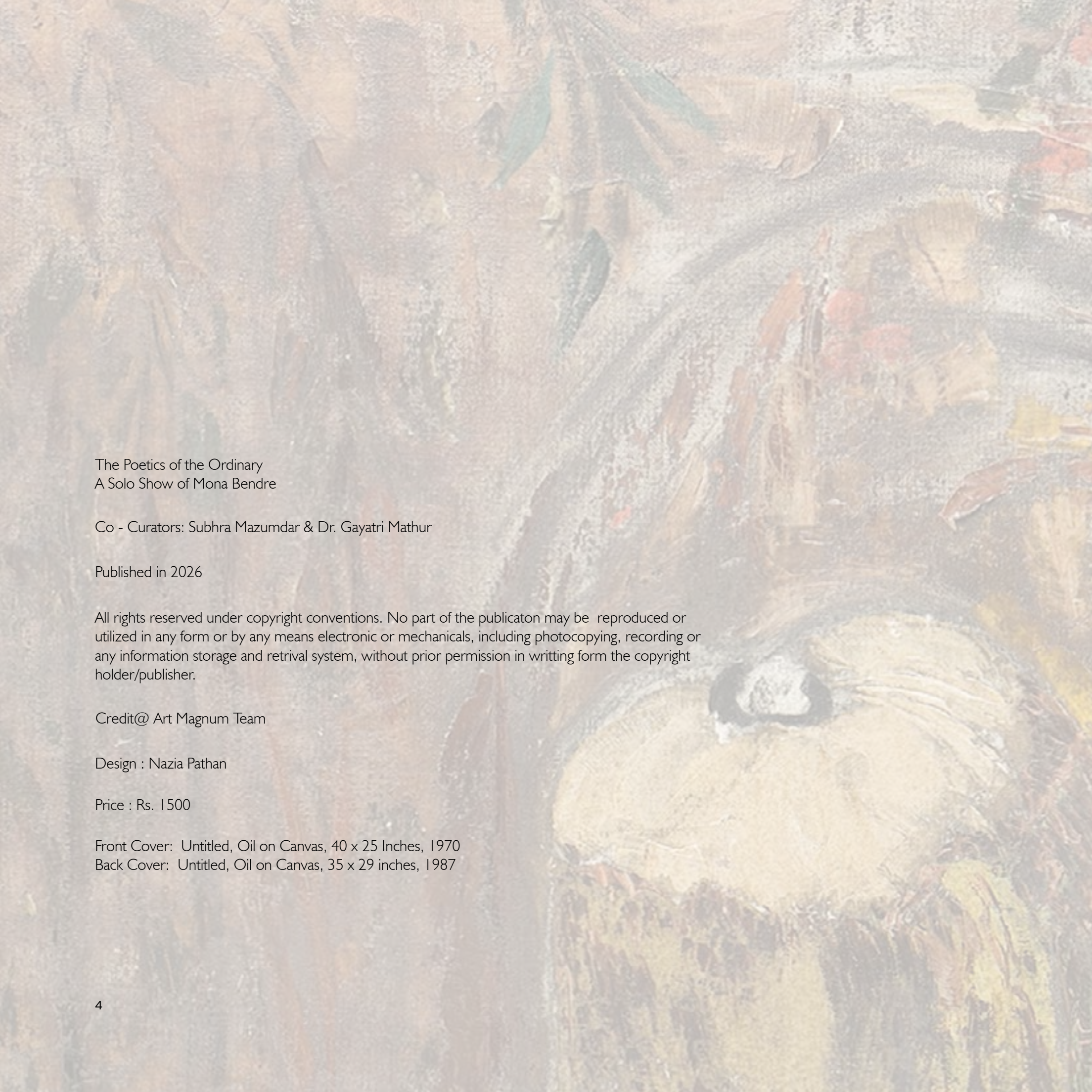
THE POETICS OF THE ORDINARY

A Solo Show of Mona Bendre

Co - Curators:

SUBHRA MAZUMDAR & DR. GAYATRI MATHUR





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Front Cover: Untitled, Oil on Canvas, 40 x 25 Inches, 1970

Back Cover: Untitled, Oil on Canvas, 35 x 29 inches, 1987



presents

THE POETICS OF THE ORDINARY

A Solo Show of Mona Bendre

Co - Curators:

SUBHRA MAZUMDAR & DR. GAYATRI MATHUR

at

Art Magnum

01st February - 14th March, 2026

60/2C, 3rd Floor, Indian Oil Complex, Yusuf Sarai, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi - 110016



Image courtesy Jyoti Bhatt and Asia Art Archive





MONA BENDRE
The Poetics of the Ordinary

In the fitness of things, an artist turns to Nature for inducting an aesthetic appeal in their works but when they use the medium of Nature as a conduit to express a personal symbolic language coded to engage with divinity, human emotion, transcendence, and the connection between the physical world and the inner self, there are few to match the treasury of art from the palette of late artist Mona Bendre. In this posthumous showing, *The Poetics of the Ordinary*, Mona Bendre invites us to pause—to look again at what we often overlook. Her work dwells not in spectacle, but in the quiet intensity of everyday life, where the familiar is rendered luminous through sustained attention, empathy, and painterly sensitivity, gelling into spaces, objects, and moments that shape lived experience, yet rarely demand notice.

Painstakingly emblematic of the late art maker's practice, the current showing of a selective output of Mona Bendre, gives the art fraternity a 'viewfinder' into a hitherto latent talent. According to reliable sources, the late artist and wife of master artist NS Bendre, had deliberately chosen to live in the backdrop, yet continuing a disciplined follow-up of art making, taking succour from a life of deep spirituality, and her training as a classical music practitioner.

Peer closely into Bendre's practice, as she approaches the quotidian not as something mundane, but as a site of profound meaning. In her works, the ordinary becomes a language—one that speaks of memory, time, intimacy, and presence...a corner of a room, a domestic object, a fleeting human posture, or an unassuming landscape, transformed into a visual meditation. These are not depictions meant to explain, but rather to evoke.

Naturally, the first reaction to this self-contained, non-demonstrative output, is their striking palette of earthy tones. This artistic choice creates a haziness through a well-grounded and studied application. This technique introduces an optical merger of colours to augment a sense of atmosphere. Hence, in conjunction with her deliberately muted palette of deep maroon-brown, is a tendency to draw succour from such mundane everyday things as flower arrangements made with 'pickings' of fallen blossoms from her garden, that fronts the late artist's bungalow-residence in Mumbai. Here is also an ethics embedded in Bendre's attention to the everyday. By foregrounding what is usually dismissed as insignificant, she asserts the value of small moments and quiet lives.

Then when one has had a fill of the artist's legit motif, the eye is drawn to her ability to balance restraint with emotional depth. Her compositions, verily understated, carry a quiet resonance. The surface of her paintings—stratified, textured, and thoughtfully constructed, mirror the layered nature of our everyday existence.

The marks she makes are deliberate but never aggressive; they suggest time passing, routines repeating, and lives unfolding in gentle rhythms. Such choices tantalize the mind and eye, to go nearer, and realize how this astute formatting defines her locus operandi of relatable accents to define the central form. This way of foregrounding what is usually dismissed as insignificant, resists the culture of speed and excess, offering instead an in depth, more contemplative mode of seeing. This 'slowness' is an active form of engagement that asks the viewer to linger, to feel, and to reflect.

Further on, as one begins to assimilate the profundity of the ordinary in this exhibition, the focus becomes charged with memory and subjectivity. The images feel inhabited by a human presence even when figures are non-existent. This sense of habitation transforms space into experience. The viewer becomes acutely aware of their own relationship to similar spaces and moments, prompting a personal dialogue with the work. In this way, the artist dissolves the boundary between the artwork and the viewer's lived reality.

Such a seasoned and well honed output has in its womb, the dexterous merits of impasto, seen in a work, circa 1968, where the depiction of Nature in the raw, dramatizes the countryside in a 'wild and weathered' look of the surroundings. Elsewhere, the windblown countryside carries through a 'dramatized' interaction of texture and light.

Another probe through the collective reveals the predominant presence of casual flower arrangements in humble vases and containers, running like a linking thread. Surprisingly, these stylized formats are not pictorial, but the key unlocking the late artist's persona, for in each composition one can fathom a fresh facet of emotional anchoring, towards her love of Mother Nature.

Before long, the flowers become the resource for a private dialogue with viewers as one notices how each item in the vase has been created using a differing technique, besides colour applications. This suggests that even in the composite format, each floral inclusion has its distinct identity and when weighed alongside individual experiences, they become conduits for conversations with oneself, bringing back memories, seasonal reminders, and the recall of times long forgotten. One is introduced to her 'Still Life' series. Though developed on comparatively smaller size canvases, they appear distinctly different in their colour pickings.

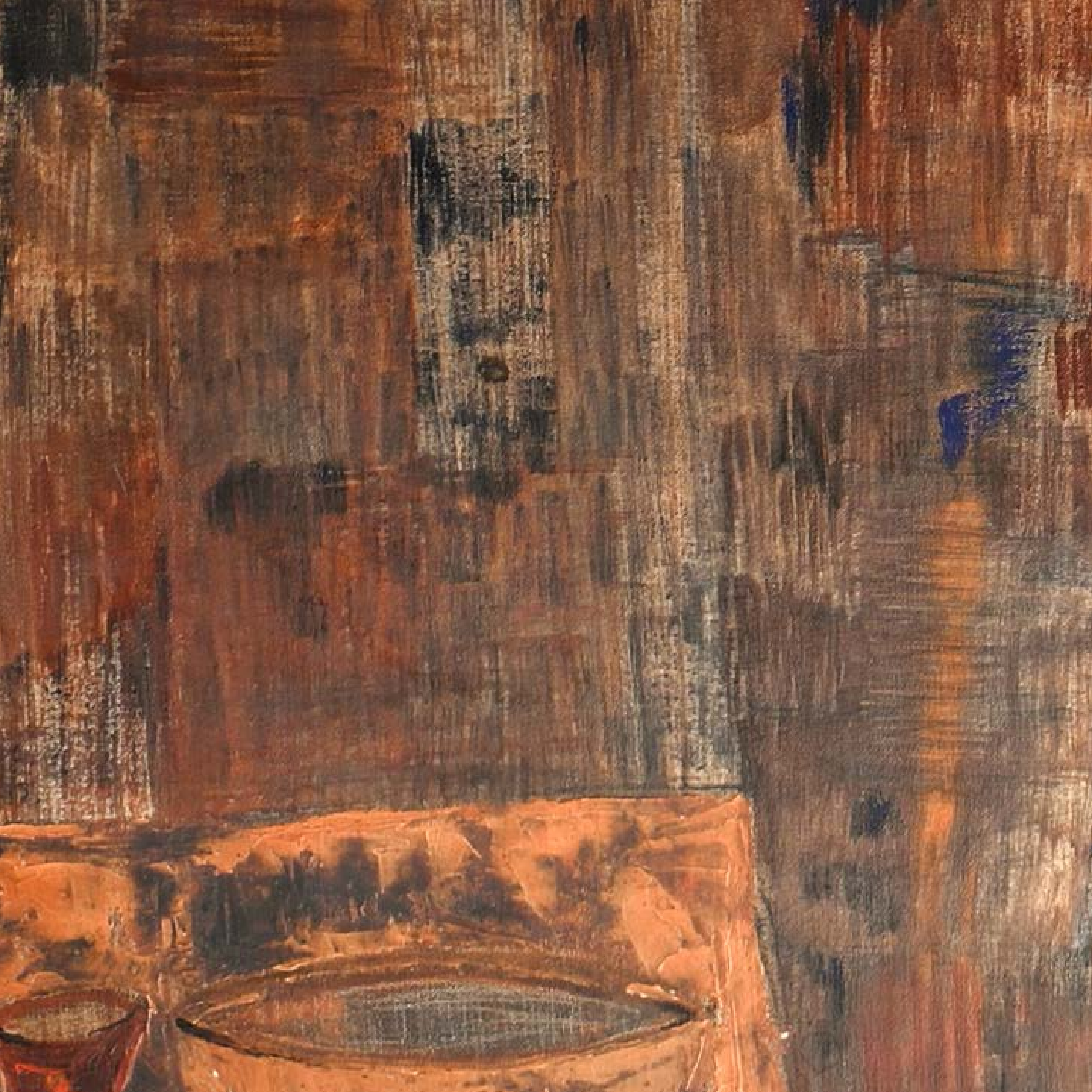
Instead of 'natural browns' these works are a compendium of fleshy red fruits, yellows, silvery metal and the like. Hence, the arrangements draw viewers by their eye-catching difference, from the opposite 'colours of the earth'. Their content too, being deliberately stylized and manmade, seem to be underscoring yet another way to dedicate a 'hymn' to life, nature, and the senses. Their overall joyful simplicity urges viewers to embrace the tactile experience exuded by the composition, unabashedly.

Altogether, this exhibition is an invitation: to slow down, to observe, and to rediscover the richness embedded in the textures of everyday life. The Poetics of the Ordinary ultimately proposes that meaning does not reside only in extraordinary events or monumental forms. It resides equally in repetition, familiarity, and presence. Mona Bendre's work reminds us that art can emerge from attentiveness—that by truly seeing the world as it is, one can uncover its quiet poetry... that the ordinary is never merely ordinary—it is where life, in its most authentic form, continually unfolds.

In the end, it is befitting to recall the role played by the artist's immediate family members namely, son, Padmanabh Bendre and Granddaughter-in-law, Sonia Bendre. Their singular belief, right from being drawn to the idea of such a showing, to reigniting the stories behind their workmanship, has been a labour of sustained dedication, across years. An exhibition of this nature is more than mere display, as it has opened the artist's personal output before an appreciative audience to mull over, long after they leave the premises.

Co - Curators
Subhra Mazumdar & Dr. Gayatri Mathur







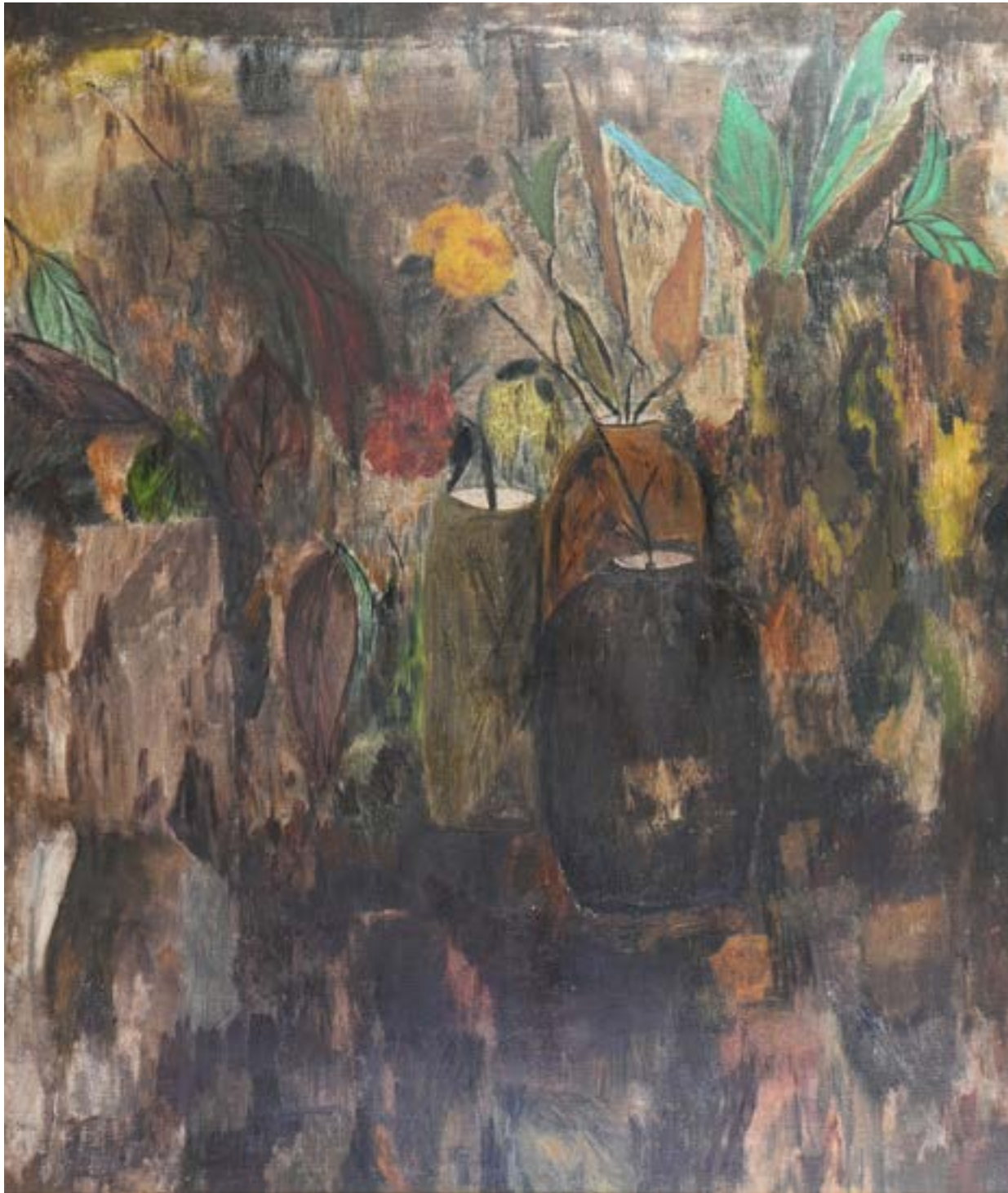
Untitled
Oil on Canvas
34 x 31 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
35 x 29 Inches
1987



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
36 x 31 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
37 x 31 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
36 x 30 Inches





Untitled
Oil on Canvas
40 x 25 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
39 x 24 Inches



Still Life
Oil on Canvas
24 x 30 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 Inches
1968





Untitled
Oil on Canvas
34 x 31 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
24 x 24 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
24 x 24 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
30 x 20 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
30 x 20 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 Inches





Untitled
Oil on Canvas
26 x 15 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
30 x 20 Inches
1968



A Potters Plant
Oil on Canvas
24 x 18 Inches
1969



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
30 x 22 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 Inches



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 Inches
1968



Untitled
Oil on Canvas
27 x 24 Inches

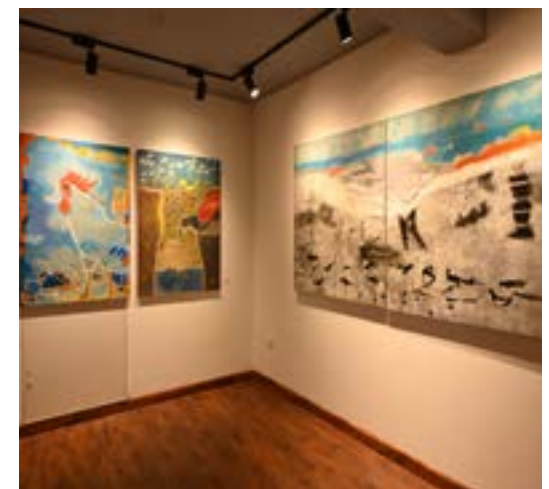
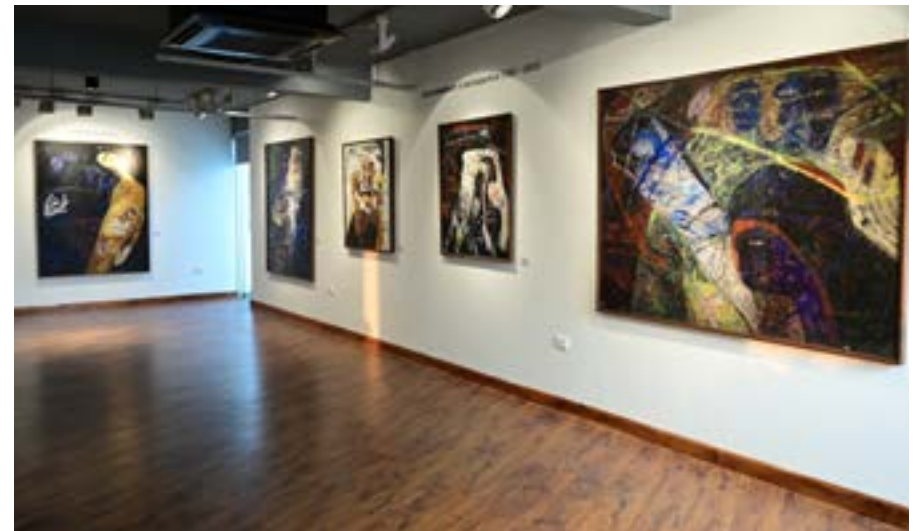
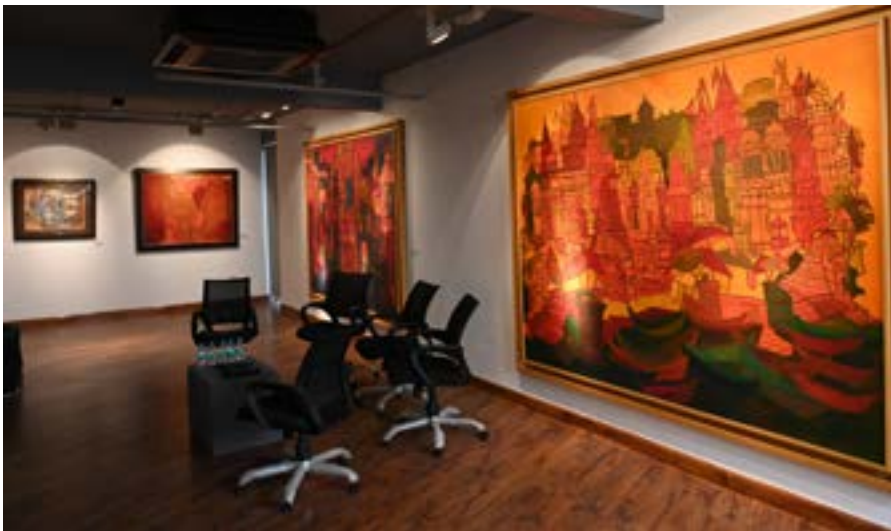


Art Magnum's vision and mission is to showcase South Asian art in its austere authenticity and magnificence on a global platform. Since its inception in 1986, it has been nurturing both the emerging and noted artists to further the cause of championing and patronizing South Asian art.

Its founder Lt. Shri Prakash Chand Singhvi was a visionary whose passion and enthusiasm was the driving force behind the gallery. Presently, Art Magnum's enterprising director, Saurabh Singhvi, is skilfully taking his legacy forward. The gallery has been proudly presenting different mediums of artistic expression ranging from the traditional to the modern, and the contemporary and the experimental. Housed at a contemporary space with ultramodern infrastructure located in the heart of South Delhi, the gallery attempts to give voice to the novel and noteworthy talents through a roster of shows that present the news makers of contemporary genre and also the old masters and marvels of Indian art from the pre and post-independence era.

Art Magnum has innovatively kept striving towards new paradigms reroute to its journey, and has achieved multiple milestones and mammoth goals. The firm has successfully organised elite art events at art capitals across the globe including at New Delhi, Dubai, Singapore, etc. and has received critical and popular acclaim for the same. The collection of the gallery includes works of M.F. Husain, S.H. Raza, F.N. Souza, Somnath Hore, Suhas Roy, K.G. Subramanyan, Paresh Maity, T. Vaikuntam amongst the others. Going forward, Art Magnum shall act as a catalyst for the talented young artists striving for creative excellence and shall keep inspiring the art aficionado by showcasing the contemporary and the classic path breakers of South Asian art.

Saurabh Singhvi
(Director, Art Magnum)







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Team Art Magnum

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