

# CREME DE LA CREME OF THE WORLD OF ART

Works of several top artists from across the globe will be on display at Pragati Maidan

Neelam Raj | TNN

Friday morning at 11am, the doors will open to hall no. 18 at Pragati Maidan, which instead of mundane trade items will be brimming with contemporary and modern art from around the world.

The flow of heavy-weight collectors and foreign curators who scout for museums has already started with Thursday's VIP preview of the third edition of the India Art Summit. Among the bona fide collectors such as Devi Foundations) Anupam Poddar and Arjun Sharma, who owns Select Citywalk Mall, were fashionistas and Page 3 dilettantes. Several gallerists did look a bit anxious about their valuable paintings being baptized with a wayward glass of Chardonnay.

Business though didn't seem to be much of a worry. Red dots which mark sold items were already up in many booths. Uday Dhoomimal, who is showcasing a huge collection of Souza's, feels the fair is breaking down many barriers to art. "Even the older buyers who were daunted by the skyrocketing prices are back making inquiries. It's far less intimidating than a gallery," he said.

Even if you're not a buyer, it's unlikely you will ever see such a wide sampling of work under one roof in the capital. So if you're heading to Pragati Maidan, here's a short guide that will make your art outing easier. The summit will last till January 23. Ticket for visitors will cost Rs 200.



**UNIQUE COLLECTION:** A visitor watches Nano car adorned with artwork by Singapore-based Ketna Patel

## HURRAH FOR HUSAIN

Exiled artist M F Husain's work has finally made its appearance at the art summit. Framed by burly bouncers who were hired from a city nightclub (Delhi Art Gallery owner Ashish Anand's candid confession) was 'Karachi' in all its magnificence. The 1990 diptych with his signature horse has a line in Urdu that is perhaps apt for what the artist has been through. Translated, it reads: "I managed to run my horses in an oppressive regime". Priced at Rs 4 crore, the Husain is among 100 artworks at the Delhi art gallery booth.

## LOOK OUT FOR...

Curious to see the Damien Hirst of Delhi? Meet him at the Nature Morte booth where Subodh Gupta's Steel Tiffins move on a conveyor belt. Other contemporary art stars like Jitish Kallat and Atul Dodiya are also here. In his work 'Portrait of A Dealer', Atul Dodiya takes

## THE FLOW OF HEAVY-WEIGHT COLLECTORS AND FOREIGN CURATORS WHO SCOUT FOR MUSEUMS HAS ALREADY STARTED WITH THURSDAY'S VIP PREVIEW OF THE THIRD EDITION OF THE INDIA ART SUMMIT

a dig at both art dealers and fairs. Using popular cinematic characters such as Prem Chopra, Pran, Jack Nicholson, he has poked fun at the business behind the brush. "It's aimed at me but I don't mind," said Parul Vadehra of Vadehra gallery who represents the artist.

## FOREIGN FLAVOUR

Want some global glam? Check out the Picasso, Dali and Joan Miro at the Die gallery booth. The Picasso's a bit steep (390,000 euros is the priciest) but gawking is free and priceless. German artist Jon Groom, who is seeing an Indian art jamboree for the first time, is going



back impressed. "I am quite critical of some of the art but the fair is quite professional."



## BUCK STOPS HERE

If you are interested in buying Indian art, this is also a good opportunity to survey the range of individual artists and prices. Most galleries are upbeat about sales this year. Many of them have brought smaller works so that new collectors can take some. "We have kept prices affordable consciously. There our works starting at Rs 25,000," said Geetha Mehra of Sakshi Gallery who has already sold a Ravinder Reddy.

## POP THEMES

Kitsch is a bankable best-seller, especially when the flavours are Asian. Singapore-based Indigo Art sold out every work of Indian-origin artist Ketna Patel even before the summit has opened to the public. Patel, whose mosaic-covered Nano drew the crowds at the sculpture park, has created works with signages from Malaysia, India, Korea and Thailand. "It's kind of a storytelling through Asia's streets."



A work of art on display at Pragati Maidan's hall no. 18

