



ELLE 20 years

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ALIA BHATT
WINNING
AT LIFE

MINDFUL EATING
HOW TO
DITCH
YOUR DIET
FOREVER

PATRON SAINTS
MEET THE
PEOPLE
DRIVING ART
IN INDIA

MAXIMAL FASHION
RICH BROCADES
PLUSH VELVET
OPULENT SILKS

ELLE WEDDING

EXQUISITE COUTURE
DIAMOND SPARKLERS
TEMPLE JEWELLERY

BRIDAL BEAUTY FIXES
FOR YOUR BIG DAY

ANGEL NETWORK

*Art in India is alive and well, thank you. **Sharmistha Ray** speaks to the patrons, mentors and cheerleaders who make that possible*

A decade in the Indian art world can give you perspective, especially when you've taken the scenic route as I have. A decade ago, I arrived in Mumbai as a young ingénue from New York, on the brink of a massive, unprecedented boom in the art market. I was at the helm of a major art gallery when, first, Lehman Brothers crashed, taking the world economy with it, and then 26/11 besieged my adopted home. Overnight, the heyday of art seemed to be over.

Back then, a colleague ventured a prediction that an entire new ecosystem of new artists and practitioners would emerge. He was right. The seven profiles in this story will introduce you to the architects of this new order. These individuals have vastly different backgrounds, but they are united by their desire to create resilient networks of exchange in the art world.

"We want young artists from India and the subcontinent to have exchanges with artists from all over the world"



**NIKHIL CHOPRA, MADHAVI GORE
AND ROMAIN LOUSTAU**
FOUNDERS, HH ART SPACES, GOA

The meeting of Romain Loustau, Nikhil Chopra and Madhavi Gore couldn't have been more serendipitous. Loustau was on a beach in Goa, drawing in his notebook, when he crossed paths with Chopra. They hit it off instantly. Loustau, who is trained in theatre, had just emerged from an underground art community in Paris and Chopra, one of the leading performance artists from the subcontinent, is married to Gore, an artist. But the three partners

agree that their biggest achievement is the setting up of HH Art Spaces in Goa. Loustau, who is currently in Lisbon, describes HH as a place that helps artists collaborate and be critical. Chopra says, "We want young artists from India and the subcontinent to have exchanges with artists from all over the world." The imminent launch of their first World Residency Program in Portugal will do much towards that cause.

KRUPA AMIN
FOUNDER,
SPACE STUDIOS,
VADODARA

When Krupa Amin landed in Mumbai with a degree from Sotheby's, she found herself in the middle of the art boom of a decade ago. The highlight of her job at various art institutions and galleries was getting to work within a thriving ecosystem of artists, historians and collectors. At home, she found an ally in her mother-in-law, Malika, who believed just as strongly in the need to provide young artists with a structure of support. They joined forces in 2006 to found Space Studios, which would offer studio facilities to fresh art graduates. "Vadodara has been so important for art production in the historic context. Besides, it is my hometown," says Amin. Space Studios also gives its budding artists tools to experiment with, through workshops on glass, ceramics, natural dye, video art, photography and installations. ▶

"Vadodara has been so important for art production in the historic context"





"I would like to see Pepper House evolve into a knowledge-sharing platform, a place where artists can connect with each other"

ISAAC AND TINKY ALEXANDER
OWNERS, PEPPER HOUSE RESIDENCY, KOCHI

Before the Kochi-Muziris Biennale acquired its current status of global phenomenon, it had the rock-steady support of this young couple from Kerala. A fortuitous meeting with the founders convinced Isaac and Tinky Alexander to turn Pepper House, a fabulous heritage waterfront property they owned in Fort Kochi, into an exhibition space every other December during the Biennale. The last two editions saw new works by major contemporary artists like

Bharti Kher and NS Harsha installed here. The rest of the year, this serves as a centre for the arts, hosting artist residencies, talks and workshops. Isaac's family has been in the food export business for generations—so this terrain is new. "The Biennale triggered our involvement in art," he says. "I would like to see Pepper House evolve into a knowledge-sharing platform, a place where artists can connect with each other, the city and society."

"I am most excited by the possibilities of what art is capable of. I believe it has the potential to shape our culture"

**TRISHLA
TALERA**
FOUNDER,
TIFA WORKING
STUDIOS, PUNE

"I am most excited by the possibilities of what art is capable of," says Trishla Talera. "I believe it has the potential to shape our culture." The Pune resident is the founder of TIFA Working Studios, a young residency programme for critical and experimental practice that is uniquely situated in a heritage hotel. Talera is lively and animated in person, with a clear understanding of what she's here to do and how. TIFA has been instrumental in helping artists pull off some pretty daring ideas. When Vishal K Dar's Maruts was commissioned for a 40,000 sqft warehouse in the outskirts, it was the first community-interaction project of its kind in the city. After a successful open studio this year, Talera is gearing up for another in early 2017, titled 'The Futures Of The Past'.




*"I want to be able to open up channels
for younger artists too"*

RICHA AGARWAL
FOUNDER,
EMAMI CHISEL
ART, KOLKATA

It all started about a decade ago when Agarwal's father-in-law asked her to coordinate art acquisitions for the family business in Kolkata. That's when she realised how little was being done to support local artists. Her new gallery—Emami Chisel Art—would change that. "We make sure that we are not just showing established names," says Agarwal. "I want to be able to open up channels for younger artists too." This has translated into an annual exhibition and the opening of another gallery in a popular city mall for emerging talents in media, art and craft. Next up on her wish list for Kolkata is a "centre for creativity" designed by her favourite architect, Pinakin Patel. In the meanwhile, she's cemented her role as art philanthropist by joining the ranks of influential patrons of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale.





"We want to be like flowing water, not contaminated by stagnation"

SHREYAS KARLE AND HEMALI BHUTA
FOUNDERS, CONA, MUMBAI

Artists Hemali Bhuta and Shreyas Karle have a packed schedule. Aside from their successful careers, they are deeply immersed in the running of Cona, a concept that defies definition. It's a porous kind of creative space that maps an unconventional route for learning, experimentation and practice. As Karle puts it: "Cona exists in a state of flux, depending entirely on the people who come into it to be the authors of an idea and help it evolve." For instance, 'A Classroom Situation' is a programme that

invites mentors from various disciplines to collaborate with learners to develop new courses. 'Print Studio' will provide press machines for artists to play around with. 'Kaatcona Company' works with those looking to extend their practice beyond the art market. Besides this, there will be curated residencies, talks, workshops and culinary events too. "Cona was never expected to be a permanent situation," says Bhuta. "We want to be like flowing water, not contaminated by stagnation." ●