



Kiran Nadar Museum of Art and Asia Society India presents
Around the Table: Conversations about Milestones, Memories, Mappings

Curated by Roobina Karode

Preview: Friday 4 November 2022 | 6 pm onwards
Venue: Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Saket
145, DLF South Court Mall, Saket
New Delhi - 110017

Around the Table: Conversations about Milestones, Memories, Mappings is a recollection of times and practices of a generation of artists who shaped the landscape of art in post-Independence India. Playing crucial roles as individuals, as collectives and as fellows, they responded and sought remedy to the emerging demands of a young nation. As cities like Bombay and Delhi expanded with the spirit of cosmopolitanism, and places like Baroda turned into testing grounds for art-institutional experiments, the seven citizen-artists—Akbar Padamsee, Krishen Khanna, Gulammohammed Sheikh, Arpita Singh, Jyoti Bhatt, Himmat Shah and Vivan Sundaram—stood out as distinct voices with clear positions, unapologetically honest about their beliefs. For the times to come, they would remain as trailblazers of not just artistic languages but as pedagogues, initiators and interlocutors of modern and contemporary art in India, often blurring the contours of the nation through their commitment to cultural heterogeneity and transnational ideals.

A few trajectories that contour the exhibition seek to uncover intersections and chance-encounters between the practices of these seven artists as friends, colleagues or fellow travellers. They mobilized to form artists groups like Group 1890 (formed in 1962), set up publications such as the *Vrishchik* (1969-1973), gave rise to artistic experimentations in workshops such as the Vision Exchange (1969-1972) workshop or the historic exhibition Place for People (1981) to name a few, paraded together protesting against censorship and coercions. As initiators, institution builders, pedagogues, authors, spearheading art movements, mentors to generations of artists, milestone-makers with the force of iconic exhibitions and publications, their contribution remains irrefutable. Expressing themselves in diverse materials and linguistic idioms, their artistic experiments have been as layered and multifaceted as their lives as they have journeyed to the west in a bid to invent a new artistic vision for a new nation or travelled to the remotest corners of the country to observe the fast-changing rural contexts. Although the exhibition inculcates by the practices of seven artists, the show aims at creating signs and indicators towards the practices generated from the 1950s onwards by many others. The exhibition will unfold these interrelationships through iconic artworks, photographs and archival material primarily from the KNMA collection.

“The present exhibition is approached as a midnight feast where the seven co-travellers have gathered to rest their bundles of images and stories after their long travel. As dawn, slowly

bleeds into the fading darkness and wanderers are placed around the tavern's dinner table, a rich repertoire of ephemera and memories unfold. The many accounts constituted by the detritus of these artistic connections and crossings build up a vision of history and time that I was fortunate to inherit from some of the awardees showcased in the exhibition, who were also my teachers and mentors."

- Roobina Karode, Chief Curator & Director, KNMA

About Asia Society India

Asia Society's purpose is to navigate shared futures for Asia and the world across policy, arts and culture, education, sustainability, business, and technology. Founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd, Asia Society is a nonpartisan, nonprofit institution with Centres in New York, Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, Paris, San Francisco, Seoul, Sydney, Tokyo, Washington, D.C., and Zurich. It fulfils its educational mandate through a wide range of cross-disciplinary programming. As economies and cultures have become more interconnected, the Society's programs have expanded to address a range of issues and pressing concerns in Asia.

Established in 2006, the Asia Society India Centre presents an array of perspectives on business, policy and the arts in modern South Asia through multidisciplinary programmes, initiatives and research. It has hosted over 800 events since its inception and has established itself as an important platform for conversations, innovation and collaborations across the subcontinent and beyond.

"Asia Society India has always been deeply committed to the arts as one of its key areas of focus and impact - the Asia Arts Game Changer Awards are a testament to that. 2021 marked fifteen years of Asia Society in India, and to commemorate this milestone, we decided to present a collaborative exhibition that would celebrate the legacy of our flagship Awards, co-chaired by Pheroza Godrej, Sangita Jindal, Kiran Nadar and Radhika Chopra. Mrs. Nadar has had a long association with the Asia Society globally and it is therefore an honour for us to be able to partner with the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art for our first-ever exhibition. We are grateful to Roobina Karode, a member of our advisory council for arts and culture, for curating this - a small tribute to our Asia Arts Vanguard awardees, some of India's most eminent artists, with the hope that it can help viewers deep dive into their world, tracing the arc of their intersecting artistic journeys over their decades of practice."

- Inakshi Sobti, Chief Executive Officer, Asia Society India Centre
