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MEET THE GALLERY

Harssh Shah | Ahmedabad, India

MEET THE GALLERY is an interview series highlighting returning exhibitors and first-time VOLTA galleries. More than simply experts, these VOLTA exhibitors are supporters of young and mid-career artists and provide insights on their presentation at the fair.

MEET THE GALLERY introduces Harssh Shah, Founder of the Ahmedabad-based Iram Art Gallery in India. Read the interview and learn about his believe in promoting artists who are honest in their practice and have the guts to go against trends purely due to their conviction in their practise.

Dear Harssh Shah, we are excited for you to join us at VOLTA Basel in June. Tell us a bit about your gallery and your journey in the art world.

Harssh Shah: Iram Art's primary objective is to discover and promote artists of various genre and media, while simultaneously work with established artists to create a cohesive and supportive community of artists and collectors both locally and globally.

We are committed to promoting ideas around contemporary art and critical thought

within Ahmedabad, a city entrenched in cultural history, but without, until now, a strong contemporary art presence. It is our mission to set a global benchmark, considering best practices and supportive holistic programming to showcase local emerging talent along with Indian and International artists so that our community of artists, collectors, and art lovers have space within their own city to learn, discover and engage.

Born and brought up in Ahmedabad, I did my post graduation in Business Management from USA and lived and worked there for 4 years before returning to India. Art was always a passion. I started collecting art around 2006, and, like every new collector I too made mistakes. I studied what it takes to promote an artist, what it takes to mentor them and show them the right path. Since art is a passion driven initiative for me, the journey so far as been extremely rewarding more so with the satisfaction of supporting the careers of multiple talented emerging Indian artists.

I believe in promoting artists who are honest in their practice and have the guts to go against trends purely due to their conviction in their practise.

Harssh Shah, Founder of the Ahmedabad-based Iram Art Gallery in India

Visitors engaging with works by artist Narayan Chandra Sinha (left) at VOLTA Basel in 2022.

Which artist are you bringing to VOLTA?

Harssh Shah: Iram Art is presenting a solo booth of critically acclaimed Indian artist **Narayan Chandra Sinha** at VOLTA Basel 2022.

Hailing from Nalhati, Birbhum, Narayan Sinha has grown up in what he considers to be a male dominated environment. From his childhood he found himself finding solace amidst nature beyond the chaotic, mundane human life. A seven year old Narayan eagerly waited all year round to learn about colour palettes from calendars received during Poila Boishakh. He has grown up to be a stern believer that despite being blessed with creativity or not, an individual should practice cultivating sensitivity towards his surroundings.

For the past 24 years Sinha has been on a journey of finding his own sense of aesthetic which finally culminated into his solo sculpture exhibition "Firelight" in 2021. Firelight explores the raw and intense emotions and tries to pin down the presence of opposing components, which coexist together in the form of basic elemental units.

Indian artist Narayan Chandra Sinha in front of his works

It deconstructs the societal filters and experience emotions and feelings for what they turn out to be more than often, full of layers, contradictory and boundless.

His first solo painting exhibition after he moved to Mumbai was at Nariman Point. It was immensely successful with most of his paintings being sold off by the first day itself. However, he still felt hollow. It took him 23 years to make way to Firelight where his raw talent became evident.

Narayan has held over 20 solo shows of his works since 2000 all over the country in many established art shows and art fairs like India Art Fair. All of this culminated in his most well known series 'Debi' in 2011 which caught the attention of the entire nation because of Sinha's sublime reinterpretation of spirituality and ritualism through the medium of metals.

Narayan Chandra Sinha, Untitled, 2022, Brass, 51 x 104 x 16 cm

Which advice would you give to the next generation of collectors that are making their first steps into the art world?

Harssh Shah: Art has its own and unique way of communicating with everyone. Listen to your soul! Expose yourself to various practises by visiting art fairs, following galleries on social media whose program appeals to you, visit contemporary art museums, follow the career paths of artists whose works you like. Above all follow your instinct. This way you will have a rewarding experience with your own collection.

Narayan Chandra Sinha, Wounds of Time, 2022, Copper, 180 x 90 cm

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