

## PRESS RELEASE

# Muziris Contemporary Opens in Colaba with Inaugural Exhibition *Memory Palace*

- Opening exhibition to launch on Art Night Thursday in partnership with Mumbai Gallery Association, on 14 August 2025
- New gallery launches showcasing underrepresented art movements and regions
- Muziris Contemporary opens in the historic Wodehouse Road adding to the fabric of the Colaba art district

**Mumbai, 30 July 2025** – Muziris Contemporary, a new South Asian contemporary art gallery, opens its doors in August on Wodehouse road, Colaba.

Located in the Colaba-Cuffe Parade precinct, the gallery is in the historic Arsiwala Mansion, amidst one of Mumbai's most architecturally and culturally significant neighbourhoods.

Muziris Contemporary draws its name and spirit from the ancient port city of Muziris on the Western coast of India, a site where millennia of trade, exchange, and migration shaped a unique cultural identity.

By invoking Muziris, the gallery seeks to build a space rooted in place yet contemporary in spirit, serving as both platform and catalyst for overlooked art movements from the region and beyond. The gallery aims to add to the fabric of the Colaba Art District and further the post-covid surge of the South Asian art market with its launch.

*"While being rooted in identity, Muziris Contemporary is a new and contemporary proposition for the ever evolving art landscape in India. It hopes to usher in a new era of purposeful, fresh, society-relevant art exhibitions and artist-practices while placing equal importance on innovation in making the process of collecting art more personalised for new buyers and patrons in this post-covid, resurgent young India. The art market experience sometimes tends to be exclusionary instead of being aspirational and that's something we are committed to changing."* says founder Joe Cyril.

In addition to its exhibition program, Muziris Contemporary extends its vision through a residency in Vagamon, a remote hill station in Kerala's Western Ghats. The residency offers artists an immersive, off-grid space for reflection and creation, away from the pressures of urban spectacle.

With the gallery in Mumbai and soon-to-launch space in Fort Kochi, ahead of the upcoming edition of the Kochi Biennale, Muziris Contemporary is uniquely positioned to

support emerging and established artists alike, while fostering new conversations about how cultural histories and influences continue to shape and expand contemporary art practices.

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## **Inaugural Exhibition: *Memory Palace***

Curated with architect and spatial researcher **Ayaz Basrai**, *Memory Palace* marks the inaugural exhibition at Muziris Contemporary. It brings together eight artists, **Harsimran Juneja, Nandita Mukand, Kuber Shah, N.N. Rimzon, Santhi E.N, Tulika Shrivastava, Kapil Jangid**, and the **Vayeda Brothers**, whose practices explore questions of space, resilience, and collective memory through a variety of media and material.

The artists' work engages with memory and the built environment. Each piece reflects an attempt to preserve a space through various materialities, whether that space still exists or lives on only in memory.

The connections to these physical structures are varied. Some are deeply personal: homes once lived in, neighbourhoods that shaped a sense of self. Others are part of a city's larger cultural memory; spaces that hold collective significance. The works move across time and scale, from intimate interiors to public landmarks, from lived experience to imagined recall.

What emerges is an exploration of how architecture anchors memory. The show considers how we continue to relate to spaces we no longer inhabit, and how these artists use their practice to document, reconstruct, or simply hold on.

This is not an archive, but a series of subjective maps. The gallery becomes a site where personal geographies overlap, a memory palace built through individual acts of looking back.

## **Featured Artists**

**Kapil Jangid** creates sculptural pieces from concrete, wood, and found objects that reference his migratory upbringing on the fringes of Vadodara. His practice is a spatial inquiry into labour, land, and resistance, material investigations shaped by lived experience and inherited craft.

**Vayeda Brothers**, Mayur and Tushar, reimagine the traditional Warli visual language in urgent ecological and urban contexts. In their *Urban Forest* series, they depict indigenous cosmologies navigating the complexities of contemporary city life. Trees and skyscrapers, ancestral rituals and traffic flows coexist in intricate harmony, a vision of adaptability and resilience.

**Santhi E.N** is a visual artist and teacher whose work draws on personal and cultural memory, often reflecting on childhood, ancestral homes, and sacred spaces. She creates small-format paintings in a predominantly purple palette, depicting quiet landscapes and

solitary figures. Her practice, which was featured in the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, explores themes of tradition, belonging, and the passage of time with subtlety and restraint.

**Harsimran C Juneja** explores the tensions of personal, political, and cultural conflict through a Neo-expressionist, primitivist, vocabulary. His paintings and mixed-media works often incorporate text, drawing on graffiti and public speech to question binaries and power.

**Nandita Mukand** is a Singaporean artist whose practice spans sculpture, installation, and painting. Through a considered juxtaposition of materials, forms, and processes, she explores the complex interplay between the artificial and natural worlds. Mukand transforms everyday urban materials, such as medical gauze and industrial substances, into organic forms that evoke the intricacies of the natural world, prompting a dialogue between seemingly disparate realms.

**Kuber Shah** has been documenting Mumbai's Deco building for several years. His photographs transform theatres and homes into quiet monuments of a fading modernist optimism. By isolating lines, shadows, and motifs and sometimes typography, Shah reframes these everyday structures as spaces of beauty and endurance of another time.

**N.N. Rimzon**, a seminal figure in Indian contemporary art, bridges sculpture and drawing with political urgency and spiritual depth. A product of Kerala's landscape and the 1980s radical movement, Rimzon's works explore trauma, belief, and place. His practice has evolved into meditative forms shaped by memory and ritual.

Delhi based **Tulika Shrivastava** is a designer and artist whose process-driven practice translates everyday life into visual systems. Her work draws heavily from traditional craft, techniques and material knowledge, while maintaining a rigorously contemporary sensibility.

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## About the Founder

**Joe Cyril** is gallerist and art advisor whose experience spans the commercial, grassroots, and institutional ends of the art world. With a breadth of experience across the primary and secondary markets, he has played a pivotal role in shaping new creative economies in and around south asian art and its markets.

He was part of the founding team of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale and has held leadership roles at Saffronart, India's leading auction house as well as serving as the founding director of Gallery XXL, India's first gallery dedicated to street art. Joe has a very keen interest in creating new art spaces and introducing new audiences to collecting and learning about Indian art.

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## The Space

Muziris Contemporary is located in the Arsiwala Mansion, a striking example of Bombay's architectural hybridity. With its Georgian tympanums, carved brackets, and vernacular ventilators, the building embodies the layered histories of Colaba, a neighbourhood shaped by colonial legacies, cosmopolitan life, and artistic transformation.

Culturally, the mansion captures the transformation of Colaba from a colonial-era enclave into a lively hub of art, commerce, and everyday life. Its location, in the same neighbourhood as the Gateway of India and Colaba Causeway, places it within one of Mumbai's most architecturally diverse corridors, where British colonial buildings, Indo-Sarsenic bungalows, Art Deco facades, and newer structures exist side by side.

Arsiwala Mansion quietly holds its place among grand Victorian neighbors, while continuing to house the evolving rhythms of contemporary Bombay.

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## Programming

- The gallery opens on Art Night Thursday as part of the Mumbai Gallery Association's monthly program, with a guided walkthrough scheduled for the evening of the 14th. To accommodate Mumbai's busy audience, the gallery will also remain open on all weekends.
- The gallery will host regular workshops for both adults and children, exploring various forms of art-making in collaboration with invited artists.
- The gallery has devised a curated programme and guide '101 on Collecting Art' for first-time collectors offering insights into Indian art and styles, its markets and price-points, art as an investment versus aesthetics among other topics. Audiences can book individual appointments to participate.

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