



# ARTS ILLUSTRATED



C. Douglas

IAF 2018  
Special



## *Creating Traditions, Building Bridges*

Over the past decade of its existence, the India Art Fair has grown into the quintessential showcasing platform for contemporary art, bringing cutting-edge visual arts from India and the world under one roof. Last year, the fair was acquired by the MCH Group that presents leading events such as Baselworld and Art Basel across three international locations. Understandably then, there is much optimism layered with enthusiastic anxiety to see things unfold in the 10th edition. We present a glimpse into that journey.

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Front Cover: *C. Douglas, From the series **Blind Poet & the Butterfly**, Mixed Media, 41" x 51"*

Back Cover: *Vijay Pichumani, **Between You and Me**, Wood Paper and Acrylic, 99" x 90" x 2", 2018*

## *A New Hope*

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
WITH JAGDIP JAGPAL, WHO  
JOINED THE TEAM AS THE FAIR  
DIRECTOR IN AUGUST 2017.  
SHE IS BRIMMING WITH IDEAS  
AND DETERMINATION TO GROW  
THE INDIA ART FAIR TO A MORE  
SIGNIFICANT EVENT IN THE  
COMING YEARS.

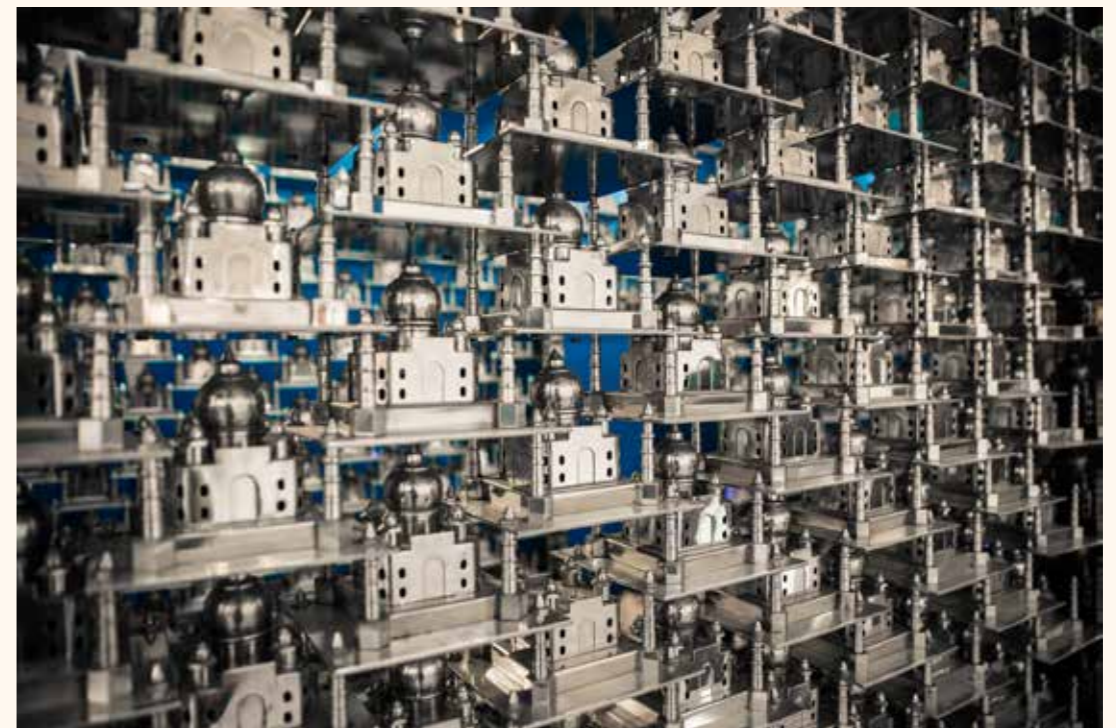


*Looking back at the 10 years since its inception, what were the key motivations for MCH Group to acquire India Art Fair?*

I have been to the last couple of editions of the India Art Fair. So I can personally say that it has grown to be a significant platform for the arts in the region. Although I am not really part of the MCH management or involved in the acquisition decision, it made complete sense for them to have moved in this direction. The fair made a strong proposition for MCH, and likewise for the fair it is good to be part of a larger, global organisation. It is very helpful to have access to international links and perspectives, and it looks like it was a win-win situation.

*What is the renewed vision and what can we expect in the next 3–5 years from the fair?*

I see the 2018 edition as a work-in-progress to achieve a long-term goal. We have cleared up a lot of things to set the house in order to move in the new direction. We have brought back ‘art’ at the core of everything. This naturally compels us to think of the two most critical components to make the fair a success – galleries and visitors. Deep thought has gone into deciding which galleries should be part of the 2018 edition. Opportunity must be given to new and upcoming galleries, especially from the Tier-2 towns of India. From my own experience I can say that galleries in India do a lot more in terms



Sudharshan Shetty, Art Project by KNMA.

of regularly showing good art and focusing on education by way of conversations and walk-through. A lot of this is not done in the West. For visitors, our focus is to give them a seamless experience. One that is comforting, with access to information. We are going to place team members who are knowledgeable at every corner of the fair so they can help the visitors and guide them around.

*In terms of new international galleries and participants, and specifically museums, how significant do you think MCH's role would be?*

It is our endeavour to build institutional interest internationally for the fair. It is interesting that so much art from the South-Asian region is being shown outside the region and it is getting noticed. Through the MCH channels we hope to have increased presence of international collectors. We will continue to have international galleries, but

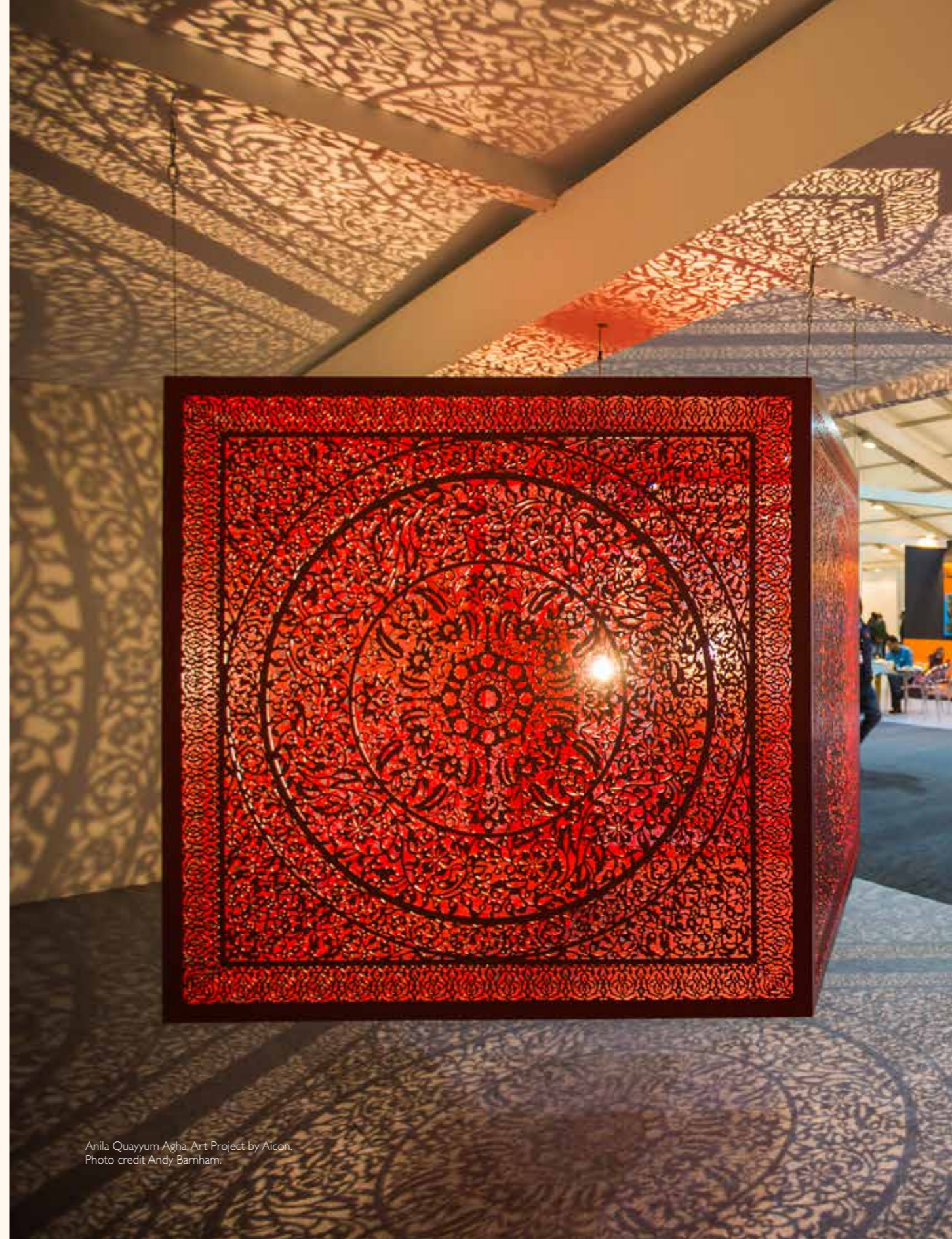
we have tightened what they will show. India Art Fair cannot be used as the second-class space for showing art that did not sell in other parts of the world. In addition, we will eventually look at ways to digitally share things from the fair editions with a global audience. So much content is generated through display of art, talks and presentations. We ought to capture that and make it available online. All of this is on the cards.

*Tell us about art projects curated for the 2018 edition, and the focus of the Speakers' Forum.*

We have carefully selected projects that deserve to be shown but do not fit in the booth display, and which has an underlying commercial angle to it. In addition, it was important to give the projects their due focus and space. We have separated the booths and project sections so these installations get space to breathe. For the erstwhile Speakers' Forum...yes, we are not calling it by that name



Artist-led tour with Jitish Kallat at National Gallery of Modern Art, February 2, 2017.



Anila Quayyum Agha, Art Project by Aicon.  
Photo credit Andy Barnham.

anymore, the renewed focus is engagement with the audience. We will have smaller panels and less focus on international speakers. The fair focuses on Indian art and art from the region, so that ought to reflect across all our programming. We plan to have additional events to include music and other performing arts, as visual arts cannot be seen in isolation.

*How is collaborating with BMW and other partners adding to the fair experience?*

Sponsors are the critical support that enables us to put up the fair. But beyond the economic model, they bring a lot more to the event. Their partnership adds to the profile and credibility of the fair, and the network they tap into is distinct yet very relevant. We carefully study the intent of the sponsors. Their partnership is not merely a marketing strategy, but they are enthusiastic about art. This is at the core of everything we do. Also, they have a long-term goal to support the arts and have a global presence.



Installation view. Photo credit Manoj Kesharwani.

Rathin Barman, Art Project by Experimenter.  
Photo credit AndyBarnham.

## *AI Recommends*

We put the spotlight on 14 discerning artists from several hundred showing at the India Art Fair, 2018. They question tradition through their practice. They create thought-provoking works. We hope you will enjoy their works on display, as much as we enjoyed cherry-picking them!

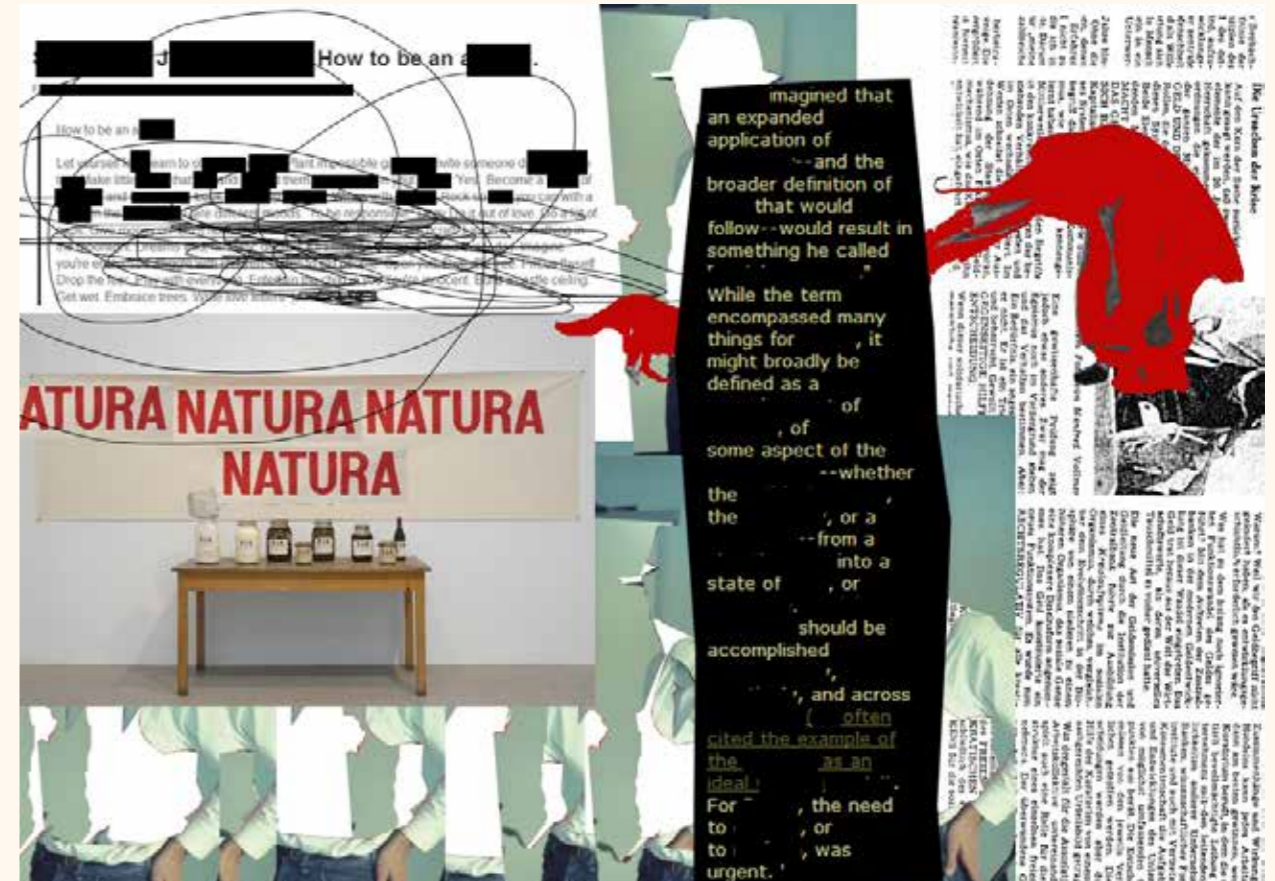
“  
*My works are ephemeral in nature. They are witty and aesthetically very light. The idea is to always oppose and make fun of aesthetically heavy works. I spontaneously question the art scene or the art itself: what is right, and well, what is left?*”

**Who:** Abir Shome

**What:** Digital Prints

**Why:** Abir's works use a process that questions ideology and power, enquiring into the concept of 'capitalism promotes equality' in a satirical way.

**Where:** BluePrint I2, New Delhi



Abir Shome, *Again art is saved, from the Nature*, Photographic print, 12" x 18", 2013. Image Courtesy of the artist and BluePrint I2, New Delhi.



Ajay Sharma, *Colour of Patriotic Land Scape*, Digital print, 50 cm x 75 cm, 2017.  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Wonderwall Gallery, New Delhi.

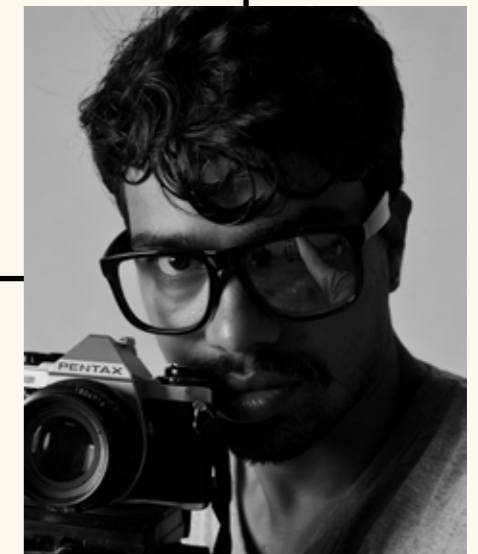
**Who:** B. Ajay Sharma

**What:** Installation, video, drawing, digital photography and performance art

**Why:** Ajay Sharma's works revive techniques of conventional photography. His conceptual treatment of alternative photographic techniques such as cyanotype, and creating temporary darkroom for experimentation has been significant for his current body of work. His art-making is often ritualistic, and involves a series of preparatory acts.

**Where:** Wonderwall Gallery, New Delhi

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When I look back at my childhood, I realise that in our society “death” becomes an event. This has become the theme of my art practice. Not only as a personal question but also through politics, historical references and socio-economic structures of caste and race. How does the event of dying transform the physical? How can we examine death in digital and virtual time? Through my process of making art, I find beauty in death.



“*What keeps me interested is what the future of architecture might hold. In order to abolish the traditional perspective of blocky buildings surrounding us, I struggle for the conquest of the unknown, surprising spaces with dynamic architectural forms. Nature and mathematics comprising of Fibonacci, fractals and polyhedra have been my ideological source of interpreting the city of the future.*”

**Who:** Bhagyashree Suthar

**What:** Pen and ink on paper; pigmented bees wax and gouache on board

**Why:** Bhagyashree's works are unique and captivating, seamlessly merging architectural forms with patterns in nature. They are an interpretation of imaginary architectural structures that are fluid and full of vigour and innovation.

**Where:** Akara Art, Mumbai



Bhagyashree Suthar, **Untitled**, Pen and Ink on Rajasthani Paper, 22" x 30", 2017.  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Akara Art, Mumbai.





From the series **Blind Poet & the Butterfly**, Mixed Media, 48" x 48".  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Art Houz Gallery, Chennai.

**Who:** C. Douglas

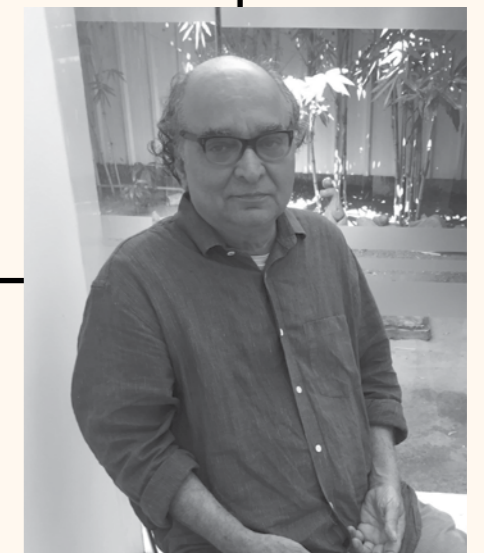
**What:** Canvas board and paper

**Why:** Douglas expresses emotions through lines, colours and abstracted forms. In his works, which imbibe all his various experiences – from Kerala to Cholamandal to West Germany and back, he arrives at a universalised figure that approximates both subliminal depths and analysis. His works are often dense, with distortions depicting pain and anguish.

**Where:** Art Houz Gallery, Chennai

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*In my current body of work I have worked with calligraphy as a process to explore the more poetic side of things. I enjoy using the fragility of paper. The tears and the creases, they make the surface active and that somehow dictates my process. And to me, that is most important – the process where the viewers are as much a part of it as I am. Usually, I prefer to work without a central subject; it makes my works more fragmented.*



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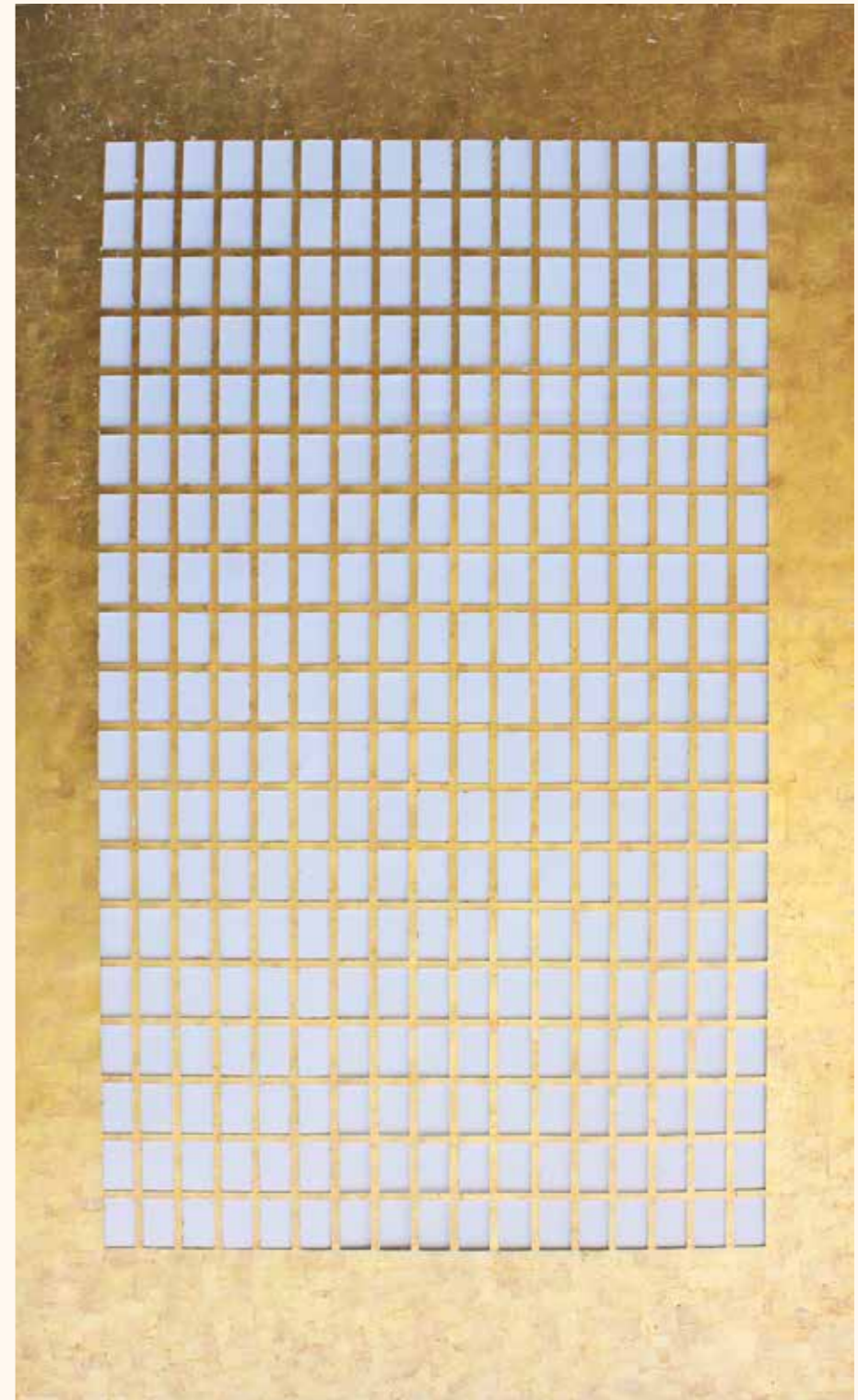
*The journey of a moving point is recorded by the trail it leaves behind, geometrically known as the “line”. A point can be considered to be the inception of everything present in nature; therefore, a line proves to be an inevitable part of our existence.*

**Who:** Chetnaa

**What:** Pen and ink on paper

**Why:** Chetnaa’s geometric abstractions from the landscape and architectures of the modern-day city are translated into an eloquent schematic of lines and markers. Initiated as symmetrical arrangements, her work reveals the need to deconstruct the order she had once sought, so as to build a new geometrical logic that feeds her minimalist aesthetic.

**Where:** Gallery Art District XIII, New Delhi



Chetnaa, **La Grille**, 22 carat gold on paper, 70" x 42", 2017.  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Art District XIII, New Delhi.



Elizabeth Drury, **Between Parallels**, Pastel and coloured pencil on primed paper, 31.5" x 23.5", 2018. Image Courtesy of the artist and Akara Art, Mumbai.

“  
My drawings play upon  
the laborious process of still  
life observation to address the  
obscurity of perception, memory  
and desire for control. Through  
the rendering of mundane, lowly  
objects, I place them in unsettling  
psychological spaces, using them as  
a form of language between fiction  
and reality.

**Who:** Elizabeth Drury

**What:** Graphite on paper; pastel and coloured pencil  
on paper

**Why:** Elizabeth's works deconstruct the traditional  
representation of still life drawings in order to renew  
our perception of ordinary objects around us. She also  
explores their relationship, symbolism and impact on  
the viewer's interpretation of the environment.

**Where:** Akara Art, Mumbai



“

*I try to merge cultural and agricultural philosophies in my work, as agriculture is one of civilisation's founding components. I am from Uttar Pradesh and believe that living close to nature can make one more creative. There is so much to learn from the fields where we grew rice, wheat, mustard and pulses.*

**Who:** Harish Ojha

**What:** Paper and canvas

**Why:** Through his works, Harish talks about underlying philosophies of agriculture and civilisation within contemporary idioms. Having spent his childhood in rural India, he finds inspiration in indigenous objects like the brightly coloured wooden toys and pull-carts and places them as the main motifs in his works. Harish revives folk imagery and merges it with his own individual style.

**Where:** Art Houz Gallery, Chennai



Harish Ojha, **Under 71**, Mix Media on Board, 41" x 60", 2018.  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Art Houz Gallery, Chennai.



Janarthanan R, **Nest**, Iron, 76" x 69" x 7", 2018.  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Art Houz Gallery, Chennai.

“  
*My works explore the idea of the self. And it struck me that the body is not very different from a bird's nest. When I observed the form of the nest more closely, I found several parallels with the human body because both are built up in layers; layers that are sometimes perceptible to the eyes and at other times not. This idea of physical absence/presence fascinates me and I translate this concept into my work.*

**Who:** Janarthanan R

**What:** Canvas, paper and metal

**Why:** At a first glance, Janarthanan's works look like simple depictions of the body. However, a closer inspection reveals a rather nuanced and layered understanding of matters that move beyond the physical space of our bodies – both literally and metaphorically.

**Where:** Art Houz Gallery, Chennai



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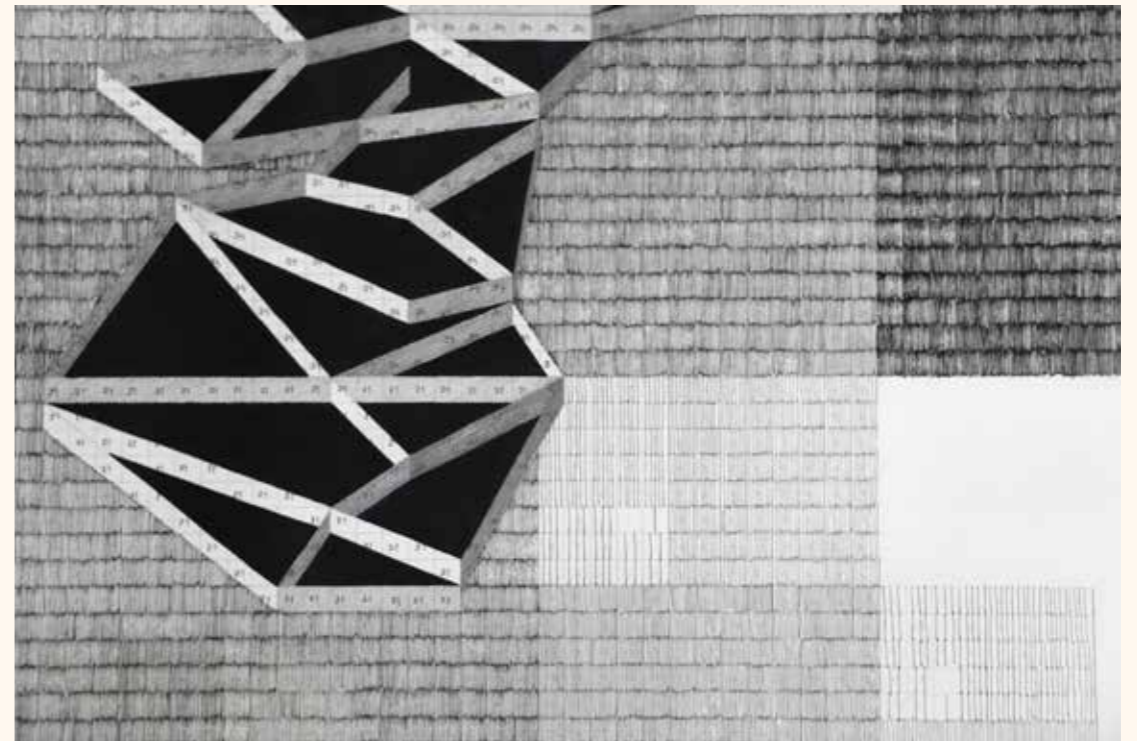
*When one talks of expression, numbers and numerical sequences, it also carries the weight of emotions that often comes from nature with respect to human interaction. My concerns in these works are to see the representation of numbers to record the various sources of information and deal with our documented realities.*

**Who:** Raj Jariwala

**What:** Water colour, ink-pen, pencil, charcoal on acid-free paper

**Why:** Raj is concerned with data and its interpretation in various contexts. In his series of drawings, he challenges the status of empirical quantities as crutches for a corporatised scientific world through a visual recreation of the Fibonacci series, upon which he imposes a free-form, random numerical landscape.

**Where:** Shrine Empire Gallery, New Delhi



Raj Jariwala, **The Golden Landscape**, Ink, Pencil and Watercolour on paper, 40" x 70", 2015.  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Shrine Empire Gallery, New Delhi.



Ram Singh Urveti, **Untitled**, Ink on paper, 14" x 10", 2017.  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Tribal Art Forms.

**Who:** Ram Singh Urveti

**What:** Ink on paper, acrylic on canvas

**Why:** Ram Singh uses the traditional Gond style of painting in a contemporary context, where the colours bleed into our rigid perceptions. Trees appear in many forms in almost all his paintings and often in creative, surprising ways.

**Where:** Tribal Art Forms (TAF)

“ We used to paint on the walls of our villages. Every festival was embellished with our art. We used datoon (Neem twig) and colours made from chaar fruit. I've observed people coming to museums and seeing our work, but no one actually asks the real meaning behind them. These kinds of exhibitions are really helpful and I appreciate the efforts of every single individual who has been working to promote authentic tribal art.



“

*I would like to address my works as an infantile transition into the truth of fragmented, yet, conspicuously designed world of spectacted desires. The conversion of representation in my works gets clarified through the forms of violence and satire, to indicate the enigmatic character of nature and the tension brought by the theory of capitalism in the neo-urban survival extensions.*

**Who:** Ravi Kumar Chunchula

**What:** Gouache on rice paper and rice paper prepared on canvas

**Why:** Ravi's works juxtapose the traditional miniature-painting technique with a contemporary pun. They are often personal and humorous observations of the human being as a social animal that brings in multiple stories into the work.

**Where:** Anant Art, New Delhi



Ravi Kumar Chunchula, *Indigenous Dreams 4*, Gouache on rice paper, 11.5" x 16.5", 2017.  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Anant Art, New Delhi.





Sanjay Barot, *Passage through the Veil - I*, Acrylic on canvas and wood, 60" x 66".  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Rukshaan Art Gallery, Mumbai.

**Who:** Sanjay Barot

**What:** Acrylic on canvas and wood

**Why:** In Sanjay's works, the frame and mount can be read as the 'final impressions' that have been culled out from the chaos on canvas. His wooden frames work with a dual purpose: as frames of construction for the work and also as an interesting interplay of socio-political incidents that have had a bearing on the artist.

**Where:** Rukshaan Art Gallery, Mumbai

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My creative process is really like my beliefs. They have travelled with me from when I moved from my village in Kapadvanj to the city of Baroda that I now live in and love. I return to my hometown every six months; and with every visit, the roots get stronger and help me cope with the chaos of city life. There is a juxtaposition of emotions, feelings and standards that I have to balance, on and off the canvas.



“  
*I find meaning in things and events around me and it is this that is expressed in my works. I draw inspiration mostly from nature – be it fibres in fruits that seem to form some sort of connectivity or a spider’s web. I am intrigued by the minute forms present in nature. In my works, I take these forms and somehow enhance the experience of seeing them through the added aspect of my imagination.*

**Who:** Saravanan Parasuraman

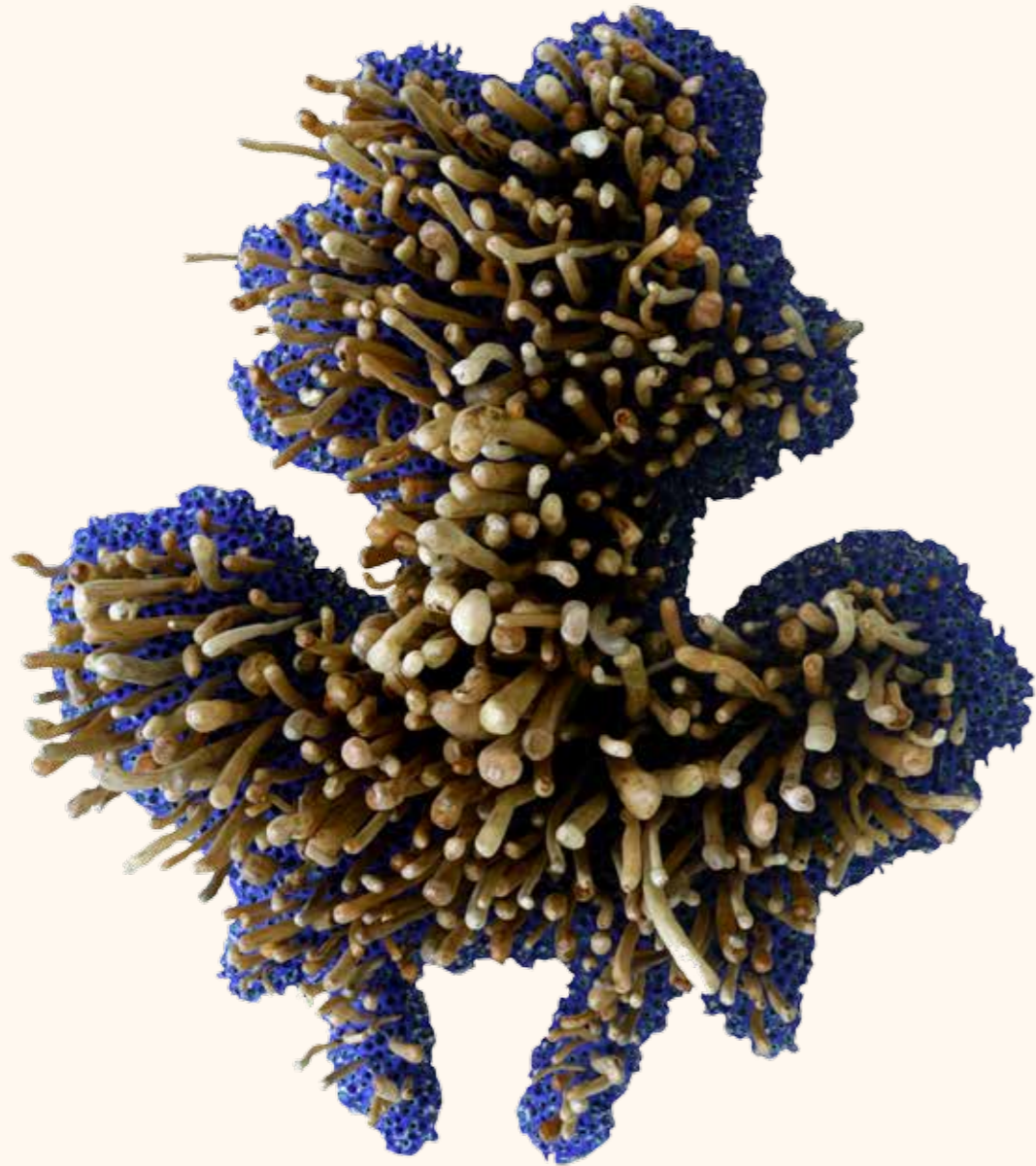
**What:** Canvas, paper and metal

**Why:** Saravanan Parasuraman’s eclectic practice uses a variety of mediums including vinyl stickers, ball bearings, sand, silicone and fibreglass. His interest in philosophical explorations of the embedded-ness of our lives in (or as) the world underpins much of his works.

**Where:** Art Houz Gallery, Chennai



Saravanan Parasuraman, **Structure**, Iron, 32" x 28" x 47", 2017.  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Art Houz Gallery Chennai.



Vijay Pichumani, **Genesis**, Wood and Acrylic, 38" x 40" x 30", 2018.  
Image Courtesy of the artist and Art Houz Gallery Chennai.

**Who:** Vijay Pichumani

**What:** Wood and paper

**Why:** Vijay speaks of his self and the body through works that intricately map the emotional and physical components of a singular moment – that of birth, that moment of exhilaration and the precise moment of revelation. His works bring to the table a unique quality that elevates the experience of viewing art.

**Where:** Art Houz Gallery, Chennai

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*My new works are all about what happens in a particular period of time. When we are in the midst of things, engrossed in it, we tend to lose ourselves in it. At that moment we feel connected to the entire universe. We only realise this when we recall the experience. Often my art approaches a similar thought, but through form. It relates to all forms of connections we experience all around us – an almost out-of-body experience where we look back at that one moment that made complete sense.*





CONFLICT



WHO'S THE AUDIENCE?



BEAUTY



SILENCE



HUMOUR



SANITY/INSANITY



TACTILE ART

NEWS ARTS THEATRE CINEMA DESIGN  
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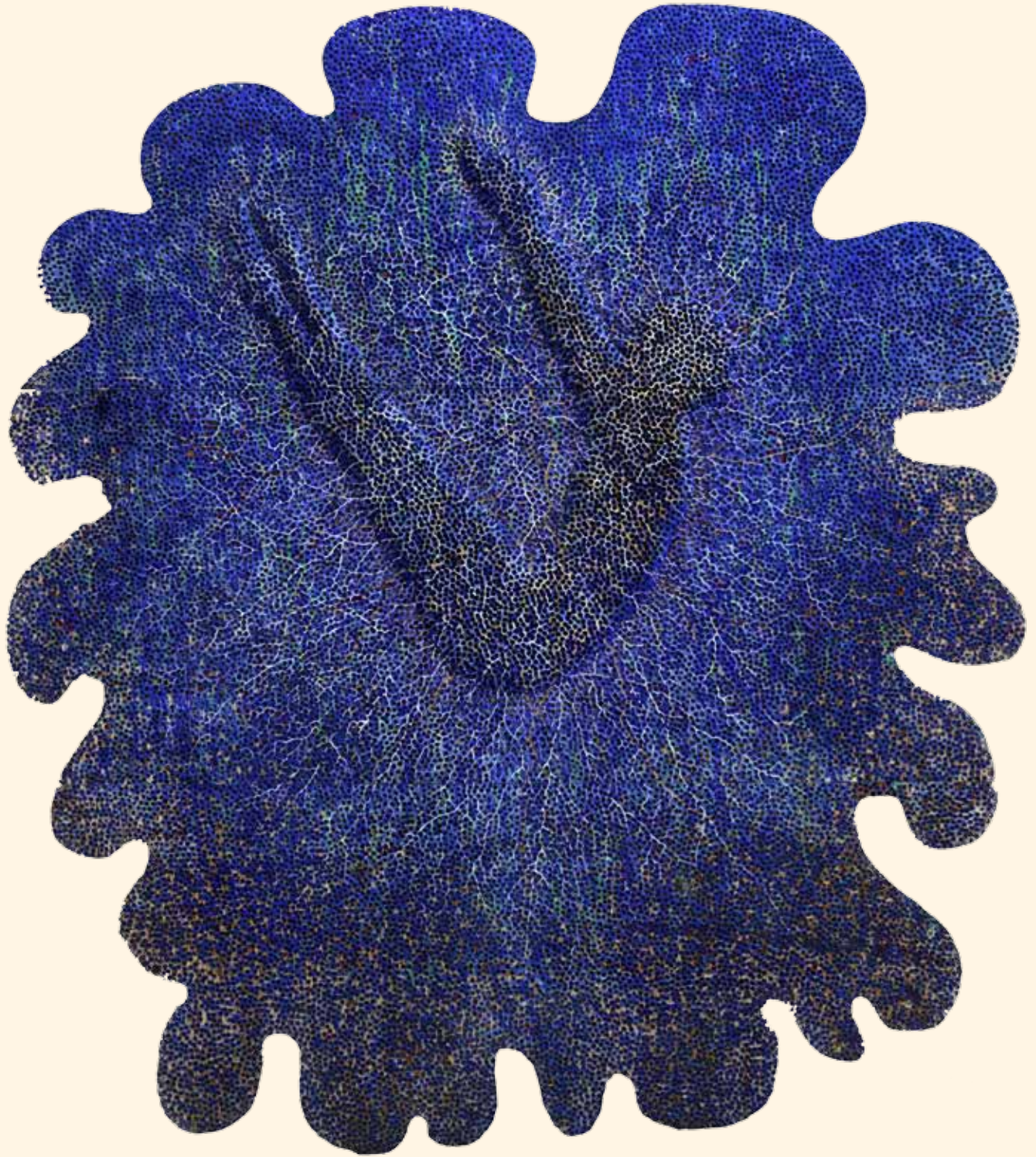


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