

The second iteration of Avid Learning's Multipolis Mumbai series concludes with a discussion that will examine the city's rich artistic and architectural landscape

OR

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For Immediate Release

Mumbai is a city like none other – diverse and cosmopolitan, vibrant and multicultural. A city synonymous with hustle and bustle, strife and struggle, but one which is teeming with dreams and aspirations. Often described as a microcosm of India, the city is a breeding ground for a myriad of cultures and traditions that have flourished throughout its dynamic history and are now inseparably woven into a distinctive and heterogeneous cultural fabric. In this sense, Mumbai has long been a muse to many well-known artists and architects whose distinguished work is a representation of the city's colourful past, rich heritage and its quintessential 'never-say-die' spirit.

Very few artists have chronicled Mumbai the way *Artist Sudhir Patwardhan* has. For five decades, he's captured city life, its everyday tensions, and the unique elements that exemplify its effervescent spirit. His works incorporate a skillfully honed aesthetic that relates to the ground realities of the city, its locales and its inhabitants. From mill workers to chawl dwellers and old settlements to fancy towers, Patwardhan's art has kept up with the ever-changing landscape of the city.

National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai, Ministry of Culture, Government of India in association with **The Guild** and **Avid Learning** present **Multipolis Mumbai: Art and Architecture in the City**, a panel discussion around *Walking Through Soul City*, an exhaustive and authoritative retrospective exhibition, curated by **Nancy Adajania**, which celebrates Sudhir Patwardhan's decades-long artistic journey and practice.

Showcasing the best of Patwardhan's paintings and drawings, this retrospective exhibition –which is being held at the venue – will provide an underlying context to this discussion with a special emphasis on the artist's depiction of Mumbai's urban culture through his works.

Join Sudhir along with *Artist Ranjit Kandalgaonkar*, *Artist and Illustrator Sameer Kulavoor*, and *Architect Neera Adarkar* who will be in conversation with *Architect, Theorist and Critic Kaiwan Mehta*.

The description of the discussion is as below:

These speakers will attempt to trace the rich artistic and architectural lineage and heritage of Mumbai and examine the various legacies and nuances associated with it. They will discuss how experts and practitioners in the fields of art and architecture use the variegated and multifarious cultural mosaic of the city as a source of inspiration for their work. It is often said that Mumbai is more than a city, it is an emotion. How have artists and architects alike, created works that best represent and demonstrate this sentiment?

A number of fascinating parallels can be drawn between psychological, social and physical elements of contemporary urban society and the art that makes an attempt to depict them. Our speakers will deconstruct how artists attempt to take viewers beyond the surface tensions and noises of one of the world's most densely populated, largest and most energetic metros and reveal its unique core which is responsible for perpetuating the essence and spirit of Mumbai and its people.

Mumbai's architectural expression is also unique and varied. The city has seen major political and cultural shifts that have played a major role in affecting its architectural identity. The Colonial Era influences are most prominent with many structures displaying Gothic, Victorian and Classical architectural styles. After independence, Bombay adopted Art Deco to recreate its urban identity. The style in many ways was representative of the larger idea of a changing, post-colonial India. Our experts will speak about the nuances and shaping forces of the colonial agenda, socio-politics, contemporaneous architecture and urban planning. What role have cultural shifts played in evolving Mumbai's architecture? And in turn, how are the cultural aspects of the city influenced by its architecture and built heritage?

In recent times, the city has faced major space constraints in the face of a growing population and increased urban migration which has resulted in a changing mentality with regards to preserving and conserving its architectural legacy. How do architects of today attempt to preserve and conserve the city's rich architectural legacy? How are they able to find a balance between architecture and urban planning? This panel will also discuss concepts like Vernacular architecture in the city and how it has come to signify the divergent nature of Mumbai's cultural landscape. They will compare and contrast the way the city has evolved and decipher what makes Mumbai's architectural landscape and legacy unique.

This talk will be the final episode of AVID's **Multipolis Mumbai Series** that decodes the past while looking to the future and finding novel ways of engaging, interacting with and reenergizing the city that we love! The original nine-part series, which began in 2012, examined how Architecture, Music, Food, Theatre, Fashion, Environment, Literature, Innovation, and Film influenced and were influenced by the city. Our second iteration of this series, which began in 2017 attempts to renegotiate larger perspectives on the city, dig deeper and capture its essence and changing rhythms and nuances. In this second round we seek to plumb new depths and unearth more fascinating nuggets about our ever-surprising Mumbai! On our journey, we have explored how entities like businesses and brands, architects and illustrators, historians and designers, artists and poets, women writers and female theatre stalwarts have influenced our city. We have also explored how art technology and gaming, wildlife activism, philanthropy and maritime culture, alternative museums and urban subcultures, the Independence Movement, sporting and dance culture and the Kitsch aesthetic and style have all played a role in enriching Mumbai's cultural fabric. We've also held workshops that looked more closely at iconic Mumbai architecture (namely Art Deco, Indo-Saracenic and Victorian Gothic).

Join us for our final Multipolis Mumbai talk which will examine artistic and architectural trends and legacies in the city!

WHERE: The National Gallery of Modern Art, Sir Cowasji Jahangir Public Hall, M. G. Road, Fort, Mumbai, 400032

WHEN: Wednesday, 15th January 2020 | 6:00 PM – 6:30 PM – Registrations | 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM – Discussion

RSVP: www.avidlearning.in/

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About the Speakers

Sudhir Patwardhan was born in Pune in 1949. He graduated in medicine and worked as a Radiologist in the city of Thane, near Mumbai from 1975 to 2005. He took to art seriously while in medical college. Since 1979 his work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and has received wide critical as well as popular acclaim. He is an occasional writer and lecturer on art, and also a curator who has focused on introducing new audiences to contemporary art. In 2008 – 2009 he organised 'Expanding Horizons' an exhibition of thirty important contemporary artists and travelled with it to eight cities in Maharashtra, along with lectures, seminars and film shows on art. Apart from exhibition catalogues, five books on the artist's work have been published. 'The Complicit Observer' The Art of Sudhir Patwardhan, by Ranjit Hoskote 2004 (Sakshi Gallery and Eminence Designs); 'Chitrakar Sudhir Patwardhan' (in Marathi) by Padmakar Kulkarni 2005 (Lokvangmay Grih); 'The Crafting of Reality, Sudhir Patwardhan: Drawings' by Ranjit Hoskote 2007 (The Guild); 'Rekhachitravichar', Marathi translation of 'The Crafting of Reality' by Dilip Ranade, 2012 (Popular Prakashan); and 'Hamsafar' with an essay by R. Siva Kumar in English and by Vijay Kumar in Hindi, 2018 (Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal, and The Guild). The artist lives and works in Thane, near Mumbai.

Ranjit Kandalgaonkar lives and works in Mumbai and his art practice primarily comprises a lens directed at the urban context of cities. Projects such as 'cityinflux', 'Gentricity', 'build/browse' and 'Stories of Philanthropic Trusts' map vulnerability within redevelopment strategies of urbanisation or record timelines and 'blindspots' – alternate markers of a city that's unravelling. A study of combative histories of reclamation and speculation have led to projects such as 'Isles amidst reclamation' and 'Seven Isles unclaimed'. Another decade-long project recording ship-breaking practices at Alang, Gujarat have led to the exhibition 'Shipping & the Shipped' – showcased at the Bergen Assembly, Art & Research Triennial in 2016 and subsequently at 'Sea Change' – Colomboscope in 2019. Awards & grants include Majlis Visual Arts Fellowship, UDRI Fellowship, Leverhulme Artist Residency, Harvard University SAI Artist Residency, Seed Funding Award – Wellcome Trust and a Gasworks Artist Residency in collaboration with Wellcome Collections in 2017 for which he produced an interactive drawing depicting his research on the Bombay plague of 1896.

Sameer Kulavoor (b.1983) lives and works in Mumbai, India. His work lies at the intersection of art, graphic design & contemporary illustration and has taken the form of paintings, murals, books, zines, prints and objects. He is interested in why things look the way they do; constantly exploring and understanding the impact that time, culture, politics and socio-economic conditions have on our visible and invisible surroundings. In this age of visual overload, his work involves filtering, dissecting, documenting and defamiliarising commonly seen subjects through the act of drawing, painting and design. Some of the zines he has produced include Sidewalks & Coffeeshops (2009), Zeroxwallah Zine (2011), The Ghoda Cycle Project (poster-book, 2012), Blued (book/zine, 2013) and Oh Flip (flipbooks, 2013). He exhibited The Ghoda Cycle Project at WDC Helsinki in 2012 and in Mumbai in 2013 while also collaborating with Paul Smith on a series of Ghoda Cycle Tee-shirt designs which were released worldwide. He presented select sketchbook drawings from between 2012 and 2016 as large serigraphs at Artisans', Kalaghoda, in a show titled 'Please Have A Seat' (2016). He has been working on a number of large-scale public art projects and paintings which are on view in Auckland (New Zealand), Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi and Chennai. 'A Man of the Crowd' (2018) was Kulavoor's first solo presentation at TARQ. Two of his new works were showcased at the TARQ booth group show at India Art Fair in 2019. Most recently, his drawings and paintings were part of 'The Shifting City' – Mumbai pavilion of 'Making Heimat – Arrival City' at the Goethe Institut Max Mueller Bhavan curated by Kaiwan Mehta. Kulavoor was the founder of Bombay Duck Designs which is presently directed by graphic artist + urdu/arabic typography specialist, Zeenat Kulavoor. Along with artist/designer Lokesh Karekar (Locopopo), Kulavoor also founded and curated six issues of 100%ZINE (currently on hiatus) – a visual arts magazine that discovers and showcases a wide range of visual art talent from India and abroad. He is represented in India by TARQ Mumbai.

Neera Adarkar is a practicing architect and an urbanist based in Mumbai. A graduate from Sir J. J. College of Architecture, Neera has been awarded Honorary Doctorate by the department of Urban planning, Urbanism and Architecture of the Katholieke University, Belgium. Neera is running a joint practice under Adarkar Associates, engaged in architecture, planning, conservation and urban research. Neera's work emerges from deep concern of social, urban and gender issues. She is one of the founder trustees of the School of Environment and Architecture, a graduate school of architecture in Mumbai. She has co-authored with Meena Menon 'One Hundred Years One Hundred Voices: Oral History of Millworkers of Girangaon' (2004) and has edited an anthology: 'The Chawls of Mumbai: Galleries of Life' (2011). 'Multilicities: Urban Cultures of Mumbai Metropolitan Region' is a forthcoming volume authored by Neera Adarkar and published by the Heritage Conservation Society of MMRDA.

Kaiwan Mehta, is a theorist and critic in the fields of visual culture, architecture, and city studies. Mehta has studied Architecture (B. Arch), Literature (MA), Indian Aesthetics (PGDip) and Cultural Studies (PhD). In 2017 he completed his doctoral studies at the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bengaluru, under the aegis of Manipal University. Since March 2012 he has been the Managing Editor of *Domus India* (Spenta Multimedia). He is also Professor and coordinator of the Doctoral Programme at the Faculty of Architecture, CEPT, Ahmedabad since 2017; and part of the CEPT University Press since 2018. He was the Charles Correa Chair professor at the Goa College of Architecture under the aegis of the Department of Art and Culture, Government of Goa for the academic year 2017-2018. He authored *Alice in Bhuleshwar: Navigating a Mumbai Neighbourhood* (Yoda Press. New Delhi, 2009) and *The Architecture of I M Kadri* (Niyogi. New Delhi, 2016). He has delivered keynote lectures and seminars at Cornell University, Centre Pompidou, Paris, besides other Indian and international universities, institutions, museums, and organisations; and has also contributed a section on Modern and Contemporary architecture in India and South-Asia for the forthcoming and updated edition of Bannister Fletcher's "A History of World Architecture". Mehta co-curated with Rahul Mehrotra and Ranjit Hoskote the national exhibition on architecture – "The State of Architecture: Practices and Processes in India" (UDRI. 2016) at the National Gallery Modern Art, Mumbai and 'State of Housing - Aspirations, Imaginaries, and Realities in India' (UDRI. 2018). He has been elected as the Jury Chairman for two consecutive terms (2015–17 and 2017–2019) for the international artists' residency programme across 13 disciplines at the Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, Germany. He has been curating the Urban Design and Architecture section of the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, Mumbai since 2016.

About Partners

The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) Mumbai, Ministry of Culture, Government of India is a repository of the cultural ethos of the country and showcases the changing art forms through the passage of the last 160 years starting from about 1857 in the field of Visual and Plastic arts. The first NGMA was opened in New Delhi at the historic Jaipur House, in the presence of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and artists and art lovers on March 29, 1954. The National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai was opened to the public in 1996. It hosts various exhibitions and also has its own art collections comprising paintings, sculptures and graphics with a focus on Indian and International artists. It is located in the precinct of the former auditorium the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Public Hall and the Institute of Science. This architecturally marvellous building was designed and built by the famous British architect George Wittet which has been completely redesigned keeping only the facade edifice that was Public Hall. It has hosted eminent artists like, K.H. Ara, F. N. Souza, Gaitonde, S.H. Raza and M.F. Hussain and contemporary artists like, K.G. Subramanyam, Sudhir Patwardhan, Nalini Malini, Atul Dodiya and Sudarshan Shetty. The NGMA in Mumbai is run and administered as a subordinate office to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, which has two branches one at Mumbai and the other at Bengaluru.

Established in 1997, **The Guild** focuses on discovering, promoting and exhibiting emerging and mid-career artists. The gallery provides a platform for discursive practices, innovation and experimentation. The Guild functions as a semi-institutional space. We believe in promoting critical and rigorous practices and ideas and our programming reflects this critical practice, and includes along with exhibitions, film screenings, artists' workshops, studio workshops, panels and talks. The Guild also continues to produce and publish artists' books – Navjot Altaf, Sudhir Patwardhan, K. G. Subramanyan, A. Ramachandran, T. V. Santhosh – as well as high quality catalogues. The Guild's artists have participated in significant museum exhibitions and biennales most notably at the Tate Modern, the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art in Oslo, the Hering Kunstmuseum in Denmark, the MAXXI National Museum in Rome, the Zacheta National Gallery in Warsaw, the Newark Museum, the Centre Pompidou, the Frost Art Museum in Florida, the Fourth Moscow Biennale, the Venice Biennale, the Musée d'arte Contemporain de Lyon in France and at the Sydney Biennale in Australia. These artists have been critically acclaimed in various art journals, magazines and newspapers. The Guild also works with institutions to lend works of art for exhibitions as well as to present significant exhibitions in the institutions and Museums.

Avid Learning, the cultural philanthropy arm of the Essar Group founded in 2009 has, over the past decade, grown into one of Mumbai's leading public programming platforms and is firmly entrenched in the country's wider cultural ecosystem. Over the years, AVID has gained a reputation for curating thought provoking, innovative and path-breaking content that is intellectually and creatively stimulating and engages with a variety of topical subjects and trends. Our thoughtfully curated and diverse events embrace the spirit of collaboration to bring together the best of Indian and international writers, artists, intellectuals, cultural experts, policymakers and industry leaders across Visual Art, Literature, Culture and Heritage, Education, Design & Technology and the Performing Arts through engaging and dynamic formats like panel discussions, workshops & master classes, roundtables, lecture demonstrations, festival platforms, symposiums & conferences, multidisciplinary performances and walkthroughs. We seek to democratize the arts, create new audiences, and deepen engagement by providing a platform that gives equal access and opportunity to new learners, fresh voices and nascent minds in order to nurture future stakeholders for the creative community in India. To date, AVID has conducted over 1150 programs and connected with more than 140,000 individuals, a widely eclectic group of life-long learners including students, patrons, practitioners, influencers, thought leaders and cultural & creative enthusiasts in Mumbai, Delhi, Jaipur, Bangalore, Goa and Gujarat. We have also made our mark internationally, with events and collaborations in Dubai and New York. We regularly collaborate and partner with institutions, organisations and initiatives like the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), one of the apex bodies that impact cultural policy and the creative sector as a whole. We have been at the helm of programming at the Royal Opera House, Mumbai India's only surviving Opera House since its reopening in 2016. We believe in the importance of arts for social change and we regularly offer our support and platforms for Social Advocacy. Thanks to a dedicated and innovative team, as well as a growing and evolving community of learners, AVID continues to give truth to the belief that Learning Never Stops! To keep updated and attend our events, like us on www.facebook.com/Avidlearning, follow us [on www.twitter.com/Avidlearning](https://www.twitter.com/Avidlearning) and Instagram: [@avidlearning](https://www.instagram.com/avidlearning) or log onto www.avidlearning.in