



7000 Museums: A Project For The Republic Of India

By Atul Dodiya

Exhibition Overview

The exhibition is a continuation of the Museum's curatorial series, 'Engaging Traditions', which encourages contemporary artists to engage with the Museum's history and collection. Through the series, artists are invited to respond to the Museum's collection, history and archives, addressing issues that speak directly to the traditions and issues that underlie the founding of the Museum, yet evoke the present by challenging orthodoxies and questioning assumptions.

7000 Museums: A Project For The Republic Of India is comprised of a comprehensive body of artworks, with oil paintings, water colours and sculptural assemblages. The works evoke a layered dialogue with varied conceptual frameworks from the Museum's collection, as they reference defining moments of history, art history as well as the semantics of museums and museum displays.

Atul addresses the complexity of various simultaneous happenings in history - of politics, art and culture, through playful interventions in his works. The water colour series humourously addresses ideas of local cultural representation through a construction of mock museums which represents both a lament and a hope.

The paintings in oil recreate historical photographs of events from the freedom struggle which recall the magnificent aspirations of the nation's founding fathers. These are ruptured by a strong painterly gesture in colour against the black and white, taken from the Museum's archive of pre restoration damaged paintings. The gesture sometimes acquires a flourish that recalls the decorative lines of the building as the artist fuses fact and fantasy into a striking allegory of our times.

In the vitrines Atul assembles an encyclopaedic vision of potentialities. Mythical figures take on a contemporary characterisation invoking the theatrical models and dioramas in the Museum. They nudge painterly references from Tagore, movies and great artists Atul admires, images from a personal history, or the popular kitsch that abounds in Mumbai's markets. In an inspired binary juxtaposition Atul paints the poems of Arun Kolatkar on the reverse of the vitrines, inscribing a sharp edge into the playfulness, an act that reflects the city itself built as it is on loss and hope.

Tasneem Zakaria Mehta
Honorary Director and Managing Trustee

Exhibition Credits

The exhibition is organised by the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum.

Curated by Tasneem Zakaria Mehta, Honorary Director and Managing Trustee.

Support

We are grateful for the support of Chemould Prescott Road.

About The Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum

The Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum was established in 1872 as the erstwhile Victoria and Albert Museum, Bombay. As Mumbai's first Museum, it showcases the city's cultural heritage and history through a rare collection of Fine and Decorative Arts that highlight Early Modern Art practices as well as the craftsmanship of various communities of the Bombay Presidency. The permanent collection includes miniature clay models, dioramas, maps, lithographs, photographs, and rare books that document the life of the people of Mumbai and the history of the city from the late eighteenth to early-twentieth centuries.

The Museum, once in a derelict condition, underwent a comprehensive five-year restoration and won UNESCO's 2005 Award of Excellence in the field of Cultural Conservation. The Museum re-opened in 2008 with an extensive exhibition program and is committed to promoting contemporary art and culture.

The Museum has collaborated with other museums and cultural institutions from around the world to showcase contemporary artists and international exhibitions that relate to the Museum's permanent collection. In 2011, the Museum hosted *Something That I'll Never Really See—Contemporary Photography from the V&A*, as well as an exhibition on a *Century of Olympic Posters* from the V&A, London. In 2012, the Museum presented *Sightseeing Trip: Eberhard Havekost in India*, along with the Dresden State Art Collections in Germany. The exhibition, *Social Fabric*, was displayed at the Museum in 2012 through collaboration with INIVA, the Institute of International Visual Arts, London and the Goethe-Institut, Max Mueller Bhavan, Mumbai. In 2013, the Museum presented the BMW Guggenheim Lab in Mumbai and ZegnArt Public, with Ermenegildo Zegna. In 2014, the Museum collaborated with the Guild of the Dome Association, the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, Max-Planck-Institute, and the Museum of the Opera del Duomo, Florence, to present *The Florentine Renaissance: The City as the Crucible of Culture*.

In December of 2012, the Museum introduced a dynamic cultural hub, the Museum Plaza, which offers the public a recreational space for performances, outdoor activities, and workshops. The Museum has restored and reappropriated abandoned spaces to accommodate a Special Projects Space, Museum Cafe, Museum Shop and an Education Center.

The Museum is soon launching an exciting expansion plan supported by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai. The Museum's envisioned Mumbai Modern Wing will provide new gallery spaces and facilities including an Interpretation Centre, Library, Archive, Conservation Laboratory, Museum Shop, and Café. At the heart of the North Wing will be a permanent gallery to showcase contemporary Mumbai, focusing on important milestones in the city's development and highlighting its cultural achievements, as well as a temporary exhibition space of international standards capable of hosting large-scale travelling exhibitions. The aim is to create spaces and facilities that will allow the Museum to further diversify its activities and services to the city.

Related Programs

The Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum will host a series of curatorial tours and workshops for both children and adults throughout the duration of the exhibition. Please refer to the Museum website for more information.

Contact

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For press inquires contact:

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Visiting Hours

The Museum is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (last entry is at 5:30pm) and is closed on Wednesdays and certain public holidays.

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