

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF ART DECO: 1925-2025

Where: Alliance Française de Bombay, Churchgate | **When:** January 18

Much before the modernism of Le Corbusier, India had another brush with an architectural style with origins in the Francosphere. Art deco got its name and its features in 1925 Paris, at the International Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts. It spread to India in the following decades, with Bombay hosting one of the largest collections in the world. From Oval Maidan buildings to Tardeo baugs to Sion sadans to Juhu bungalows, art deco is everywhere you look.

“This international style characterised much of modern Bombay’s built form starting from the 1930s to the ‘50s,” says Atul Kumar, founder trustee, Art Deco Mumbai Trust. “It afforded us apartment-style living and a cosmopolitan way of life. In its 100th year, we begin its centenary celebrations in January with a public lecture by architect and academic Mustansir Dalvi on art deco’s origins, and how it took on a life of its own in different parts of the world. This will be followed by events and activities throughout the year, culminating with the World Congress in Paris in October. These events are opportunities to think about our city more broadly, and acknowledge how much history has passed before us.”



The Indian Merchant Chamber’s building at Churchgate was designed by Master, Sathe & Bhuta and built by Shapoorji Pallonji in the art deco style.

CULTURAL CALENDAR 2025 THE YEAR AHEAD

STEP INTO A WHIRL OF ART

Two major programmes overlap in January; important heritage projects are greenlit; and world-class shows, physical and physical, come to town: 2025 will have a lot going on, says Ekta Mohta



For MGW 2025, Spanish artist Santiago Giralda has created a four-metre-long triptych for his solo show at Galerie Isa.

MUMBAI GALLERY WEEKEND 2025

Where: Galleries across Mumbai | When: January 9-12

From furniture pieces by architect Pinakin Patel to textile works inspired by lungis in Madras checks, Mumbai Gallery Weekend (MGW) encompasses a lot more than just art in its new edition. With 37 participating galleries and spaces, here's the rundown: a new solo show by Atul Dodya at Chemould Prescott Road, the deliciously titled 'Radio Ceylon Paintings: Vol I'; Rana Begum returns to Jhaveri Contemporary with a new solo; British-Sri Lankan artist Christopher Kulendran Thomas debuts his first solo in India at Experimenter - Colaba; as does the Aravani Art Project, at Gallery XXI. Art Musings celebrates its 25th anniversary with works by

Anjolie Ela Menon, Sakti Burman, and others; while Galerie Mirchandani + Steinrucke opens the second part of Kulpreet Singh's fantastic first show, Akara Modern will be showing Jaydev Thakore's large unseen body of work; and both gallery spaces at Isa will be taken over by Santiago Giralda's 'Maps of the Invisible'. MGW Talks will also host a panel discussion on 'The Founding of Hong Kong's Museums and Cultural Institutions'.

In India's contemporary art scene, a lack of international art institutions has prompted galleries to play the role of institutions themselves, for which lessons from Hong Kong are both necessary and timely.

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN FILM FESTIVAL

Where: NCPA Mumbai | When: January 9-12

It's rare for Bawa and BV to share the same stage. But, this is what will happen at Architecture & Design Film Festival (ADFF), an event dedicated to celebrating the two related masters. In partnership with media house STIR, the four-day programme will include screenings of 'This is Not a House', which details the construction of one of the most unique homes in the world: the Crawford House in Montecito; a restored and remastered screening of the Oscar-nominated 'My Architect', about American architect Louis Kahn; 'Modernism, Inc.: The Eliot Noyes Design Story', on the influential architect who propagated modernist thinking and established a corporate design aesthetic at IBM; 'The Promise: Architect BV Doshi', on the legacy of the

Indian Pritzker prize-winner; and 'The Genius of the Place: The Life and Work of Geoffrey Bawa (2023)', on the Sri Lankan architect most well-known for his work in Tropical Modernism.

The festival will also include pavilions, talks, book readings, workshops, and other special projects. "The festival presents films that delve into the works of global icons such as Louis Kahn and Charlotte Perriand, while also spotlighting regional narratives and the legacies of Indian architecture," says Amit Gupta, founder and editor-in-chief, STIR. "Our programming aims to explore the interplay of culture, sustainability, and creativity in shaping our built worlds, while facilitating widespread access to these disciplines, often confined to a few."



'The Promise: Architect BV Doshi' (2023) will be screened at the Architecture & Design Film Festival (ADFF:STIR) at the NCPA Mumbai.

DR BHAI DAJI LAD MUSEUM REOPENS

Where: Rani Baug, Byculla East | When: January 2025



Dr Bhai Daji Lad Museum's interior is a rare example of High Victorian design in India.

Closed in 2022, Mumbai's oldest museum will finally reopen next year. The 1872 structure, with its Palladian exterior, High Victorian interior, and Wes Anderson colour scheme, is the city's crown jewel, something to go with its queen's necklace. "During Covid-19, the building suffered due to a lack of regular maintenance, and we had to close it for urgent repairs," says Tasneem Zakaria Mehta, managing trustee and director, Dr Bhai Daji Lad Museum. "The objects have also been cleaned and restored, and the building is looking magnificent now." The work was overseen by the BMC through its Heritage Cell, with special interest taken by

commissioner Dr Bhushan Gagrani. "We have planned exciting programmes," continues Zakaria Mehta. "We will restart our much-appreciated course on Indian art in the summer. Richard Peña, director, New York Film Festival, will conduct courses on film history as well. In January, we are presenting a mini-retrospective of artist Reena Saini Kallat's work over the last 25 years. In April, we are collaborating with the German embassy for an exhibition on Eckart Muthesius, the architect who designed an incredible palace in Indore and worked as the state architect for Yashwantrao Holkar in the early 20th century. And, many more events and exhibitions are on the table."

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A SHOW OF HANDS: IN MEMORIAM: GIEVE PATEL

Where: JNAF, CSMVS | When: March 20 onwards

Artist Sudhir Patwardhan's portrait of Dr Gieve Patel, which is a part of 'A Show of Hands' PHOTO COURTESY: VADEHRA ART GALLERY AND SUDHIR PATWARDHAN



When Dr Gieve Patel passed away in November 2023, eulogies were delivered in art galleries, on theatre podiums, and within poetry circles. An artistic polymath and a practising physician, Patel left behind a great body of works in visual art, poetry, and playwriting, and a litany of admirers in each of the fields. The Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation (JNAF) is bringing together 13 artists (Sudhir Patwardhan, Gulamohammed Sheikh, Nilima Sheikh, Atul Dodya, and others) to celebrate the life and work of Patel in a group show called 'A Show of Hands'.

Curated by poet, art critic, and cultural theorist Ranjit Hoskote, the exhibition comprises 73 artworks across mediums. "A Show of Hands" is, above all, a celebration of the richness that Gieve Patel brought to those whose lives he touched, as friend, as interlocutor, as fellow painter," says Hoskote. "A number of the artists we invited were his close friends, while some others were younger colleagues whose work interested him deeply. For myself, I had the privilege of being his friend for nearly 40 years, his fellow poet, and his fellow traveller in the visual arts. To me, this exhibition is a deeply personal act of dedication."

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Where: NMACC, BKC | When: March 5 onwards

Crashing chandeliers, sopranos muttering into croaking frogs, stagehands dangling from Punjab lassos, and sets turning into reigns of terror: it's just another day at the opera.

The troubled titular character of 'The Phantom of the Opera' is a fascinating villain, who has entertained audiences over nearly 14,000 shows. Disfigured at birth and paraded as a circus act, he's a musical genius-turned-obsessive stalker. When he falls in one-way love with the understudy Christine, he doesn't moan and sing love songs. He tries to burn the Paris Opéra

House to the ground. Audiences on West End and Broadway need no introduction to his origin story. Soon, neither will audiences in Mumbai. Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical is set to open at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre in March, in time for the venue's two-year anniversary. Founder and chairperson Nita Ambani says, "Our vision has been to present the best of India and the world to our audience. 'The Phantom of the Opera' is a timeless tale, which unveils the beauty in vulnerability and the power of love to transcend barriers."



'The Phantom of the Opera' is the longest running show in Broadway history.



DA VINCI GENIUS: INTERACTIVE IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

Where: Nesco Center | When: Till January 29

Unlike Auguste Rodin or Vincent van Gogh, Leonardo da Vinci doesn't have a single museum dedicated to him. The Louvre, which has five paintings by him, is considered the venue with the largest collection of his paintings. The problem, of course, is: how do you sum up a man who was an artist, sculptor, architect, physicist, cartographer, draughtsman, geologist, theorist, and astronomer, in one structure? 'Da Vinci Genius' has a go at it. An immersive experience that projects more than 50 of da Vinci's works onto giant

screens, including the 'Mona Lisa' and 'The Last Supper', 'Da Vinci Genius' is an accessible way of deciphering the man. Sketches of 'The Vitruvian Man' with giant captions; recreations of his famous works such as 'Salvator Mundi' and 'The Lady with an Ermine', which dissolve into pixels; animated versions of his far-fetched ideas such as Flying Machine and The Parachute; interactive displays, floor-to-ceiling projections, AI-enhanced experiences; and a Mona Lisa who definitively smiles thanks to VFX: this is da Vinci for the digital age.

YEAR AT A GLANCE

- Currently undergoing a facelift, the Gateway of India will reopen in February.
- The Kala Ghoda Arts Festival will take place from January 25 to February 2 in Mumbai's art district.
- Art Mumbai will take place from November 13-16 at the Mahalaxmi Racecourse.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) will open the European Painting section of the Sir Ratan Tata Gallery in early 2025.
- A survey of acclaimed architect and urban design thinker Rahul Mehrotra's recent projects will open at Tarq gallery on August 1, curated by Ranjit Hoskote.
- Gateway LitFest will take place from February 28 to March 1, at the Royal Opera House.
- The Symphony Orchestra of India's Spring 2025 Season is from January 25 to February 15, with maestro Zubin Mehta conducting three shows.
- Janfest 2025 will take place from January 25-26 at St Xavier's College, with performances by Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande, Shubha Mudgal, Rahul Sharma, and others.
- Lollapalooza India 2025 is from March 8-9 at the Mahalaxmi Racecourse. Green Day, Shawn Mendes, and Hanumankind are part of the line-up.
- Mahindra Blues Festival is from February 8-9 at Mehboob Studio, with Robert Randolph, The Teskey Brothers, Ruthie Foster, among others.

COLDPLAY: MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

Where: DY Patil Stadium, Navi Mumbai | When: January 18, 19, 21



The 'Music of the Spheres' world tour is the ongoing eighth concert tour undertaken by rock band Coldplay.

The concert that brought the sound with the summons. The upcoming Coldplay show is going to be remembered for the supposedly 13mn people who tried to book tickets, crashing the website; the ticket rates in black, which have now touched a lakh; senior staff from BookMyShow being called for questioning by Mumbai police; and a third concert announced in as many days just to placate the fans. Even Coldplay didn't know they were this popular in India. Named after their ninth solo album, 'Music of the Spheres' world tour has been going for two years now, and has already raked in a billion dollars. Alongside soaring pop melodies, which is quintessential Coldplay, the show is filled with fireworks displays, endless confetti guns, streamers, and an anime about robots. For a band that's uniquely skilled at playing stadiums and getting an arena to move as one, the experience, for those who get a foot in, should be a foot-tapping one.