

# Essentials to remember when you visit the ongoing India Art Fair

## ART SMART

The exhibition, which showcases works from 60 galleries, is the perfect venue to take the first step towards becoming an art collector

**T**ime, as they say, flies. Especially when one is having a good time. It's already time to bid adieu to January. Didn't 2019 introduce itself rather politely, literally 3 days or so back? It's probably because of the whirlwind pace of contemporary living that we are all entirely familiar with. I've spent a fortnight of this month on the move, with two days slipping through the cracks on account of flying between time zones.

Though living out of a suitcase has its challenges, it isn't all painful. Relief exists in the guise of the exceptional works of art, which either I'm flying halfway around the globe to view, or people, most often highly fascinating individuals, are either buying or selling.

Back to the moment at hand. By the time you'd be reading these words, the India Art Fair will be preparing to welcome visitors for the second day of its run. It is on till Sunday, and I would urge each one of you to visit this event. If your reaction to this suggestion is, "But I'm not really interested in art, Arvind...", then I'd insist you attend it.

The driving reason would be the prospect of viewing a varied range of work you will be exposed to over a relatively short span of time. The scale isn't overwhelming, with under 60 galleries, which comprise a mix of Indian and international galleries, representing a mix of modern and contemporary art.

The Fair organisers have created a program focused on young collectors, and there are a number of events that are can be attended, should you be interested. The calendar, along with all other essential information, should be available on the Fair's website (<http://indiaartfair.in/>). Here's a list of five essentials to keep in mind when you're at the Fair.

Try to schedule your visit along with someone who is an experienced hand in this domain. The ideal profile would be that of a seasoned collector, who would be familiar with the industry and its processes. Walking through with someone with this sort of a background

would convert the Art Fair into an excellent training ground for you. You can witness first hand how a pro glides through these seemingly intimidating functions, how they ask questions, what they consider and take into account while zoning in on an artist, or an artwork of interest, how they make offers and negotiate. It is quite clearly the finest (and swiftest) route to learning the ropes.

Put your trusty camera phone to work, and take photographs of all works that cause a reaction — positive as well as negative. You will over the course of this walk-through view about a thousand works of assorted forms. You will, undoubtedly, find it impossible to remember all that you see — even the ones that make an impact. Create a gallery dedicated to the works you see, with a side note of the gallery that displayed this work. This should become part of a growing archive you create that features works of art that you view at different venues and events, the world over. And remember to carry a battery pack.

Always make it a point to speak to gallerists representing the works of which that you are making a note. This step is crucial since it involves two aspects that will serve you richly: unraveling the story behind the work and the artist's practice and introducing yourself to the gallery as a potential patron of the said artist. Gallerists are among the leading authorities of information on the artists they represent and it is essential for you to build a relationship with them, should collecting art be of interest to you.

Take a breather. Every individual has a personal and unique level of comfort in terms of visual appetite. Beyond a point, everything tends to become a blur of colours. It is essential to remain aware of this aspect when entering a premises that holds a few thousand works. Once you've covered the first pavilion, take a self-imposed beverage and snack break, if for nothing else than to give your faculties a respite from the multitude of hues and forms. If you're overtly overwhelmed, take a longer break and return the following day to resume the tour.

Reserve a work. Make an offer. Take the leap. This is what will allow you to qualify and take the first step towards collecting - taking that proverbial plunge. If following a complete round of the premises, you've identified something that you like enough to wish to own, and are satisfied with the back story on the work, go forth and make an offer. If it's meant to, you might be going home with a new friend.

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