

Art

10 Indian Artists Who Are Shaping Contemporary Art

● Cleo Roberts 3月10, 2020 6:52pm [f](#) [t](#) [e](#)**Shilpa Gupta***WheredoIendandyoubegin*, 2012

'My East is Your West' at Sujral Foundation, Venice (2015)

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India has a history of debate around the nature of “Indian art” and the development of an idiosyncratic style of modernism spurred by the country’s independence in 1947. Contemporary Indian artists continue to be critical and engaged with issues linked to the country’s turbulent and fraught history of colonialism, decolonization, and division. The legacies of crafting nation-states—which continue to be felt in the present—and questions of representation often underpin works. Artists respond to faith and gender politics, the country’s contested territorial boundaries, the nuances of secularism, and wider geopolitical agendas.

The scarcity of international exhibitions by Indian artists in no way reflects reality. India’s thriving art world is growing fast—and the strength of Indian art will only grow. In addition to the annual Indian Art Fair, various new museums and exhibitions are emerging: The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art is developing a new, forthcoming institution; the Museum of Art and Photography will open in Bangalore; the Gujral Foundation is commissioning a public pavilion series in Delhi; and the Kochi Biennale will have its fifth edition this December.

Streamlining this rigorous and expanding Indian contemporary art world into a list of 10 artists is a challenge. This is a mere selection focused on a range of established and emerging artists, the majority of whom are based in India. Working across performance, installation, photography, painting, sculpture, fashion, and ceramics, each artist has a distinctive aesthetic vocabulary, which affirms their place in the global canon of contemporary art.

Himali Singh Soin

B. 1987, New Delhi. Lives and works in New Delhi and London.



Himali Singh Soin, still from *we are opposite like that*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist.

Winner of the Frieze Artist Award at Frieze London in 2019, Himali Singh Soin has risen to prominence for her evocative practice, which combines performance, text, and film. At the core of her practice is the natural world and ecology, often used as metaphors to reflect on the foibles of human intervention and interaction with the environment.



Her films and performance works have their origins in research. Her ongoing series “We Are Opposite Like That” (2017–present) builds a historical narrative for the most remote areas of the Arctic and Antarctic circles, told from the perspective of its ice. The ice recounts tales of the area’s “discovery” at the hands of European colonialism, integrated with references to conspiracy theories, animation, and UFO sightings spliced with archival material. She is currently a writer in residence at [Whitechapel Gallery](#) in London. ●

Cleo Roberts