



## **Pavilion of India at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia 2026**

**The Pavilion of India announces *Geographies of Distance: remembering home*, a seminal exhibition revealing the cultural depth of a nation in the throes of economic boom with a vibrant global diaspora**

**Presented by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, in partnership with the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC) and Serendipity Arts Foundation**

**Venice (Arsenale), 9 May - 22 November 2026 | Previews: 6, 7, 8 May 2026**

**3rd February 2026, New Delhi:** The Pavilion of India announces details of its participation in the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, featuring the group exhibition, *Geographies of Distance: remembering home*. Presented by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and curated by Dr. Amin Jaffer, the exhibition will reflect the cultural depth of the nation at a key moment on the world stage. The India Pavilion returns to Venice for the first time since 2019, in partnership with the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre and Serendipity Arts Foundation, two of India's leading multi-disciplinary cultural institutions.

All five participating Indian artists - Alwar Balasubramaniam (Bala), Sumakshi Singh, Ranjani Shettar, Asim Waqif and Skarma Sonam Tashi – draw on the material culture traditions that span millennia to evoke an emotional connection to the idea of home. Despite the artists' different geographic origins, experience and practice, all are united in their use of organic materials traditional to India in the creation and presentation of their work.

*Geographies of Distance: remembering home* will express how, for those whose lives are shaped by change or distance, home becomes less a fixed place and more a portable condition: part memory, part material, part ritual, part personal mythology. The exhibition reflects a moment of accelerated change in India, as cities grow horizontally and vertically, transforming neighbourhoods at an unprecedented pace. Indians today are more mobile than ever, both within a country in the throes of economic boom and as a visible and vocal global diaspora. Constituting nearly 20 per cent of the world's population, Indians remain deeply connected to their origins and culture. As once familiar physical spaces transform and renew, we are invited to consider whether home is a place or an evocation of emotion and memory.

Across the exhibition, elements of 'home' appear fractured, suspended, scaffolded, or vulnerable as the artists explore longing and a deep-rooted sense of attachment to the place to which we belong. Each artist considers India's transformation, mobility and the global diaspora.

The exhibiting artists represent many regions and generations of artists at the forefront of artistic practice in India:

- **Alwar Balasubramaniam (Bala)** works from a studio in rural Tamil Nadu, with a practice that emerges from an intimate dialogue with the natural world and the landscape surrounding his home, crafted from the soil and clay from the terrain in which he lives.
- **Sumakshi Singh** is a New Delhi-based artist who creates ethereal installations from embroidered thread, which turn memory itself into an architectural medium.
- **Ranjani Shettar** explores India's ancient craft traditions through sculptural works that appear to defy gravity. Working in Karnataka, she translates natural materials into organic floral forms entirely by hand, demonstrating the slow revelation of a finished work and its hidden possibilities.
- **Asim Waqif**, trained as an architect, repurposes organic and discarded materials for his sculptural installations, confronting issues of consumption and sustainability in public space. His work invites visitors to participate and activate his structures beyond observance.
- **Skarma Sonam Tashi** presents work grounded in the landscape and architecture of his native Ladakh, working with organic recycled materials and traditional techniques such as paper mâché to showcase the fragility of the natural world, raising questions about ecology and cultural preservation.

The exhibition is curated by Dr. Amin Jaffer, who has devised the project in response to La Biennale di Venezia's theme, In Minor Keys, conceived by the late curator Koyo Kouoh.

India seeps into Venice not as a spectacle, but as a whisper with confidence. Through music, movement and murmurs, the India Pavilion creates ephemeral interventions that dissolve into the city's daily rhythm - appearing at dawn on a bridge, resonating at dusk, materialising during afternoon light. A key highlight of the India Pavilion will be a curated programme of music, performance, poetry and conversation over the course of the Biennale.

**Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism of India:** *"India's return to La Biennale di Venezia is a proud moment of reflection and a statement of cultural confidence. Our national pavilion will showcase a contemporary India that is deeply rooted in its civilisational memory while fully engaged with the world today. Through this pavilion, India affirms the strength of our cultural diversity, the vitality of our creative communities, and the role of art and culture in contributing to how our nation is seen and understood on the global stage."*

**Vivek Aggarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture:** *"The India Pavilion brings together artists whose practices reflect the evolving realities of contemporary India. Working across regions and material traditions, these artists articulate India's global voice through deeply personal and innovative forms of expression. Their work demonstrates how India's creative talent continues to engage meaningfully with questions of memory, place and transformation in a changing world."*

**Isha Ambani, on behalf of the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre said:** *"The Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre is pleased to partner with the Ministry of Culture to present the National Pavilion of India at La Biennale di Venezia, featuring some of our most compelling artistic voices. The richness and plurality of their work reflect the complexities and creative ambition of*

*contemporary India, while celebrating the timeless traditions of our country. This project underscores our vision for art and culture to foster a global dialogue that transcends boundaries, bringing the best of India and the world together.”*

**Sunil Kant Munjal, Founder Patron of Serendipity Arts said:** “Serendipity Arts creates platforms for living, shared and dynamic artistic practice. The India Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia extends this philosophy onto a global stage. Alongside the visual arts programme, our involvement will activate the Pavilion through performance and participation, inviting audiences to engage with the ideas of memory, place and belonging in multiple forms. This collaboration reflects Serendipity’s belief that India’s cultural expression is most powerful when it is interdisciplinary and open to dialogue.”

**Dr. Amin Jaffer, Curator and Director of the Al Thani Collection, said:** “The 61st International Art Exhibition, themed ‘In Minor Keys’, offers a poignant opportunity to explore the nuances of distance and the enduring power of memories of home. The India Pavilion brings together artists whose practices reflect the experience of a world in constant change. The pavilion explores home not as a fixed physical location, but as an emotional space carried within the self, a repository of culture, personal mythology and emotion. Using materials associated closely with Indian civilisation, the chosen artists create a singular meditation on the fragile nature of home, which is both personal and universal, quiet and resolute. Through this work, our artists come together to form a collective Indian voice that resonates with Koyo Kouoh’s vision for this Biennale.”

**ENDS**

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About the Ministry of Culture**

The Ministry of Culture is the apex body responsible for the preservation, promotion, and dissemination of India’s vast and diverse cultural heritage. With an unwavering commitment to safeguarding the nation’s tangible and intangible art forms, the Ministry undertakes strategic efforts to ensure that India’s rich cultural legacy is accessible, inclusive, and sustainable. Operating through 2 attached offices, 7 subordinate offices, and 34 autonomous organizations fully funded by the Government of India, the Ministry facilitates a culture-based development model that nurtures creativity, honours tradition, and fosters innovation in the cultural space. These institutions work synergistically to implement policies and programs that empower communities, recognize artistic excellence, and connect citizens with their heritage.

### **About the Artists:**

- **Alwar Balasubramaniam:** (b.1971) in Tamil Nadu, India. He received a BFA from the Government College of Arts, Chennai, India, in 1995 after which he continued his studies in Edinburgh and Vienna. Bala’s works have been featured in exhibitions and collections worldwide, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), New York; The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Mori Art

Museum, Tokyo, Japan; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), New Delhi, India, In 2001 he was given the Joan Miro foundation award accompanied by a solo exhibition.

- **Sumakshi Singh:** (b.1980) is an artist, curator, writer and educator. Her interactive installations, paintings, drawings, embroideries and sculptures have been presented in over 20 solo and 100 curated, group gallery and museum exhibitions worldwide, including at *The Gallery of Modern art*: Queensland, *Saatchi Gallery*: London, *Kochi Biennale*: Kochi, *Museum of Contemporary Art*: Lyon, *MAXXI Museum*: Rome, *Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum*, Madrid, *Padiglione Arte Contemporanea*, National Museum, Milan, *Mobilier National/ Les Gobelins*, Paris, *Whitworth Art Gallery* U.K.
- **Ranjani Shettar:** (b. 1977) lives and works in Karnataka, India. Her works are in many prestigious museum collections and have been the subject of several solo presentations. Recently, the Barbican Centre in London hosted *Cloud songs on the horizon*, Shettar's first major institutional show in Europe featuring a series of new, large-scale suspended sculptures across the entirety of their Conservatory.
- **Asim Waqif:** (b.1978) studied architecture at the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi. After initially working as an art-director for film and television he later started making independent video and documentaries before moving into a dedicated art-practice. He has presented solo exhibitions at London's Hayward Gallery, Palais de Tokyo in Paris and with the Vancouver Art Gallery among many others.
- **Skarma Sonam Tashi:** (b.1997) has pursued a BFA from IMFA, Jammu, 2019 and MFA, Kalabhavana, VBU, Shantiniketan, 2021. His works have been exhibited in solo shows at Ladakh Art and Media Organization (LAMO), 2022 and group shows in various cities of India including Delhi, Kolkata, Kerala, Gujarat, Hyderabad, etc. He has received the Lalit Kala Academy Scholarship 2021-22; 64<sup>th</sup> National Award, NEA, Lalit Kala Akademi 2023; "Art For Hope Grant" Hyundai 2024. He participated in the India Art Fair 2024 through Sa Ladakh.

### About Dr. Amin Jaffer, Curator

Dr. Amin Jaffer is Director of The Al Thani Collection, an encyclopaedic holding of more than 5,000 works of art spanning millennia. Dr. Jaffer, whose academic and curatorial work focuses on the meeting of European and Asian cultures, was an Artistic Director for the second Islamic Arts Biennale (January-May 2025) and Senior Curator at the Victoria & Albert Museum (1995-2007). Jaffer has curated exhibitions at institutions ranging from the Museum of Fine Arts, San Francisco to the Doge's Palace, the Forbidden City and the State Hermitage Museum. Working to the vision of Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani, he oversaw the creation of The Al Thani Collection museum space at the Hôtel de la Marine, Paris, which opened to critical acclaim in November 2021. Since its inception, the space has presented exhibitions in partnership with prestigious institutions such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon; the Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca D'Oro, Venice; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

### About NMACC

The Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC) is a first-of-its-kind, multi-disciplinary cultural space in the sphere of arts. Situated in Mumbai, the centre was envisioned by Nita Ambani, and aims to preserve and promote India's rich art, culture and heritage through varied art forms. Opened in 2023, NMACC is home to three performing arts spaces: the majestic



2,000-seater Grand Theatre, the technologically advanced 250-seater Studio Theatre, and the dynamic 125-seater Cube. It also features the Art House, a four-storey dedicated visual arts space that houses shifting exhibits and installations from the finest artists across India and the world. Spread across the Cultural Centre's concourses is a captivating mix of public art by renowned Indian and global artists, including the famed Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Mirrored Room, an immersive installation and 'Kamal Kunj' – one of the largest Pichwai paintings in India.

### **About Serendipity Arts**

Serendipity Arts is an organization that facilitates pluralistic cultural expressions, sparking conversations around the arts across the South Asian region. Committed to innovation and creativity, the aim of the Foundation is to support practice and research in the arts, as well as to promote sustainability and education in the field through a range of cultural and collaborative initiatives. The Foundation hosts projects through the year, which include institutional partnerships with artists and art organizations, educational initiatives, grants and outreach programmes across India and the globe. The largest outreach programme of the Foundation is Serendipity Arts Festival, which is South Asia's largest multidisciplinary arts festival, creating platforms for artistic innovation and public engagement across visual arts, music, theatre, dance, culinary arts, craft, and photography. Held annually in Panjim, Goa, with free public access, SAF emphasizes the civic responsibility of supporting the arts and fostering meaningful connections between artists, audiences, and communities.



Ministry of Culture  
Government of India



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