

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

ART MUMBAI

Storytelling ... from Modern to Contemporary



The Poet & Philosopher, 1966, Oil on canvas, 114.3 x 86.36 cm

Dubai, UAE - Leila Heller Gallery is delighted to announce its participation in Art Mumbai 2025. The gallery's presentation will showcase a curated selection of works by leading contemporary artists from the Middle East and beyond, reflecting its long-standing commitment to fostering cross-cultural dialogue and artistic innovation.

For Art Mumbai 2025, Leila Heller Gallery presents "Storytelling... From Modern to Contemporary", a booth that bridges modern and contemporary practices through the lens of storytelling. The presentation celebrates artists whose works are deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of their homelands each drawing from inherited traditions, collective memories, and personal mythologies to construct visual narratives that resonate across time and place.

Ranging from whimsical, character-driven compositions to meditative explorations of natural and organic forms, the selection highlights the multiplicity of voices shaping today's artistic landscape. Each work becomes a vessel for identity and experience, reflecting how personal histories evolve into universal expressions.

Together, these works form a dialogue between past and present, reflecting the ever-evolving nature of cultural expression. Through this diverse yet interconnected group of artists, the presentation affirms that storytelling remains a vital and unifying force one that continues to shape the aesthetics, sensibilities, and emotional landscapes of art across generations and geographies.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Aref Montazeri is a sculptor removed from conventional practices, he pursues a novel approach to mirror art that involves large numbers of mirror cuts and meticulous attention to detail. Conceptually, he follows an approach he has termed "The MIRROR follows narrative"; Which favours materialism over ornamentation and resilience of design over buildability. His design apparatus consists of three criteria: Narrative, Material and Technique, which is also the way he looks at art and creates it.

Arash Nazari is a self-taught Iranian artist. Nazari's works are heavily influenced by Negārgari (Persian Miniature Art). In his paintings, he brings to notice the contrast between, unique classical art of miniature opposed to color tones from contemporary minimalist art.

Bahman Mohasses (1931–2010) was a pioneering Iranian modernist artist, renowned for his provocative paintings, sculptures, and collages. Often referred to as the "Persian Picasso," he was known for his bold, surreal imagery and unflinching social critique.

Charles Hossein Zenderoudi (b. 1937, Tehran) is a pioneering Iranian modernist celebrated for founding the Saqqa-khaneh movement, which fused traditional Iranian motifs and calligraphy with contemporary art. Based between Paris and New York since 1961, his works are housed in major institutions including MoMA, Centre Pompidou, and the British Museum.

Dale Chihuly is one of the most prominent American artists of the 21st century who has transformed glass into a multidimensional art form and has led the avant-garde in the development of glass as a fine art. His work is included in more than 200 museum collections worldwide.

Jehangir Vazifdar (1920–2013), a pioneering modernist painter and architect from Bombay, seamlessly bridged structure and abstraction in his art. Known for his unique "Fake-proof" technique, his rare works embody a refined balance of geometry, texture, and emotion, marking a vital chapter in Indian modernism.

Melis Buyruk primarily focuses on large-scale floral ceramic sculptures. Buyruk identifies and subtly blends patterns of vegetation and the natural world, creating porcelain flower fields. Fluctuating between boundaries of reality and surreality, these works remind viewers of our fractured and disjointed relationship with nature, and provokes a double consciousness.

Naeemeh Kazemi is an Iranian artist that focuses her art on themes of environmental anxiety, feminism, and humanity and disguises them in her enchanting paintings through tokens and motifs of the natural world, classical paintings, and quotidian objects.

Parinaz Eleish Gharagozlou's works may provoke strong emotions of nostalgia in the viewer. It is the tradition of storytelling in Iran that inspires Eleish. "Though I begin each painting with a story and an idea, at the core, I hope it is the raw emotion that will carry the viewer." She says.

Ran Hwang is a South- Korean artist known for her ingenious use of materials to build up contemporary installations drawn from eastern philosophies, using buttons, beads, pins, and threads on wood panels to form images of falling blossoms, vases, Buddhas, and birds. She has exhibited at several international institutions including the Queens Museum of Art, New York; The Hudson Valley Center for the Arts, New York; the Chelsea Art Museum, New York; The Seoul Arts Center Museum; and The Jeju Museum of Art, Jeju Island.

Reza Derakshani (b. 1952, Sangsar, Iran) is a painter, musician, and performance artist whose work bridges Eastern and Western traditions. With pieces in major institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum, his practice reflects a vibrant dialogue between art and music. He currently lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Ryan Koopmans (b. Vancouver Island, Canada) is a lens-based artist exploring the relationship between nature, architecture, and urban evolution. With degrees from UBC and The School of Visual Arts, New York, his work captures surreal structures where the natural and built environments converge. Exhibited internationally, his acclaimed book *Vantage* (Black Dog Press, 2019) expands on his fascination with "the poetry of form in intriguing settings."

Alice Livijn Wexell, based in Stockholm, is a digital artist known for crafting surreal environments through innovative technology. With backgrounds in animation and coding from Lund, Uppsala, and Hyper Island, she explores the reimagination of architectural landscapes in her celebrated series *The Wild Within*. Collaborating with Koopmans for over a decade, her work merges art and technology in global projects and exhibitions.

Sultan Bin Fahad (b. 1971, Riyadh, KSA) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice spans abstract painting, sculpture, and installation. At the core of his work lies an exploration of spirituality and the material culture of his native Saudi Arabia. Reinterpreting histories, stories, and narratives through objects and images, Bin Fahad transposes these references into a contemporary context, offering a personal reassessment of Islamic art. His work frequently engages themes of repetition, sound, and movement, drawing on symbols rooted in Islam.

Wassef Boutros-Ghali's paintings balance architectural precision with painterly intuition, transforming geometry into a meditative language of form and colour. His work bridges architecture and abstraction, achieving harmony through asymmetry and a timeless sense of spatial rhythm.