

Cross-cultural creations on canvas

Four city-based artists express the realities of life in their work for the exhibition, Madras Muse, which is being showcased at InKo Centre, where they experiment with styles, materials and topics



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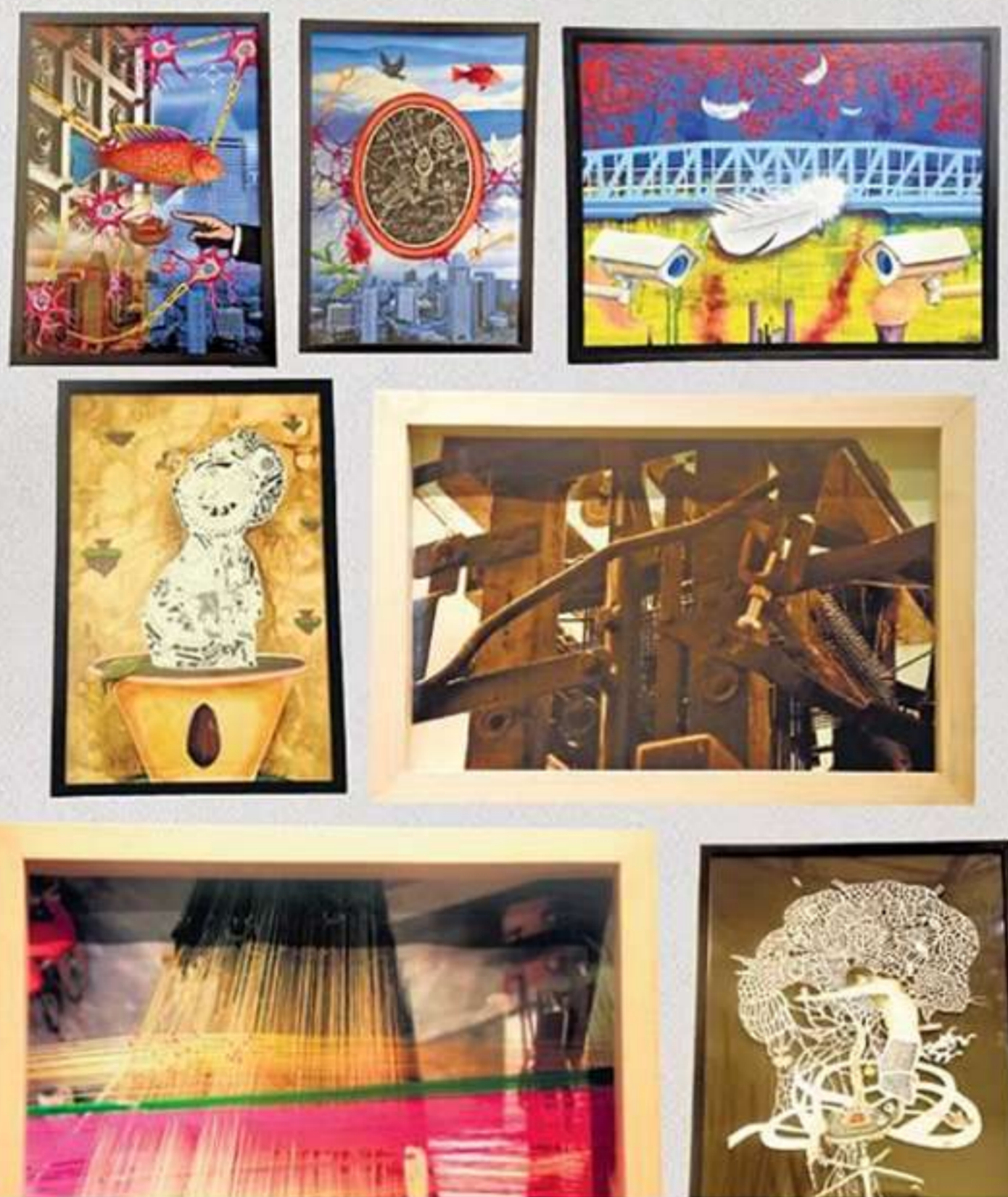
By [Diya Maria George](#)
Express News Service

CHENNAI: Art is a fusion of fact and fantasy, a deft fusing of social and emotional substance, and an exploration of cross-cultural relationships. Madras Muse, the art exhibition at InKo centre featuring four artists residing in the city, is an expression of the subtleties of life when viewed from a distance. Zooming into the creations, we find the common thread which connects all the artists' works — the ever-changing nature of the human condition and the analysis of how societal institutions and constructions affect people's psyches and ways of being.

Introducing the artists and their works, Rathi Jafer, director, InKo Centre, Chennai shares, "The artists were united by the way they experimented and reacted to social issues. Geetika Juyal Chatterjee combines art, science, and spiritual insights. Samuel Jayachandran uses pop art in seemingly mundane things. Vijayaraghavan is a multi-disciplinary artist who works with both video and multimedia. His works are more about the binaries, exploring from the good and the bad to the more complex details. Michael Irudayaraj has a layering technique where memory, identity, and history are coming together. All of them experiment with different techniques and mediums," adding that through this exhibition the institution wants to promote local artists.

Understanding the muse

Madras Muse welcomes us to Geethika's paintings that revel in pastel shades. The artist uses a geometric, minimally abstracted visual language with a strong spiritual undertone. She aims to convey the idea of love via her work. Speaking about the acrylic painting "Love formed me like itself," she shares, adding, "Even if you have everything in the world, without love, you feel as though you have nothing in life. Every time I have encountered unconditional love, I strive to capture it on canvas in an effort to convey my ongoing desire for love. Through this abstract artwork, I have tried to capture the visual impressions I have of what it could be like to embody the quality of love that is unending."



The exhibition will be held till February 19 at InKo Centre from 10 am to 7 pm (Except Sundays and public holidays).

Amid the colourful paintings lie a wooden installation titled 'Imbalance' that combines 20 wooden rods aligned at different heights. Samuel, the creator explains, "I have been living in India for almost seven years now and I have seen the imbalance between the people in terms of culture, religion, caste, politics, and many other factors. As an artist, I wanted to bring all those issues that separate us to the limelight, with my art. Each of the twenty rods represents a different issue and their placement reflects the imbalance."

The artist has experimented with different materials like banana fibres to show his inclination towards discarded materials. His photographs displayed were also abstract and portrayed bright colours. He says, "The photographs were taken in Kanchipuram. I wanted to show them in bright colours as the story behind the pictures, those of the weavers were dark. They were not properly benefiting from the work they did."

When the other artists focus on societal issues, Michael's works look into the unconscious manifestations of the mind. The layering technique he uses lends his compositions a meta-narrative element. His artistic output, Chronicle Land, exposes a rich visual dialogue that links human nature, the body-mind, pain and pleasure, the past and present, and his idea of Tamil culture. He emphasises on recalling prior experiences when the villages were pollution-free and humans and animals survived together happily.

"The pictures I have seen in my childhood and the land which is divided is being reflected in my work. I used watercolour, wax, smoke, and pencil," he says.

Vijayaraghavan tries to blend in both society and the individual. His creations reflect the quest that drives human existence and life. His animated single-channel video projections titled Techno Avatar-1 and Wake Me Up, which were made in Berlin and Portugal respectively, are displayed for the first time in Chennai. The artist delves into the opposing forces or binaries at work in daily life, including truth and falsehood, good and bad, attraction and repulsion, and conceptual notions of reciprocal visual dialogues that dehumanise in metropolitan settings.

Explaining his painting, Nostalgia, he says, "I lived in Singapore for a few years. When you are going outside India you are in the diaspora engaging with memories and the past. I have represented the cityscape in the background and the memories in the foreground. I have also used cultural connections showing fish, Vishnu's avatar, and Noah's ark, intending the fusion of the East and West." The simultaneous meetings between the conventional and the unorthodox in his work, as well as his expansion into the world of new media technologies and the dimensions of estrangements of the visual surface into detectable pictures, define the artist's style.

Collaboration of the like-minded

The exhibition is the collaboration of four people who met at the right time and right place, comments Geetika. Vijayaraghavan, the curator of the event details, "We had the idea of exhibiting our works during the pandemic. The focus was on the artists living in Chennai who were continuously working with material exploration in a post-modernism context. All three artists except Geetika are from Chennai, but Geetika had been residing here for the past few years. InKo has given us a great opportunity when most of the private galleries do not promote experimental work."

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Chennai-based artists' group exhibition features art with unique mediums

Talking about the works she says Geetika combines art with science and spirituality.



Art by Vijayraghavan

Muskaan Ahmed

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CHENNAI: InKo Centre is organising Madras Muse, a group exhibition featuring the works of four Chennai-based artists, Geetika Juyal Chatterjee, Michael Irudayaraj, Samuel Jayachandran, Vijayaraghavan S, at The Gallery till February 19.

Speaking to DT Next about the exhibition, Rathi Jafer, director of InKo Centre says, "These artists approached us and pitched the idea for the exhibition. Each of these artists has a different technique and their concept of experimentation is what brings them together. It is a given to say that the muse is important, but these artists have managed to bring it out in a way that is collaborative."

She says she was intrigued by how visually-rich their art is. "The fact that they are looking at deeper socio-cultural and political issues that impact us on a daily basis through the lens of art is very inspiring and this also initiates conversations."

Talking about the works she says Geetika combines art with science and spirituality. Her work reflects on patterns and how things in life repeat themselves. Vijayraghavan's works are sophisticated in the sense that he uses both conventional and unconventional mediums of art. Being a multimedia artist, he explores the concept of binaries in life.



Love created me like Itself
Oil on Canvas
4ft X 3ft, 2023

Art by Geetika

Irudayaraj's work has a sense of a repetitive narrative. He uses a layering technique wherein people can see how memory and identity play a role in his concept and work. Samuel's pop art uses bright and popping colours to highlight and offer a fresh perspective to everyday life's mundane objects.

"Apart from the Indo-Korean collaborations we also try to accommodate and offer our platform to support local artists. This is one such collaboration and we are looking forward to more."

Offering insight into how the collaboration happened, Vijayraghavan says, "We have been seeing the work InKo does and so we felt would be the right platform for us to showcase our works. Each of us has something different to offer and this comes from a special place. Even though the other artists have been in Chennai for a short duration, they feel an undeniable connection with the place that reflects in their work."

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