

A Churning of the Arts

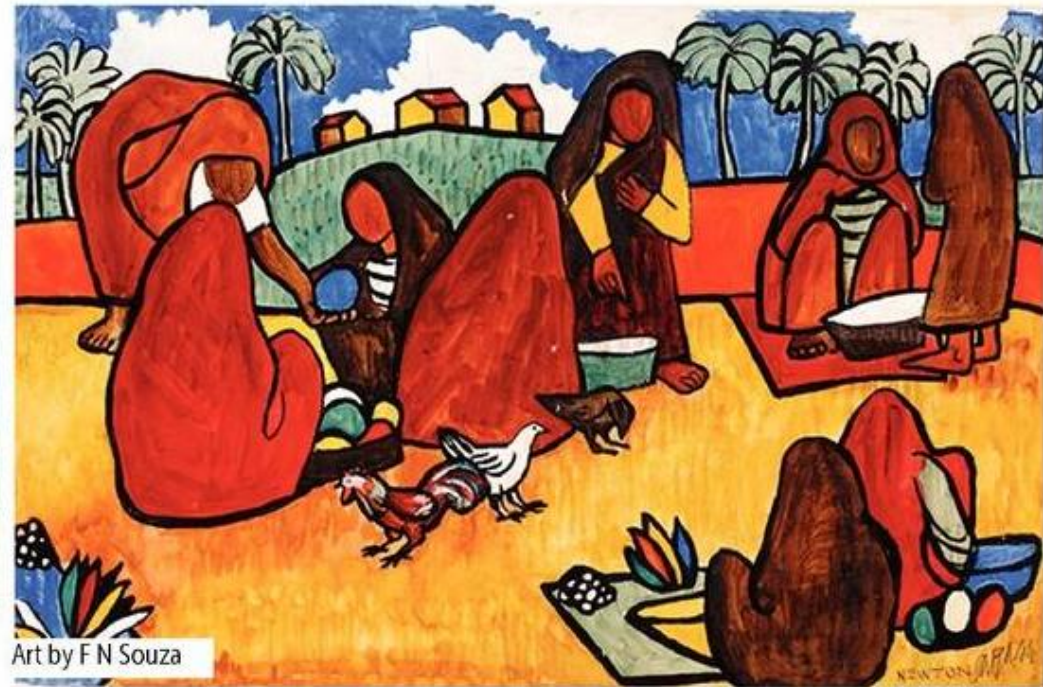
Goa has recently seen a welcome boom in art activity, observes Samira Sheth



Goddess by Sonny Singh and Georgian artist Ketil Melkadze in concrete and wire mesh



Art by Laila Vaziralli



Art by F N Souza

Samira Sheth

"Goa should be what Goa can be, a creative hub for the arts," says Sonny Singh, gallerist and artist based in Goa who recently held residencies for artists from Russia and Georgia at his space, The Cube gallery in Moira.

Goa seems well on its way to becoming just that. While artists from around the world come in to Goa



Artists from around the world come in to Goa during the multi-disciplinary art festival Serendipity, held annually in December for the last 3 years, the State is now witnessing a more continuous flow of artistic activity and exchange through the year.

Goa has definitely witnessed an upswing in art activity in recent times. In a wonderful initiative, the Fundação Oriente, the Portuguese private institution that supports educational and cultural activity in India, particularly Goa, founded its first Visual Arts Award. Received by young artist Mansi Trivedi, the first FOVAA is a step forward in encouraging visual artists in Goa.

The established galleries have of course put on some stimulating shows. One of the most significant exhibitions in recent times, 'Souza in the 40s', ongoing at the non profit Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts, documents the beginnings of the renowned artist F N Souza's career as well as those of the Modernist movement in India. The artist's move to London in 1949 is the end point of the show, which features only works produced in India. In Majorda, Carpe Diem gallery hosted 'Earth, Sand & Fire: The Consequences' – a visually delightful exhibition of handcrafted ceramics and glass by Ramdas Gadekar and Nandini Datta while Gallery Gitanjali in Fontainhas exhibited 'Dance of the Divine', an expansive solo show of artist Veenita Chendvankar.

To further churn up activity in the arts, the Museum of Goa-MOG held the 'Raza-Souza Dialogues', a two-day symposium curated by poet, art critic, cultural theorist, and writer Sabitha Satchi that brought together eminent figures including Wendell Rodricks, Orijit Sen, Arundhati Ghosh, Suresh Jayaram, Subodh Kerkar, Hemant Divate, Damodar Mauzo and Jeet Thayil to debate matters related to the arts in depth. Apart from these critical shows and dialogues, artistic experimentation is being encouraged with more spaces opening up to showcase work in widely different media.



Art displayed at Carpe Diem



A session of the Raza Souza Dialogues 2



Textile artist Gopika Nath talks about her work at Studio 365



Scenes at the Raza Souza Dialogues

The design led Project Café in Assagao has been showing more tightly curated shows while artist led space, Studio 365 Goa Velha by senior artist Seema Kohli, encourages environmental and experimental art-making practices to facilitate research on the constant overlapping of different cultures and influences - on people, places, material, and immaterial heritage through its many artist residencies.

Luckily, it's not all serious! In another independent and wonderful show at Kala Academy, 'Cartoonists &

Illustrators of Goa 2019' showcased the wit and charm of artists Alexyz, Billy Fernandes, Sanket Lawande, Rohit Chari, Malcolm Rebello, Swapnil Behere, Govit Morajkar, Manuela Mendonca Gomes, Cornelia Sequeira, Nadia De Souza, Melanie Costa Pereira and Fabian Gonsalves.

With such a variety on view and so much on offer – from the deep to plain delightful - Goa is definitely coming into its own as an artistic destination more than halfway to fulfilling its creative promise.