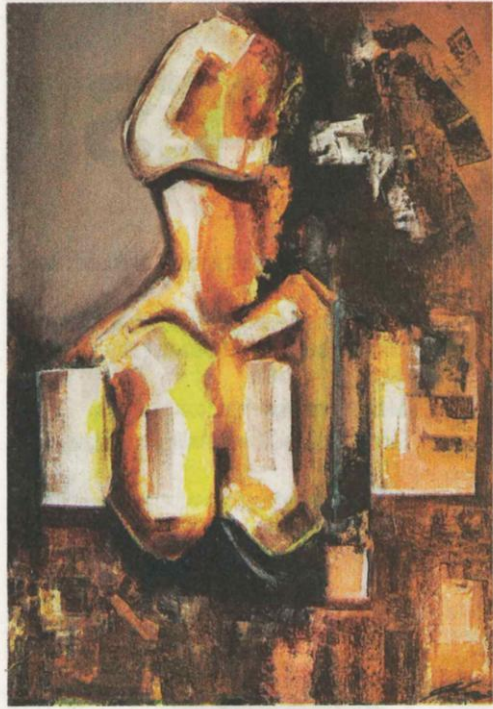


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Ms. Jeniffer Kenny, BVA - Fine Arts, 2013-2017
Ms. Nirupama Thomas, BVA - Fine Arts, 2016-2020



(From top) Art works by Nirupama and Amal Mohan

AVENUES OPEN FOR ART... ARE THEY ENOUGH?

While most artists are happy with the art scene in the city, some tell *CE* that this is still a profession only for the urban elite

• **Thushara Ann Mathew**

A simple stroke of a blue shade on a canvas could mean different things to different people. From abstract to portraits and surrealism to photorealism, art and artists have evolved so much over the years, and so have the opportunities. Over the last 10 years, art and artists have seen a lot of changes — both ups and downs. From art education to career options and a space to exhibit their work, the evolution has happened, or has it? *CE* attempts to find out.

Earlier

Jayakumar, popularly known as JK has been an artist for around 60 years, and belongs to one of the first batches that passed out of the School of Arts. "When we were studying, the minimum thing was to get a job as an art

"There is more awareness today, and many career options and opportunities to choose from. Plus, there are so many galleries to exhibit their works," opines JK.

On the other hand, Nirupama Thomas, a fine arts student believes that although there are several options to choose from, more opportunities need to be created. "There's a wrong perception that art students are given a lot of opportunities nowadays. In reality, they tend to be independent and come up with ways, one way or another, to earn for themselves. There are more sectors that have come up — like freestyling or doing commissioned artworks, designing, art direction, advertising and even animation, but we need to create those opportunities," she avers.

Galleries

Exhibiting their art at a gallery is a dream for most artists. While many have had the opportunity, there are those with talent that still go unnoticed. "In the earlier days, it was expensive to exhibit your works in a gallery, but today there is a gallery in every nook and corner of the city. And if not in galleries, people can exhibit their works on social media platforms today," explains Amal.

Shalini Biswajit, founder, Forum Art Gallery, says that they were one of the only galleries in the late 90s. "When I started Forum in 1997, my focus was to provide a platform for both established and emerging artists. In a unique way, we put together various art forms, workshops, symposiums," she adds.

Chris Gideon Herbert, who runs Artist's Hive (an e-commerce platform) and conducted exhibitions of several artists, believes otherwise. "There is an opportunity for you to come up and exhibit your work if you have money or contacts," he avers. "That's why I started Artist's Hive...to promote every artist's work and give them a platform, regardless of their background."

Though social media platforms have opened up newer ways to showcase art, artists opine that exhibiting in a gallery is a different experience altogether. "I had exhibited my final year project once; it was a great experience as I got a lot of exposure and responses to my design. It helped me grow as an artist and designer," explains Jeniffer Kenny, student, Stella Maris College.



I feel that the art forms that were lost are slowly coming out and people are getting inspired. We are also discovering different forms and styles of art

— Jeniffer Kenny, student, Stella Maris College



My parents have always been supportive of my choices and encouraged me to pursue what made me happy

— Nirupama Thomas



teacher. There were not many opportunities those days and the platforms were limited as well." Having been through the Madras Art Movement, which began in the 1960s and brought modern art to Madras, JK has literally seen the emergence of different forms and mediums in the field.

City-based artist Amal Mohan says that today there is more inclination towards realism. "Other mediums of art are popular too but there is more concentration towards realism than abstract."

Opportunities

Thanks to technology, art has undergone several changes and innovations — in forms, education and even opportunities.

NEWER FORMS OF MODERN ART

Anamorphosis: A technique of drawing images that can only be understood from a specific point or angle.

Photorealism: An image of an image of life

Body Fluid Art: Use of bodily fluids as a medium to paint

Shadow Art: Positioning objects and using them to create an image

