

A Group Exhibition ‘Necropolis of Remains’ That Reframes Mumbai’s Relationship With Waste and Memory

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Necropolis of Remains at Mumbai Gallery Weekend reframes urban waste and memory through emerging art, presented by Mumbai Art Expo and Priyasri Art Gallery.



Priyasri Art Gallery

Mumbai’s contemporary art circle found a resonant point of convergence this January at Kathiwada City House, Worli, where *Necropolis of Remains* opened on January 9 as part of Mumbai Gallery Weekend. The exhibition, presented by Priyasri Art Gallery in partnership with The Mumbai Art Expo, offered collectors, students, critics, and art lovers a chance to engage with work that reframes the city’s relationship with waste, memory, and survival.

Mumbai Art Expo came into being when co-founders Urvija Mafatlal and Naisha Didwania realized the city lacked meaningful, consistent platforms for emerging artists to show and discuss their work. Drawing on structural exposure gained during their studies in the US, Urvija as a senior at Tufts University and Naisha as a junior at Brown University, the duo returned with a shared goal: build sustained opportunities for young, early-career makers that go beyond the typical gallery moment.

For *Necropolis of Remains*, the Mumbai Art Expo partnered with Priyasri Art Gallery, a space known for nurturing both contemporary and experimental art practices and supporting new voices in Indian art. Together, they handled the end-to-end logistics of the exhibition, artist coordination, installation,

programming, and audience engagement ensuring the show was anchored in both thoughtful curation and public accessibility.

The exhibition responds to themes central to journalist Saumya Roy's book *Mountain Tales*, which draws attention to the lived realities around Mumbai's vast dump sites. Rather than merely aestheticising waste, the works by young artists explore consumption, labour, memory, and resilience. On the opening night, visitors were able to meet the artists and hear firsthand about their processes and intentions, making *Necropolis of Remains* feel less like a traditional opening and more like a collaborative reflection.

A major highlight this weekend was a public talk on Sunday that invited conversation beyond the gallery walls. Saumya Roy engaged with writer and curator Anish Gawande in a dialogue that expanded the themes of the exhibition: intersectionality between waste, urban living, labour, and policy in a city that often looks past its own marginal spaces. This public programming was crucial to the show's mission, spotlighting stories that typically go unheard and prompting audiences to consider art not just as form, but as social engagement.

Speaking about the process and her learnings, Naisha Didwania said the experience underscored the depth of what goes into creating work that resonates. "It taught me how much lies behind making pieces that truly connect, and speaking with the artists made me reflect on precarious living conditions in India," she shared. "I want to help bring shows like these ones that are thoughtful and impactful to wider, global audiences."

Necropolis of Remains remains on view at Priyasri Art Gallery, Kathiwada City House through January 11, offering Mumbai a reminder that even in what we discard, stories complex, layered, and deeply human continue to live.

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