

T. Venkanna

Born in 1980, T. Venkanna's powerful and visceral imagery and his prodigious output have earned him the reputation of being one of his generation's most exciting, versatile, and unconventional artists. Across more than two decades, his work has bridged Indian artistic traditions and global contemporary discourses on sexuality, identity, and power. He holds a Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in Printmaking from the Faculty of Fine Arts at M.S. University of Baroda, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) in Painting from J.N.T.U, Hyderabad, where he was awarded a Gold medal.

"Venkanna has exhibited widely in biennales, museums, and art fairs worldwide, including the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Saatchi Gallery, London, Clarinda Carnegie Art Museum, MOCA Taipei, and Sharjah Art Museum."

In 2025, Venkanna had his 17th solo show, *The Human Theatre: Prints 2002-2024*. His 16th solo show, *Black Blue Yellow*, was held at Gallery Maskara, Mumbai. In 2024, Venkanna had his fifteenth solo show titled *Venkanna Drawings 2014-2024: Part I*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India. He participated in various group shows, including *Politically Charged* at Aicon, New York, USA; *Inked Legacies Linked Geographies* at Srishti Art Gallery, Hyderabad, India; *Siren's Lullaby in a Forgotten Realm* at Gallery Dotwalk, Gurgaon, India; *Miracle of Absence* at Art Exposure, Kolkata, India and at *India Art Fair*, New Delhi, India. In 2023, Venkanna had three solo shows titled *Reworkings* at Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India, *Looking for Peace*, which opened at Modesti Perdriolle Gallery, Belgium and *LOVE ME AS I AM*, curated by Abhay Maskara at Gallery Maskara in Mumbai, India.

The year 2022 marked 20 years of his printmaking practice, and he had his eleventh solo show titled *AS I AM* at Gallery Maskara in Mumbai, India. During the same year, he participated in various group shows, including *Inside India*, Espace 251 Nord, Liege, Belgium, curated by Laurent Jacob. *Radical Enchantments*, AICON Gallery, NY, curated by Jason Vartikar. *Inside India*, Modesti Perdriolle Gallery, Belgium. In 2021, Venkanna was part of a group show titled *The Art of India*, Clarinda Carnegie Art Museum, Iowa, USA, curated by Anne Pagel. In 2019, the artist had two solo shows titled *LOVE ME* and *Tradition/Transformation* - both shows at Gallery Maskara were curated by Abhay Maskara.

In 2018 Venkanna was invited to participate in *Inde* at Manoir de Martigny, Switzerland. In 2017 his solo show *Looking for Peace* opened at Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, India. In 2016 he was part of a group show *TIME* at Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India. In 2015 his solo show *CELEBRATION* curated by Abhay Maskara opened at Gallery Maskara. In 2014 his shows include *Residual Remnants*, Site art space, Baroda, India; *Midnight's Grandchildren* curated by Girish Shahane, Kitab Mahal, Mumbai, India; *Trajectories: 19th-21st Century Printmaking from India and Pakistan* curated by Dr. Paula Sengupta and Camilla H. Chaudhary, Sharjah Art Museum, UAE.

Major shows in 2012-13 include *Air Sri Lanka*, Galerie Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna, Austria, *Lunch with Olympia*, curated by Dr. Robert Storr, Yale University School of Art, CT, USA, *Between the Lines: Identity, Place, and Power*, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai, India, *Pancha Mahabhuta (The Five Great Elements)* at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kochi, India, *Cynical Love: Life in the Everyday* curated by Gayatri Sinha at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Noida, India, a solo presentation at Art Brussels 30th Contemporary Art Fair, *ProjectStage* at Art Stage Singapore, the India Art Fair, India, the VIP Art Fair, (online).

In 2011, Venkanna presented a controversial solo performance at Art Stage Singapore and was part of *New Trends from South India*, at the Lalit Kala Academy, Chennai, India. Other key projects during the year included; *CROSSROADS: India escalate* (India Pavilion) at the Prague Biennale 5, Czech Republic, a solo presentation at the Art Brussels 29th Contemporary Art Fair, Belgium, *Fabular Bodies*, curated by Gayatri Sinha for the Harmony Art Foundation, Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai, India, *Printmaking: Open Studio*, at Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India, *(M)other India* at Galerie du Jour – Agnès B, Paris, France and *Window in the Wall*, Pearl Lam Galleries, Shanghai, China. In 2010 his work was part of *Finding India: Art for the New Century*, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Taipei, Taiwan. His solo show, *NERO* opened at Gallery Luce in Torino, Italy and he simultaneously showed at Artissima 17 Torino, Italy. He was also the youngest artist featured in the Saatchi Gallery show *The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today*, London, UK.

About His Work:

The predominant subject in T. Venkanna's works is sexual imagination, which questions and confronts the stereotypical ways in which sexuality is understood and defined. His voice remains unique, unapologetically vulnerable, and mythic in scope. Working across drawing, painting, and printmaking, T. Venkanna has developed a distinctive and bold visual language that explores the intersections of sexuality, power, mythology, and social conditioning. Drawing equally from Indian miniature traditions and cultural iconography, his practice is characterised by erotic imagination, conceptual rigour, and a steadfast engagement with the body as a site of pleasure, politics, and resistance.

"Human sexuality is shaped by the society we live in, yet within fantasy lies a space of freedom. In my imagination, I can escape the weight of reality and explore desire without restraint."

"In this process, I often re-present images and motifs from medieval art, modern artists such as Botticelli and Rousseau, and traditional Indian art. By placing them in new contexts, I examine how history, power, and social norms continue to shape how we see, desire, and judge today."

His continuous persistence with this subject has stimulated his interest in exploring image-making in all kinds of media, including drawing, painting, embroidery, sculpture, installation, and performance. Venkanna's most important linguistic device is the integration of the personal and the social, using material as per the subject's requirement with complete freedom and ease.

T. Venkanna CV

Born 1980, Gajwel, India. Lives and works in Hyderabad, India

Education

2006 M.F.A. (Printmaking), Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda, India
2004 B.F.A. (Painting) (Gold Medal) J.N.T.U, Hyderabad, India

Selected Upcoming Projects (2026):

Solo show at Studio Voltaire, London

Solo Exhibitions/Projects (selected):

2025

Frieze London, *Artist-to-Artist* section nominated by Bharti Kher
The Human Theatre, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India
Black Blue Yellow, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2024

Venkanna Drawings 2014-2024: Part I, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India
Asia Now, Paris, France, Modesti Perdrille Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

2023

Reworkings, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India
Looking for Peace, Modesti Perdrille Gallery, Belgium
LOVE ME AS I AM, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2022

AS I AM, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2019

LOVE ME, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India
Tradition/Transformation, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2017

Looking for Peace, Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, India

2015

CELEBRATION, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2013

Art Brussels 31, Contemporary Art Fair, Brussels, Belgium
Pancha Mahabhuta, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai

2012

Art Brussels 30th Contemporary Art Fair, Brussels, Belgium
Pancha Mahabhuta, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kochi, India

2011

Printmaking: Open Studio, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India
Art Brussels 29th Contemporary Art Fair, Brussels, Belgium
Here I am yours, I am yours, be mine, ArtStage Singapore, Singapore

2010

NERO, Gallery Luce, Turin, Italy

Sacred and Profane, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2009

For Identity, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

Group Exhibitions (selected):

2024

Politically Charged, Aicon, New York, USA

Inked Legacies Linked Geographies, Srishti Art Gallery, Hyderabad, India

Siren's Lullaby in a Forgotten Realm, Gallery Dotwalk, Gurgaon, India

Miracle of Absence, Art Exposure, Kolkata, India

India Art Fair, New Delhi, India

2023

Vichitra Desh: Queer Nation, New Delhi

India Art Fair, New Delhi, India

2022

Inside India, Espace 251 Nord, Liege, Belgium

Radical Enchantments, Aicon Gallery, NY

Inside India, Modesti Perdriolle Gallery, Belgium

2021

The Art of India, Clarinda Carnegie Art Museum, Iowa, USA

2018

Inde, Manoir de Martigny, Switzerland

2016

TIME, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2014

Residual Remnants, Site art space, Baroda, India

Trajectories: 19th – 21st Century Printmaking from India and Pakistan, Sharjah Art Museum, UAE

Midnight's Grandchildren, Kitab Mahal, Mumbai

India Art Fair, New Delhi, India

2013

Air Sri Lanka, Galerie Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna, Austria

Lunch with Olympia, Yale University School of Art, New Haven, CT, USA

Between the Lines: Identity, Place, and Power, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai, India

Skoda Prize Show, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi, India

India Art Fair, New Delhi, India

2012

VIP Art Fair, Online

India Art Fair, New Delhi, India

Mumbai Gallery Weekend, Mumbai, India

Cynical Love: Life in the Everyday, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Noida, India

ProjectStage, Art Stage Singapore, Singapore

2011

(M)other India, Galerie du Jour – Agnès B., Paris, France
Window in the Wall, Pearl Lam Galleries, Shanghai, China
Fabular Bodies, Harmony Art Foundation, Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai
CROSSROADS: India escalate (India Pavilion), Prague Biennale 5, Prague, Czech Republic
New Trends from South India, Lalit Kala Academy, Chennai, India
Group Show, India Art Summit, New Delhi, India

2010

Finding India: Art for the New Century, Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, Taiwan
Artissima 17 International Fair of Contemporary Art in Torino, Torino, Italy
The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK

2005-2008

loosentiefirst, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India
789, Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda, India
Chronicles of the Unspoken, Travancore Gallery, Delhi, India
Show-off, Kitab Mahal, Mumbai, India
Group Show, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, India
Student Show, Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda, India

Residencies (selected):

2013

Krinzinger Projekte/One World Foundation, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Collections (selected):

His works are in significant public, institutional and private collections worldwide, including the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia; the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, India; the Burger Collection, Switzerland; the Karen and Robert Duncan Collection, USA; and the Ark Foundation for the Arts, Vadodara, India, among many other important collections worldwide

Contact / Representation:

Represented by Gallery Maskara, Mumbai
www.gallerymaskara.com

Press Quotes (selected):

"In every good exhibition, if it's really good, there will be good paintings...And in Art Brussels, the one that really stole the show was from Indian artist T. Venkanna, represented by Maskara Gallery from Mumbai. There is a vibrant, life and death quality to all of Venkanna's work, though I personally most enjoyed this painting. Though it is dark and features the face of death, it rises also with such urgency that it seems to spring to life. The multi-layered compositions and deft use of colors further expand not only the painting's depth, but its reach. It's no longer European or Indian painting – it's pure, vibrant, source of life painting." - Hadelin Feront, May 1 2011, Pulp Gazette – Art Laboratory and Journal, Brussels, Belgium

"Constantly immediate and with raw openness, T. Venkanna creates new art for a new world. His storytelling takes various forms through constellations of images, collage, pastiche, the recourse to allegory, painting - all ways of thinking-in-pictures from which understanding emerges without having to be expounded." - Sonia Nazareth, Feb 15, 2011, Art & Deal, India

"Mumbai painters T. Venkanna and Atul Dodiya variously hijack twentieth-century westerners such as Henri Rousseau and Jasper Johns, in paintings that force Western primitivism and avant-gardism into historical dialogue with the mixed iconography of India's aesthetic traditions and its urban present" - JJ Charlesworth, Feb 4, 2010, Time Out London, UK

"T Venkanna's reworked versions of Douanier Rousseau are fun and sexy..." - Adrian Searle, Feb 2, 2010, The Guardian, UK

"As the gallery going crowd dubs him one of the more radical voices in today's Indian Contemporary art scene..." "T Venkanna, a bold and scathing Hyderabad artist explores a world of fantasy" - Georgina Maddox, Jan 12, 2009, The Indian Express, India

"A young artist pushes the limits of sexual imagination" - Vishwas Kulkarni, Jan 30, 2009, Mumbai Mirror, India

"The Baroda based artist, whose works focus on the sexual imagination, re-visits motifs and imageries from artists like Mondrian, Henri Rousseau, and other classical examples, but irreparably tweaks them with his patented perversity" - Vishwas Kulkarni, Sep 27, 2008, Mumbai Mirror, India

"Subversive, daring imagery inspired by the profane and the prohibited" - Georgina Maddox, Sep 24, 2008

Bibliography

Reviews (selected):

Gudavarthy, Ajay, *How Democracy Die*, Outlook India Magazine, January 21, 2025

Paul, Chokita, *Confluence of landforms*, Deccan Chronicle, Dec 2024

Editors, *Art India Magazine*, Issue 01, 2024

Karia, Vedant, *Art Exposure's new art space at Lake Terrace*, *The Telegraph Online*, Sept 2024

Maddox, Georgina, *Vichitra Desh – Queer kinship in the capital*, *The Hindu*, Nov, 2023

Shah Verma, Jasmine, *Between Death & Desire*, Art India Magazine, Q3 2023

Singh, Pia, *T. Venkanna: Looking for Peace*, Brooklynrail.org, May 2023

Iyengar, Radhika, *The Fearless Disruptor*, Vogue India, March-April, 2023

Balaram, Rajashree, *Love Me As I AM*, Architectural Digest, January-February, 2023

Shiware, Shweta, *String Instruments*, Sunday Mid-Day, February 20, 2020

Shah Verma, Jasmine, *Three Robust Enquiries*, Art India Magazine, Q1 2022

Pillai, Pooja, *The Final Bow*, *The Indian Express*, Mumbai, India, July 23, 2016

<http://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/art-and-culture/gallery-maskaras-last-show-featuring-six-artists-is-a-fitting-tribute-to-the-space-itself-as-well-as-the-art-displayed-within-its-walls-over-the-last-decade-2930714/>

Lakhe, Amruta, *Sex and the Society*, *The Indian Express*, Mumbai, India, February 5, 2015

Banerjee, Somudra, *Erotic but not provocative*, *The Asian Age*, Mumbai, India, January 19, 2015

Editors, *T. Venkanna's Celebration opens at Gallery Maskara, Mumbai*, [mattersofart.net](http://www.mattersofart.net), January 15, 2015

<http://www.mattersofart.net/newsdetail.aspx?mpgid=4&pgid=4&nid=235>

Cembalest, Robin, *It's Manet Mania Weekend at Yale!*, *Artnews.com*, September 19, 2013

<http://www.artnews.com/2013/09/19/manet-mania-at-yale/>

Arslan, Zaira, *Different Strokes*, *Indian Express Mumbai Newsline*, Mumbai, India, March 30, 2013

Sorabjee, Deepika, *Natural Resources*, *Mint Lounge*, Mumbai, India, March 30, 2013

Doshi, Riddhi, *Drawing on the elements*, *Hindustan Times*, Mumbai, India, March 30, 2013

Uttam, Payal, *Gallery Maskara: What I'm Bringing*, *Wall Street Journal wsj.com*, Jan 13, 2012

<<http://blogs.wsj.com/scene/2012/01/13/gallery-maskara-what-im-bringing/>>

Kalra, Vandana and Arslan, Zaira, *Art From Close Quarters*, *Indian Express Mumbai Newsline*, Mumbai, India, July 28, 2011

Nagree, Zeenat, *Prints Charming*, *Time Out Mumbai*, Mumbai, India, July 22, 2011

Mumbai Mirror Bureau, *Printmaking for you*, *Mumbai Mirror*, Mumbai, India, July 16, 2011

Mehta, Shweta, *Artist Becomes Own Exhibit*, *Hindustan Times HT Cafe*, Mumbai, India, July 16, 2011

Feront, Hadelin, *Art Brussels 2011: Reportage*, *Pulp Gazette – Art Laboratory and Journal*, Brussels, Belgium, May, 2011 <<http://pulpgazette.net/?p=456>>

Nazareth, Sonia, *Nero*, *Art Etc*, New Delhi, Issue 34, Vol. 7 No. 4, February 15, 2011

Maddox, Georgina, *Venus in Vadodara*, *Eye*, *The Sunday Express Magazine*, India, October 10-16, 2010

Shukla, Subhalakshmi, *Sacred and Profane: T. Venkanna*, Art & Deal, New Delhi, Vol-7 No. 2 Issue No. 32
Varghese, Reuben, *The Phallus Fallacy*, Art India, India, Vol XV, Issue II, Quarter II, 2010
Pal, Deepanjana, *Two in Hand*, Time Out Mumbai, Mumbai, India, March 2010
Searle, Adrian, *The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today*, The Guardian -www.guardian.co.uk, London, UK, February, 2010
Charlesworth, J.J., *The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today*, Time Out London, London, UK, February 2010
Kulkarni, Vishwas, *Derobing the Mind*, Mumbai Mirror, Mumbai, India, January 2009
Pal, Deepanjana, *For Identity*, Time Out Mumbai, Mumbai, India, January 2009
Maddox, Georgina, *Forbidden Fruit*, The Indian Express Mumbai Newslite, Mumbai, India, January 2009
Pal, Deepanjana, *Starting Up*, Time Out Mumbai, Mumbai, India, January 2009

Publications (selected):

Abhay Maskara, T. Venkanna Printmaking: 2002 – 2024, Gallery Maskara, 2025
Phyllida Jay, *Inspired by India*, Roli Books, 2022
Kalhath Institute & Gallery Maskara, *LOVE ME*, India 2020
Olesen, Mads, *INDE au Manoir de la Ville de Martigny*, Manor de Martigny, Switzerland, 2018
Lina Vincent Sunesh, *Between the Lines: Identity, Place and Power*, Serindia Publications, Chicago, 2012
Joshi, Avni, *The Skoda Prize Twenty 2010*, 70 EMG Arts Initiative, Mumbai, 2011
Taipei, 2010: *Finding India: Art for the New Century*, exh. cat., Taipei, Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei, Taiwan: Taipei Culture Foundation, 2010
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Maskara, Abhay, *Gallery Maskara, Volume I*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India, 2009
Jumabhoy, Zehra, et.al., *The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today*, Saatchi Gallery, Random House, Jonathan Cape, London, UK, 2009