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Bindu Gopal Rao

At the heart of the exhibition are recurring themes that have become signature elements in acclaimed artist Seema Kohli's work—feminine and spiritual motifs that explore the creation of new myths from inherited codes of the sacred and the everyday. Her art is richly layered, incorporating elements such as gold leaf, yantras, goddess forms, and textual inscriptions.

In her new exhibition, titled "Mythic Matrices," she brings together all of these motifs and more. Featuring over 150 works, including paintings, videos, installations, and performances, the exhibition spans 20 transformative years of the artist's expansive 40-year practice.

"There was a lot which went into it because we started this process almost two years back and tried to see which are the artworks and mediums. Initially, the perspective was much wider. The curator, Darshan Kumar UY, had a vision of doing the show which included the past 20 years' works so that a clear idea of the different mediums is also brought to light. The process of selection was tough," says Kohli.

The layout of the mediums is varied: some of the artworks which are presented here are very large in format. All the works selected here are from the Golden Womb Hiranyagarbha series, based on the idea of the feminine. "It gets encapsulated in this whole idea of the oneness of the universe and of beings. Engulfing everything living or what we perceive as dead, trees, rivers, or anything else, whatever is around in the universe," she adds.

Femme Force

*Unending Dance of Light Raks e



Shams', an experimental work, an experiential video performance, is going to be shown here. It was done in 2016 on the ghats of Banaras, and it means the dance of eternity - where death and life can be witnessed at the same moment.

"The sacred pyres are burning round the clock. I stayed there for two weeks along with my team, video graphing. It was unscripted. This work is encapsulating my whole philosophy," says Kohli.

The idea of procreation, creation, and that space in between is a play of the feminine and how each being is connected to the universe. Kohli said that humans are a reflection of the eternal matrix and consciousness, which he perceives as inherently feminine.

"There is this universal feminine form—Shakti, energy; I may call her Kali," she added, explaining that for her, this consciousness manifests through nature and prakriti; the earth and its elements. She described them as the living feminine organ and reflected that "we all are breathing the same thing—whether it's a tree, humans, or animals, even insects. We all live because of breath, which is a miracle given by the feminine force."



Kohli further emphasised that the celebration of life is feminine, "as it's always in a state of expansion, procreating, recreating, and positively recycling." She primarily uses acrylic colours on canvas as the main medium. But the medium changes when her images demand a different form or manifestation.

Myth Matters

Myth is of a lot of interest to Kohli because she believes what people call a myth is a movement of time, and as the time passes, it becomes a part of history. She explained that the same people our ancestors might have seen as ordinary humans eventually acquire a halo over time, as human imagination is expansive and drawn to miracles.

"The biggest miracle is our breath," she said, noting that people tend to project these miracles onto the entities they admire, choosing to glorify—or sometimes not glorify—them. She added that she loves the idea of narrative, how oral histories are passed down through centuries and generations, becoming part of belief systems and a way for humans to survive through faith in stories.

Kohli emphasised, "I believe in myths, and I believe also in the fact that these narratives, these mythologies, existed." She further noted that her work draws inspiration from life and the concept of oneness in diversity, and that her art aims to create a meaningful connection with her audience.



Seema Kohli's solo exhibition opens at the NGMA, celebrating two decades of exploring myths, the feminine & human consciousness

20 YEARS, ENDLESS MYTHS

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- **Dates:** 26 August – 26 September 2025
- **Venue:** National Gallery of Modern Art, Manikyavelu Mansion, Palace Road, Vasanth Nagar, Bangalore
- **Opening Event** | Tuesday, 26 August | 5:30 pm. Recital by Shruti Veena Vishwanath, followed by a walkthrough with Seema Kohli & Satyajit Dave
- **Moderated Talk** | Friday, 5 September | 5:30 pm. With Suresh Jayaram, Girish Shahane, Jayvir Johar & Seema Kohli. (Followed by Open House Q&A)
- **Narrative Performance** | Friday, 12 September | 6:00 – 7:15 pm. Performance by Seema Kohli, accompanied by Sahil Vasudeva & Sina Fakhroddin. (Followed by Open House interaction)
- **Workshop** | Saturday, 13 September. Exploring art as ritual, inviting participants to engage with mythopoetic methods in their own creative practices (further details to be announced).
- **Closing Event - "Feminist Forkings: On Gender and Agency"** | Friday, 26 September | 5:00 pm. Moderated talk by Advait, with Smitha Carriapa, Navtej Johar & Seema Kohli.

