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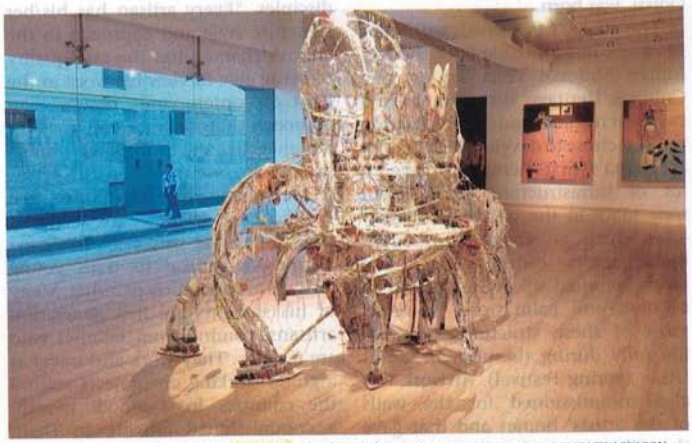
A number of galleries, especially in Delhi, are expanding their base to offer a wider canvas to art aficionado



GALLERIES SUCH AS ART ALIVE AND RELIGARE HAVE OPENED NEW SPACES JUST AHEAD OF THE NEW SEASON.

Art lovers in Delhi and the NCR region couldn't have asked for more. With three of the city's well-known gallery spaces expanding their presence, offering almost 20,000 square feet of additional art space in total, it's surely turning out to be the art capital too.

Sunaina Anand's Art Alive Gallery, which began its journey in 2001 from Panchsheel Park, has now established its presence in Gurgaon. Located in the vicinity of HUDA City Centre and Gurgaon's cultural hub Epicentre, the gallery is spread over 8,000 square feet. While Gurgaon is known for the presence of corporate houses and is a business hub, the lack of sufficient cultural centres is what prompted Anand to look at Gurgaon. "Opening up of a new space had been playing on in my mind. While Gurgaon is a growing city, there are cultural volumes that need to be filled," says Anand. She plans to run long duration shows in the new space, stretching over two to three months and cater both to the classic media and also foray into the new media.

While for Anand, Gurgaon has become her cultural hub, for Religare Art, the gallery has moved to a permanent space in Saket, moving out of their leased space in Connaught Place in Central Delhi. "Moving to Saket fits into our scheme of things. Although Connaught Place had a nice gallery space (10,000 square feet, equivalent to our current space) lack of parking space made it a difficult choice. Also, Saket has come up as a cultural hub in last two-three years with Kiran Nadar Museum of Art also opening up recently," says Amit Sarup, president – Religare Art and Family Office. The gallery plans to focus on new and emerging talent and in its 3rd year of operations, it opened with the annual summer residency art show "The Whynot Place".

Delhi-based curator Johny ML feels that this current spree of expansions is an attempt by the bigger galleries to reach out to a wider range of people. "And it's not just Delhi-based galleries that are expanding. Kolkata-based gallery Akar Prakar is also planning to come to Lado Sarai, another art hub in the capital, and establish its presence there," says Johny. He further adds that it's not just the smaller galleries, but even the bigger ones that are planning to expand to new spaces.

These galleries not only display art works, they also offer a unique art experience with in-house cafés, libraries, gift shops and a dedicated space for the gallery's private collection. At Art Alive, with ample natural light available, the gallery is divided into two floors with a specially designed sculpture garden and allocated alcoves for displaying video works. The top floor has been conceived to include a spacious café lounge for visitors to unwind at and browse through books at the adjoining library area. The lower floor is to lodge the viewing room. At Religare, the facility integrates two galleries, a proposed cafeteria, an art shop, a resource centre and ancillary transitional spaces that double up to accommodate symposia, workshops and other art activities.

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Even Delhi-based gallery Art Positive, a part of the Bajaj Capital Art House, has been redesigned to add another floor of gallery space within its fold. This will house a more spacious art book café as well as an artefacts store besides a much larger art gallery space spread across two floors in the same location at Lado Sarai. Even veterans like the Delhi-based Vadehra Art Gallery is planning to expand while opening another gallery space in Defence Colony, just a block away from the existing space. "It will be a more contemporary gallery with 2.5 floors, giving us more space to exhibit," says Parul Vadehra from the Vadehra Art Gallery. The gallery already has three existing spaces in the capital. Art lovers are not complaining.

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