

**PRESS RELEASE**



Vadehra Art Gallery is pleased to announce its participation in the upcoming edition of Art Basel's Online Viewing Rooms OVR:2021, dedicated to works created in the year 2021, with a collection of canvases and works on paper in a presentation titled *Portraits of an Existential Artist* by artist Sudhir Patwardhan.

Leading contemporary artist Sudhir Patwardhan reflects on the personal experiences of being a working artist during the last year, overshadowed by world events and the pandemic, and tips the scales in favour of philosophical scepticism. In this series of paintings made over the course of the year 2021, the passions of anxiety inextricable from creative impulses in the studio are transformed into fierce acts of vexation, as Patwardhan himself departs from the familiar contours of his dominant realist language for powerful expressionism. He speculates on the cause: Dadaism, or the artist's destruction of art as an anti-systemic declaration; nihilism, or the artist's rejection of the arbitrarily assigned values of art; fundamentalism, or the artist's extreme attitude towards purist creation and perfectionism; or the seismic effects of the global pandemic, especially in India, where much of life's experiences and inspirations continue to be fabricated because of an ongoing restrictive lifestyle. In illustrating the frustrations of the artistic process, from physical studio anxieties to cognitive doubts about art, Patwardhan eloquently presents us with a moving narrative that explores the human condition as manifested in the social roles and experiences of the constrained artist. He reveals the underbelly of creation and creativity through the trope of the aggressive artist who is not only cut off from public experience and circulation, but is also grappling with perpetual dissatisfaction, as artists have throughout the ages, with feeling as if they have failed to say what they set out to say.

To view the show virtually, please visit our website [www.vadehraart.com](http://www.vadehraart.com) or [www.artbasel.com/ovr](http://www.artbasel.com/ovr). *Portraits of an Existential Artist* will also be on view at our gallery location: D-40 Defence Colony, New Delhi. An e-catalogue is also available on request. For all inquiries, please write to [art@vadehraart.com](mailto:art@vadehraart.com).

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Pune, Maharashtra, in 1949, Sudhir Patwardhan graduated in medicine from the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune, in 1972. Patwardhan held his first solo exhibition of paintings at Ebrahim Alkazi's Art Heritage, New Delhi, in 1979, and later at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai. Since then, his work has been seen regularly in exhibitions in India and abroad. He has held more than fifteen solo exhibitions in all major galleries, including Vadehra Art Gallery, Delhi (2017); Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai (2017); Gallerie 88, Kolkata (2016); The Guild Art Gallery, Mumbai (2012); and Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai (2011), to name a few. A monograph on his work titled *The Complicit Observer* and written by Ranjit Hoskote was published in 2004, followed by another book by the author on Patwardhan's drawings in 2007, titled *The Crafting of Reality*. Patwardhan's paintings are included in many prominent public and private collections, including the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi and Mumbai; Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi; Roopankar Museum, Bhopal; Jehangir Nicholson Collection, Mumbai; Punjab University Museum, Chandigarh; Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal; Gallery of Contemporary Art, Kochi; Peabody Essex Museum, USA; and the Herwitz Family Collection, USA. The artist lives and works in Mumbai.

## ABOUT THE GALLERY

Representing a roster of artists across four generations, Vadehra Art Gallery was established in 1987 with a passion to pioneer Indian art as a conduit of cultural celebration, intellect and value in the public milieu. A confidante to art history and a paladin to contemporary art, the gallery supports a vibrant and flourishing ecosystem that at its center heroes the artist and their work. Modern masters like M.F. Husain, Ram Kumar, S.H. Raza and Tyeb Mehta find prime spot in the gallery's calendar alongside the subsequent generation of modernists like Arpita Singh, A. Ramachandran, Nalini Malani, Gulammohammed Sheikh and Rameshwar Broota. The gallery's expansive

contemporary programme includes some of the most exciting names in Indian art such as Atul Dodiya, Shilpa Gupta, Anju Dodiya, N.S. Harsha and Sunil Gupta, as well as young emerging talent like Sachin George Sebastian, Shrimanti Saha and Shailesh B.R. Vadehra Art Gallery's active and comprehensive programming takes the form of carefully curated and frequent exhibitions at two prominent locations in Delhi, alongside art events, engaging conversations and a growing digital platform, including virtual exhibitions and an online shop. With a maturing global presence, the gallery continues to present curated projects at prestigious art fairs across the world, including the Frieze fairs in London and New York, and Art Basel in Basel and Hong Kong, among others. As a key artistic interlocutor to regional and international audiences, the gallery ventured into publishing in 1996, finding a crucial need for adequate documentation, critical writing, and quality reproduction of images in Indian art. Over the last two decades, the gallery has published several books and monographs in collaboration with major publishing houses like Penguin and Prestel, as well as hundreds of illustrated exhibition catalogues, in addition to contemporaneously producing literature on ongoing exhibitions and artist projects.