

Paris Asian
Art Fair



milaaya art
gallery

SUTRADHAR

NARRATIVES IN EMBROIDERY



On Cover and Above: Untitled (Gulmarg) (2025)
Nikhil Chopra
115.82 x 91.44 cm | Hand embroidery on cotton satin fabric

PRESS OVERVIEW

Milaaya Art Gallery collaborates with leading contemporary Indian artists to create exceptional works of fiber art. For many, embroidery becomes a new medium—expanding their visual

language through texture and process. Each piece is meticulously translated stitch by stitch with master artisans, resulting in unique works that add depth and dimension to the artists' vision.



Milaaya Art Presents Sutradhar on the Global Stage

At Asia NOW Paris, four prominent voices—Nilima Sheikh, Nikhil Chopra, Ranbir Kaleka, and Manjunath Kamath—present Sutradhar, a curated exhibition named after the Sanskrit word for “narrator” or “thread-holder.” The show explores storytelling through fiber, where heritage and innovation intertwine.

Through Sutradhar, Milaaya Art pioneers Fiber Art in South Asia, positioning hand embroidery as a powerful contemporary medium that bridges India’s rich craft traditions with global contemporary art.



Curatorial Note

This unique partnership translates diverse artistic languages, from painting to performance, into richly textured fibre art.

Milaaya Art Gallery presents a collaboration with four leading Indian artists – Nilima Sheikh, Ranbir Kaleka, Manjunath Kamath, and Nikhil Chopra and the master artisans of our Mumbai atelier. Together, we explore embroidery as a medium that bridges the realms of contemporary art and traditional craft.

Sheikh's intricate scrolls evoke layered histories, drawing from Indian miniature painting and poetic narratives to weave stories of cultural memory; Kaleka constructs surreal, cinematic scenes that blend dreamlike imagery, creating embroidered tableaux that feel both timeless and otherworldly; Kamath assembles fragmented forms into hybrid narratives, combining mythological and contemporary motifs to explore identity and transformation; and Chopra captures landscapes as acts of memory and performance, using embroidery to map personal and collective journeys across time and space.

Through close dialogue with Milaaya's artisans, these visions are brought to life in fiber, foregrounding the beauty of texture, meticulous detail, and a shared creative process.

Hand embroidery serves as the focal point of this project, not merely as a medium but as a profound expression that shapes the artistic dialogue and overall narrative. It acts as a connective thread, intertwining the artists' conceptual explorations with the artisans' technical mastery.

Each stitch carries intention, embedding layers of meaning into the fabric, where the tactile quality of embroidery amplifies the emotional and intellectual depth of the works. This medium, rooted in tradition yet endlessly adaptable, becomes a language through which contemporary stories are told, fostering a dynamic interplay between innovation and heritage.

The exhibition's title SUTRADHAR, a Sanskrit word meaning "narrator" or "thread-holder" that aptly speaks to the art of storytelling through material. These works unfold as visual narratives of collaboration, where contemporary expression and age-old techniques are interwoven to shape new ways of seeing.

Together, these works stand as a testament to the power of dialogue—between artists and artisans, concept and creation.

EACH ARTIST CONTRIBUTES A DISTINCT VOICE TO THIS COLLECTION

Left Top to Bottom: Artisans embroidering Across Land by Nilima Sheikh; The Blank Letter by Ranbir Kaleka; Translated Blue Tale by Manjunath Kamath; Untitled (Gulmarg) by Nikhil Chopra.

Nilima Sheikh at
Milaaya Art (December, 2023)



NILIMA SHEIKH

(b. 1945) Contemporary Artist, India

Nilima Sheikh is a seminal figure in contemporary Indian art whose work draws from Indian miniature painting, folk traditions, poetry, and collective memory. Trained in painting and printmaking, Sheikh's career spans several decades of exploring cultural histories, storytelling, and layered narratives. Her collaboration with Milaaya Art transforms these themes into scroll-like embroidered works, weaving intricate patterns and personal narratives into hand-stitched textiles that resonate with both history and the present.

For this exhibition, Milaaya Art Gallery presents two meticulously hand-embroidered works requiring approximately 8,000 hours of artisan labor.



Above Left: Across Land (2024) and Above Right: Terrain Afterwards (2024)
both by Nilima Sheikh
86.25 x 213.36 cm each
Hand embroidery on cotton satin fabric



Ranbir Kaleka at
India Art Fair (February, 2024)

RANBIR KALEKA

(b. 1953) Contemporary Artist, India

Ranbir Kaleka is renowned for his surreal, cinematic imagery and multimedia practice encompassing painting, video, and installation. His works often juxtapose dreamlike scenarios with historical, social, or philosophical commentary. Through fiber art with Milaaya Art, Kaleka's visions are rendered as textured embroidered tableaux, transforming ephemeral cinematic moments into tactile, immersive, and timeless stitched narratives.

For this exhibition, Milaaya Art Gallery presents two meticulously hand-embroidered works requiring approximately 8,000 hours of artisan labor.



Top: Guardians In A Dystopic Garden (2024), 139.59 x 88.69 cm

Bottom: The Blank Letter (2025), 152.4 x 91.44 cm

Both by Ranbir Kaleka

Hand embroidery on cotton satin fabric



MANJUNATH KAMATH

(b. 1972) Contemporary Artist, India

Manjunath Kamath's practice explores identity, memory, and transformation, often merging mythological references with contemporary motifs. Trained in painting, Kamath has expanded his work into installations and fiber art, creating hybrid narratives that blur the boundaries between tradition and modernity. In collaboration with Milaaya Art, his embroidered works translate fragmented forms and layered ideas into richly textured textile pieces, where each stitch carries conceptual and emotional weight.

For this exhibition, Milaaya Art Gallery presents two meticulously hand-embroidered works requiring approximately 6,000 hours of artisan labor.



Top: Translated Blue Tale (2025), 137.16 x 98.75 cm

Bottom: She Couldn't Find You in the Layers (2025), 137.16 x 115.21 cm

Both by Manjunath Kamath

Hand embroidery on cotton satin fabric



NIKHIL CHOPRA

(b. 1974) Contemporary Artist, India

Nikhil Chopra's work centers on landscapes, memory, and performance, blending personal and collective experiences into visual form. Trained in painting and drawing, Chopra explores temporal and spatial journeys, creating works that are both introspective and expansive. In collaboration with Milaaya Art, his embroidered landscapes map memory and narrative through meticulous stitchwork, turning fiber into a medium that captures the emotional and temporal depth of his artistic vision.

For this exhibition, Milaaya Art Gallery presents two meticulously hand-embroidered works requiring approximately 6,000 hours of artisan labor.



Top: Untitled- Gulmarg (2025), 115.82 x 91.44 cm
 Bottom: Goa (2025), 129.23 x 91.44 cm
 Both by Nikhil Chopra
 Hand embroidery on cotton satin fabric



ABOUT

Milaaya Art Gallery

Crafting Contemporary Narratives from Tradition

Milaaya Art Gallery, based in Kemps Corner, Mumbai, is a contemporary art space dedicated to reimagining South Asia's rich embroidery traditions through fine art.

Debuting at India Art Fair 2024, the gallery introduced its vision of transforming traditional craft into a vibrant medium of contemporary expression.



Collaborating with leading artists such as G.R. Iranna, Nikhil Chopra, Seema Kohli, Nilima Sheikh, Ranbir Kaleka, Manjunath Kamath, Gulam Sheikh, Shaurya Kumar, and Jagannath Panda, Milaaya Art bridges contemporary practice with artisanal mastery.

Each hand-stitched work, crafted by skilled artisans, transforms original artworks into tactile narratives that merge heritage with innovation.

With an emphasis on storytelling and materiality, Milaaya Art positions

embroidery as a living, evolving language—one that speaks to the present while honouring the past. A portion of proceeds supports the Milaaya Art Foundation, sustaining artisan communities and ensuring the longevity of India's craft traditions.

Artisans embroidering at Threaded Visions
at Snowball Studios, Mumbai (2024)

Right:

Top row (L-R): Md Zuber Alam, Md Sakir
Ansari, Md Sayed Jamauldin, Sk Sirajul Ali,
Sk Najibul Hoseen and Sk Ashik Rahman

Middle row (L-R): Masud Molla, Sk Nadeem,
Arun Kumar, Siddique Rahaman Shah and
Sk Hasan Ali

Bottom row (L-R): Nizamuddin, Nasayuddin
Kazi, Tapas Ari, Mobeen and Sher Ali



ABOUT

Milaaya Art Foundation

The Milaaya Art Foundation was established to
preserve and elevate the fading craft of hand
embroidery.

Rooted in tradition yet endangered by modern disinterest, this art form finds new life through Milaaya Art Gallery's fiber artworks, which highlight its cultural and artistic relevance today.



The foundation also supports artisans through training, housing, and healthcare initiatives.

Each artisan, or karigar, is credited for their contribution, with their names displayed alongside the artworks they help create—honouring their skill and collaboration.

A portion of all Milaaya Art proceeds funds these programs, ensuring the craft's sustainability and the well-being of the communities that uphold it.

ABOUT THE

Pioneering Indian Artistry
on the World Stage



Ranbir Kaleka



FOUNDER

In May 2000,
GAYATRI KHANNA
founded **MILAAYA**
EMBROIDERIES,
an export house that
brought **INDIAN**
CRAFTSMANSHIP
to the *forefront of*
global fashion.

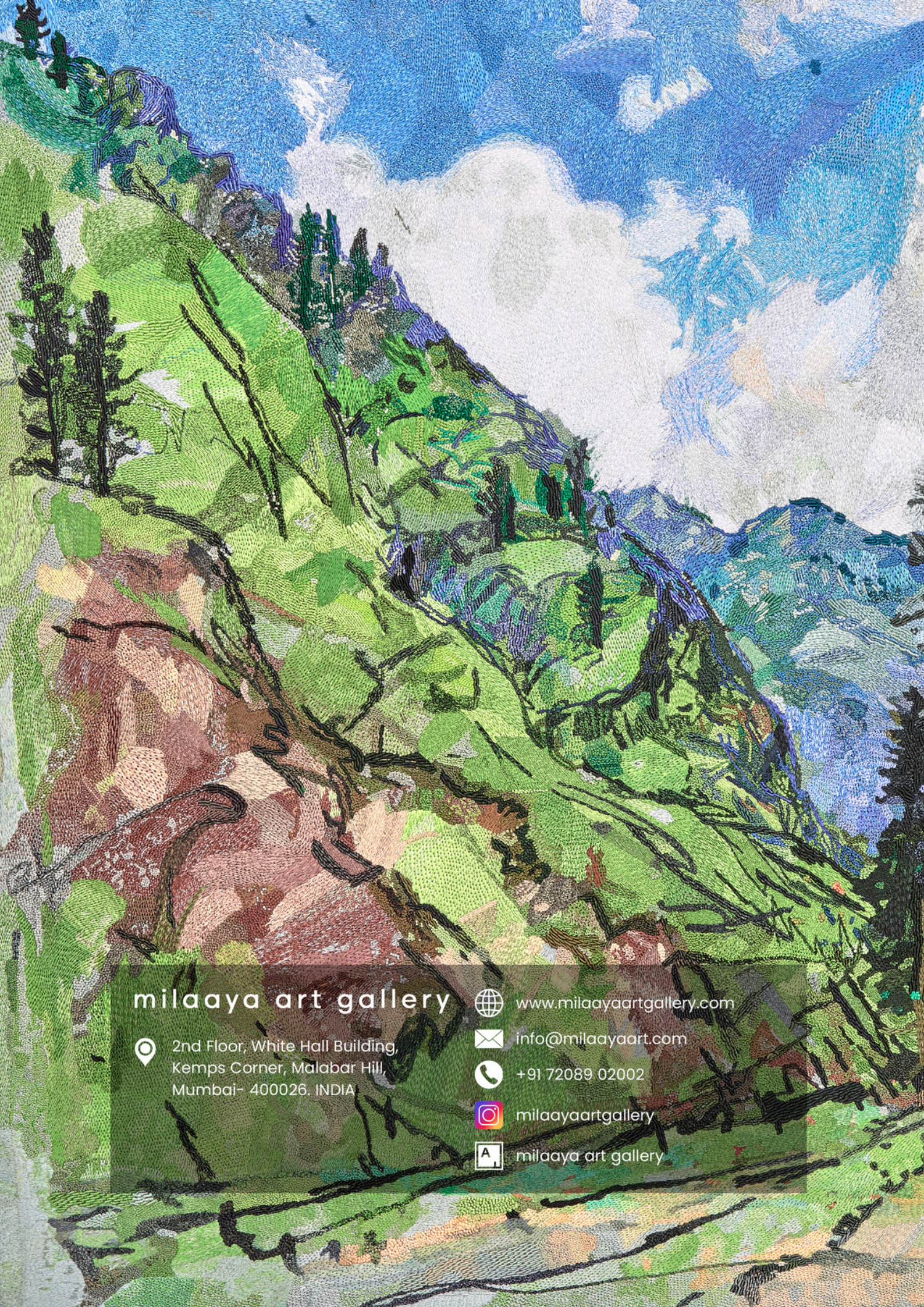
From Mumbai, Paris, London, and Milan, Milaaya worked with luxury houses such as Vera Wang, Versace, Dior, and Stella McCartney. By fusing traditional techniques with contemporary design, Gayatri established herself as a trailblazer in the industry.

In 2024, she expanded her vision by founding Milaaya Art Gallery, a pioneering space that redefines hand embroidery as a medium of contemporary art. Debuting at India Art Fair 2024 and now with a permanent gallery in Kemps Corner, Mumbai, it facilitates collaborations between artisans and leading artists, producing unique, timeless masterpieces that celebrate India's rich embroidery heritage on a global stage.

Top: Gayatri Khanna with Ranbir Kaleka at Milaaya Art, examining embroidery for his artwork *Guardians In A Dystopic Garden* (December, 2023)

Bottom: Gayatri Khanna with Nilima Sheikh at Milaaya Art, examining embroidery for her artwork *Heer 2* (December, 2023)





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