



## EVENT ART

# Artists bring early memories of the pandemic and more to fore



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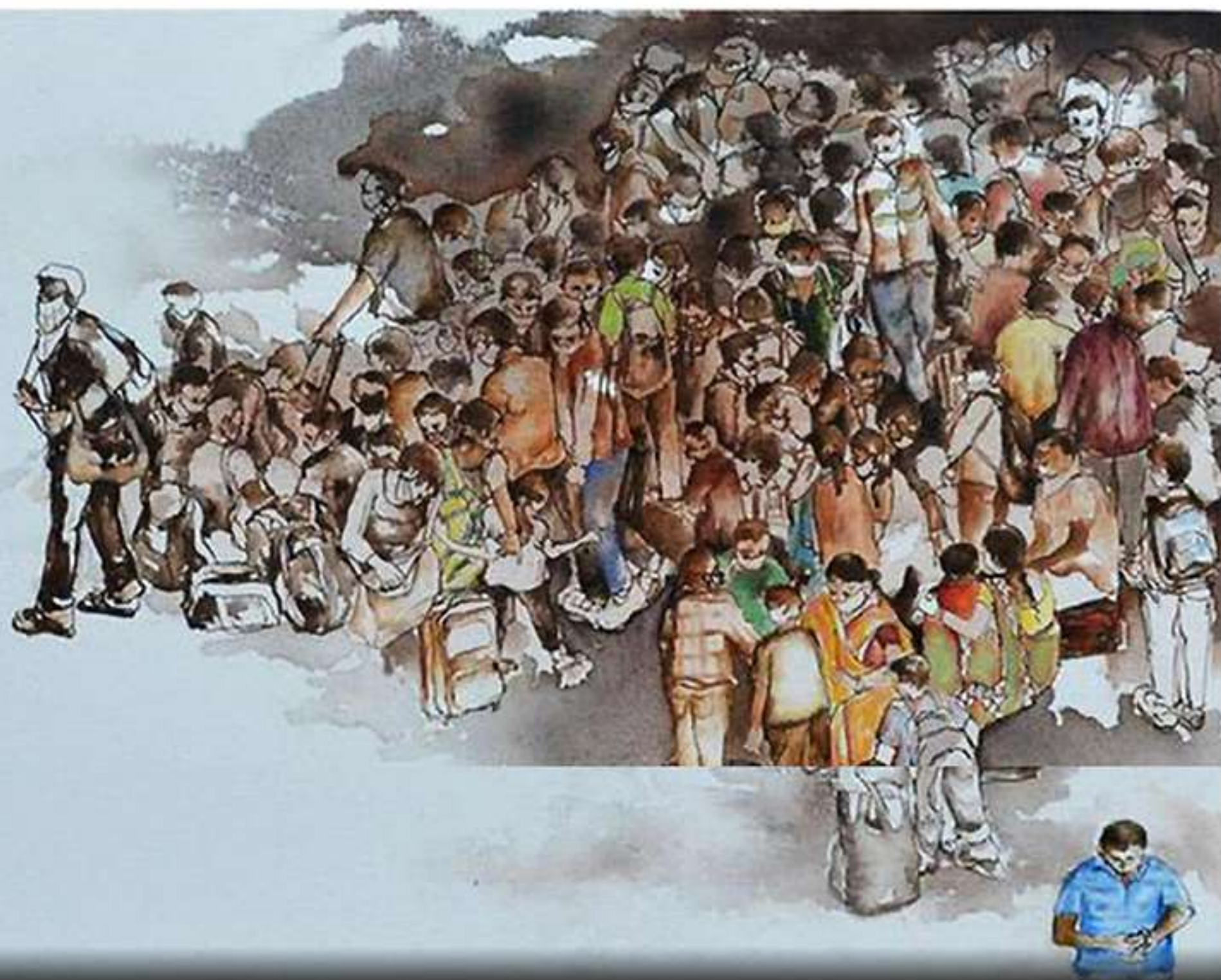


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A painting by Raka Panda, on view at kalakriti art gallery, Hyderabad

## Two ongoing exhibitions at Kalakriti Art Gallery, Hyderabad, showcase visual experimentation of contemporary artists who reflect on the pandemic, nature and unhurried lifestyles

Artist Raka Panda's paintings, titled Landscape, are not an artistic impression of a breathtaking landscape. Instead, depicted are a nameless and faceless sea of people seated together or standing by, not knowing when or how they will reach home. The memories of India's first lockdown in March 2020 come rushing back as one views Panda's artworks at Hyderabad's Kalakriti Art Gallery's ongoing exhibition titled Myth, Memory & Marvellous Realities.

With artists Amit Lodh, Balaji Ponna, Biplab Sarkar, Kiyomi Talaulicar, Laxmipriya Panigrahi, Muktinath Mondal and Vijay Kumar, Panda focuses on the fluidity of memory and how it morphs to create new narratives.



The memories of the first stage of the pandemic apart, artists draw from the unhurried lifestyles in their hometowns, kitschy and comic book colours of day-to-day life, nature in its pristine beauty and transform them into figurative and abstract artworks.

In a minimalistic manner, Kiyomi Talaulicar directs our attention to our dependency on masks and the faith reimposed by a handshake, which has become elusive in the age of social distancing. Artist Biplab Sarkar's 'Mirror of Small Things' presents images of men, women and children during the pandemic – people walking home, frontline workers geared up for their tasks, or a photographer capturing every mood. Sarkar also comments on the plight of the airline industry in uncertain times and how life has turned into a hazy, brooding mass of black and grey.

While memories of COVID-19 drive the narrative in some of the paintings, others look at nature and lifestyles. Laxmipriya Panigrahi's watercolour series, *This is Vitality*, portrays wilderness and wildlife in all its glory, with a play of light, shade and an eye for minute details.

Amit Lodh's series has a comic book-like quality as it celebrates different facets of life in vivid hues.

The visual experimentation is also evident in the gallery's other exhibition, *Lost & Found: A Visual Journey*, that features works of Claire Iono, Dhruti Mahajan, Ishrath Humairah and Karishma Wadhwa, often veering towards abstractions.

These artists explore geometric abstraction as they play with myriad textures, colours and forms that are vastly different but seem to be in harmony on their canvases. Humairah's palette varies from the burnt orange of sunsets to emerald greens and grey-blacks, with the landscapes creating a moody atmosphere. Wadhwa's multi-textured paintings, despite their abstraction, can represent a sea of humanity. Mahajan experiments with geometrical forms while Claire Lono uses abstract landscapes to create surreal passages of time.

*(Both exhibitions are on view at Kalakriti Art Gallery, Hyderabad, till January 10, and online at [kalakritiartgallery.com](http://kalakritiartgallery.com))*