

Fulcrum: An egalitarian addition to Mumbai's Kala Ghoda art hub

Inspired by her father's journalistic pursuits, curator Ayesha Aggarwal launches 'Fulcrum', a gallery built on the principles of free expression in art spaces



By Christy Rosy Sibi

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Ayesha Aggarwal; Fulcrum

Mumbai's vibrant art scene welcomed a multidisciplinary gallery space on January 9, with the inauguration of Fulcrum, housed in the historic Great Western Buildings in Kala Ghoda. The gallery's opening debut exhibition is by Odisha-based artist Amiya Ranjan Ojha. Titled *a wall made of holes*, the exhibition portrays what Fulcrum truly stands for.

Founded by arts manager and curator Ayesha Aggarwal, Fulcrum aims to bridge the gap between the known and unknown, fostering dialogue across art, culture, politics and history.

“I hope that with Fulcrum, we will create an egalitarian space within the arts and contribute meaningfully to the ecosystem of cultural practice,” Aggarwal said. The aim of the initiative is to amplify under-represented echoes, and bring to the surface discussions on the current socio-political norms.

Other than art exhibitions, the gallery will also host film screenings, book readings, and workshops, encouraging open dialogue between practitioners and enthusiasts alike.

Aggarwal's commitment to this initiative is deeply personal. Fulcrum takes its name from an eponymous independent magazine published by her father, journalist Yogi Aggarwal, during the Emergency years.

Founded a few weeks before Emergency was announced, Fulcrum was nothing short of a miracle, considering the restraints of journalism imposed during the 21 months. The situation clearly did not deter Yogi Aggarwal from publishing 13 editions of the magazine, penning down ideas on the political, economic, cultural, and environmental concerns of the decade, with issues ranging from the labour struggles in India to the rising ecological problems, and the role of women in a progressive India. It is fitting that the magazine serves as a symbolic foundation for the gallery's ethos of independent thought and expression.



Amiya Ranjan Ojha; his work 'Leaving, non-Living'

Aggarwal chose the perfect candidate for the debut. Amiya Ranjan Ojha's work chronicles the hard-knock life of migrants set against the backdrop of urban expansion, reflecting what Fulcrum stands for. Through its black-and-white imagery, the collection portrays their living conditions set against perpetual urban development.

The young artist has been celebrated for his various works, including being awarded the Odisha State Lalit Kala Academy Award for his creation *Leaving, non-Living*.

Delineating the dwellings of migrant workers, his work *Midnights* translated the living conditions of these hard workers into print by portraying four individuals sleeping on storage racks with nothing but their clothes providing them comfort, and a shared mosquito net gifting them a temporary haven from the outside world.

Continuing the theme of the working man's struggles, his work *Endless Land* but not mine portrays a surreal, post-apocalyptic landscape that reflects the isolation and fragility of migrant existence.

Fulcrum provides Ojha with his first Mumbai exhibition.

Fulcrum's current team includes Bandhu Prasad, Shubham Roy Choudhury, Bincy Shahitha Swalih, Sandeep Sonwane, and Adarsh Bhalerao. The gallery invites visitors to engage with its stimulating exhibits and events, free of charge.

Website: www.fulcrum.art

Timings: Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 6pm

Location: 116/23 Great Western Buildings, Chamber of Commerce Street, Kala Ghoda, Mumbai: 400 001