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Headless Goat Spotted Near 31-Inch Sweet

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By Joanna Sugden



Gallery Maskara

Shine Shivan's "Glimpse of Thirst" on display at Mumbai's Gallery Maskara.

Gallery owners exhibiting at this year's India Art Fair in New Delhi were making sales in the first few hours of the event Friday, raising hopes that the Indian art market is showing signs of a revival.

Aicon Gallery New York City, for instance, sold its first work, a piece by Modernist S. H. Raza, for \$200,000 to a private collector based in the U.S. on the preview day of the fair Thursday. "It's off to a pretty good start," said Andrew Shea, the gallery's director. "This fair will be a big indicator of the health of the Indian art market."

Mr. Shea said the atmosphere was more hopeful than at last year's fair, where galleries struggled amid slowing domestic economic growth and global woes. Sales of contemporary art have yet to return to levels seen before the downturn in 2008, said Mr. Shea.

This is the fifth edition of the [India Art Fair](#), formerly called India Art Summit, which takes place alongside gallery openings and speaker events until Sunday.

Some of the most popular works on display at the international galleries had a distinctly Indian flavor.

Daniel Besseiche, a French gallerist, said he had already sold a painting of Mahatma Gandhi by Bangladeshi artist Shahabuddin Ahmed for \$24,500.

Another eye-catching item he is showing is "Wrapping Bonbon Drapeau Inde," a sweet, 31-inches long, painted with the Indian flag by Jenkell Laurence. It is on sale for \$16,300. Mr. Besseiche said he had five interested buyers though they want him to lower the price. To which he responds: "I won't budge."



Gallery Maskara

Glimpse of Thirst by Indian artist Shine Shivan is the stuffed body of a decapitated goat wearing a jacket made from human hair decorated with dozens of real chicken heads.

Jannis Markopoulos from Frida Fine Arts of Berlin was exhibiting a work by Georgian artist David Datuna, which was made from photographs behind hundreds of spectacle lenses. From a distance the work, "India View Points of Millions," looks like the Indian flag.

Although the gallery was yet to make a sale when India Real Time visited Thursday, Mr. Markopoulos said he was optimistic.

"This year people are handling the art, they are talking about the prices, they are talking about the reality of buying it more than they did last year," Mr. Markopoulos said.

At Mumbai's Gallery Maskara Pvt. Ltd., one work was drawing particular attention but not, the gallery owner admitted, because people were seriously considering buying.

"Glimpse of Thirst" by Indian artist Shine Shivan is the stuffed body of a decapitated goat wearing a set of false teeth where it's head used to be and a jacket made out of human hair decorated with dozens of real chicken heads.

"This is about pushing the language of sculpture," said Abhay Maskara, the gallery owner.

The piece is selling for \$13,130 but serious buyers had yet to come forward.

"There's a tremendous amount of interest in the work," Mr. Maskara said. "The question is, 'Do you have the courage to take it home?'"