

A YEAR OF DEATH AND TRAGEDY OFFERED RESPITE IN ART
By Deepanjana Pal



It's been a rollercoaster of a year, 2011. In Mumbai, it feels like we've spent most of it complaining or commiserating about something or the other: the city's vulnerability to terror attacks, the appalling murders of the two young men who were killed by thugs, the deaths of greats like M.F. Husain and Dev Anand, a crashing stock market. But as difficult a year as it may have been on many fronts, 2011 was a surprising good year for Mumbai's art scene.

There couldn't have been a more compatible marriage between an art show and a city museum. Sheba Chhachhi's mini-retrospective *Evoking the Pause* also used Bhau Daji Lad Museum to great effect. While Chhachhi's installations weren't steeped in Mumbai like Kallat's, they did weave interesting connections with the museum's history and architecture. Plus, the most elaborate installation in the show, "The Water Diviner", was spectacular. It occupied an entire room and glowed with a hypnotic blue light that drew virtually every visitor into the installation.

In the recent past, when art lovers went gallery-hopping in Mumbai, they walked a well-trodden path, entering more or less the same handful of galleries that have established themselves as champions of Indian contemporary art. Things changed this year with these new players entering the artistic fray. Hopefully,

2012 will see more art, more ideas, more questions, more fun and more rants.
That's always worth a toast.