

# AD

CULTURE

## Galerie ISA in Mumbai presents poignant self-portraits by Anoushka Mirchandani

Anoushka Mirchandani's debut at Mumbai's Galerie Isa grapples with questions of womanhood and diasporic identity.

By [Alisha Lad](#) | 8 January 2024



*By Your Side*, 2023 by Anoushka Mirchandani. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie ISA, Mumbai

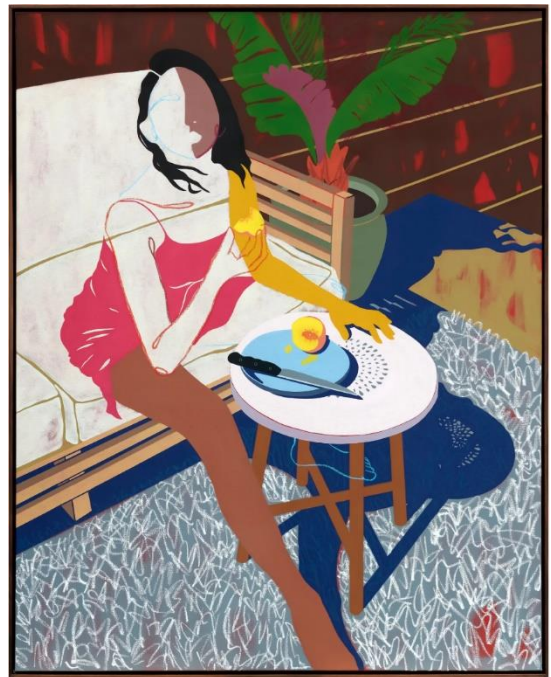
"My story is that of a patchwork identity weaving between two contrasting worlds—belonging in neither and in both simultaneously," says India-born, California-based Anoushka Mirchandani. Her debut in India, titled *Homecoming*, is curated by Ashwin Thadani, founder of Mumbai's Galerie Isa, and is a visual experience where the duality of existence is decoded through a diasporic lens as the artist explores the nuances of assimilating in a foreign land.



Anoushka Mirchandani with two of her works — *Nightbird* (left) and *Travellers*

For Mirchandani, *Homecoming* marks the culmination of a winding journey spanning three decades, illustrating a narrative of a woman navigating cultural assimilation which touches on her continuous renegotiation of identity. Mirchandani's works explore the dichotomy of her need to both camouflage and assert her existence while straddling newfound agency and a yearning for her roots. This leads into a more poignant layer in her series—personal histories that harken back to Mirchandani's ancestry in India. Inspired by archival photographs she unearthed—of her *nani* and *dadi* fleeing Pakistan to India post Partition—she tackles themes of displacement, forced and voluntary. “Assimilation is nuanced,” she says. “In addition to the loss felt, there is self-enquiry, agency, resilience and renewed hunger for one's roots that bubble to the surface when you are pushed to fit into a foreign context.”

Earthy tones reminiscent of a childhood in India meet California-inspired hues, and code-switching (where subjects' body parts—limbs, torsos, heads—slip into the background, delineated only by outlines in oil stick or pastel) begs one question: What parts of our metamorphosing identities do we suppress?



*September in San Francisco, 2023* by Anoushka Mirchandani. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie ISA, Mumbai