

Kochi-Muziris Biennale

December 13, 2022

In news– Fifth edition of Kochi-Muziris Biennale is planned to be held in December.

About Kochi-Muziris Biennale-

- **It is an international exhibition of contemporary art held in the city of Kochi in Kerala, India.**
- **It is the largest art exhibition in the country and the biggest contemporary art festival in Asia.**
- **It is an initiative of the Kochi Biennale Foundation with support from the Government of Kerala.**
- **An artist-led endeavour, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale was founded in 2011 by Kerala-born, Mumbai-based artists Bose Krishnamachari and Riyas Komu with an aim to “create a platform that will introduce contemporary, global visual art theory and practice to India.”**
- **Indian and international artists exhibit artworks across a variety of mediums including film, installation, painting, sculpture, new media and performance art.**
- **Through the celebration of contemporary art from around the world, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale seeks to invoke the historic cosmopolitan legacy of the modern metropolis of Kochi, and its mythical predecessor, the ancient port of Muziris.**
- **The current edition will have on display the works of over 90 artists from across the globe in varied media**
- **In its tenth year, curated by Singapore-based Indian-origin artist Shubigi Rao, the central exhibition of the showcase will centre on the theme “In Our Views Flow Ink and Fire”.**
- **First edition of Kochi-Muziris Biennale was held in 2012.**

History of Muziris-

- **Muziris was an ancient harbour and an urban centre on the Malabar Coast.**
- **Muziris found mention in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea**, the bardic Tamil poems and a number of classical sources. Situated somewhere around the present day Kodungallur, the exact location of Muziris has been a matter of dispute among historians and archaeologists.
- However recent excavations at Pattanam, near North Paravur, has led to some experts suggesting that the city was located there.
- **Muziris was a key to the interactions between South India and Persia, the Middle East, North Africa, and the (Greek and Roman) Mediterranean region.**
- Pliny the elder, in his Natural History, hailed Muziris as “the first emporium of India.

What are art biennales?

- An international large-scale showcase of art that takes place every two years at a particular site, **biennales are usually non-commercial enterprises – unlike art fairs – that centre around a curatorial theme.**
- **One of the most prestigious and oldest biennales in the world, the Venice Biennale** was established through a resolution by the city council in 1893 to celebrate national artistic talent.
- Coinciding with the silver anniversary of King Umberto and Margherita of Savoy, it had in attendance artists, critics, curators and patrons.
- With its rising popularity, the 1900s saw the emergence of Biennales across the world, with Bienal de São Paulo being instituted as the first non-European biennial in 1951.
- In 2009, a global Biennale Foundation was established with an “aim to create a platform for dialogue, networking, and knowledge sharing among contemporary art biennials around the world”.

- It lists a directory of over 200 biennales that are held at present.
- Though most biennales do not allow for direct purchase of art, an invitation and participation in the global showcase is often viewed as a validation of an artist's work, and an assertion that they are being noticed.