



5 Continents Editions srl
Piazza Caiazzo, 1
20104 Milano
T. +39 02 33603276
info@fivecontinentseditions.com

COSMIC GARDEN

MADHVI PAREKH AND MANU PAREKH. KARISHMA SWALI AND CHANAKYA SCHOOL OF CRAFT

Edited by Maria Alicata and Paola Ugolini

This exhibition and accompanying book show how contemporary artists are reinventing craft techniques, exploring identity and cultural history.

Embroidery, a skill passed down through generations, is central to this exploration. Traditionally practised by women, it's now embraced by both genders. The exhibition highlights the work of Madhvi and Manu Parekh, who draw inspiration from India's rich spiritual and artistic traditions. Their works, ranging from paintings to sculptures, reflect the interplay between the real and the imaginary.

The Chanakya School of Craft works with these artists to reinterpret their work through embroidery. This fusion of art and craft challenges traditional boundaries and creates a dialogue between past and present.

Madhvi Parekh (b. 1942) is a self-taught artist from India known for her folk-inspired paintings. Her work draws on childhood memories, mythology and women's craft traditions. She explores themes of human experience, the divine feminine and the interplay between reality and the surreal. Parekh has exhibited internationally and received numerous awards, including a fellowship from the Indian Ministry of Culture and a Whirlpool Women's Achievement Award.

Manu Parekh (b. 1939) a leading Indian artist, draws inspiration from Paul Klee, Tagore and the folk art of India. Rooted in the tangible and sensual, his work celebrates the beauty of embroidery and traditional craftsmanship. Recognised with prestigious awards, Parekh's art is a fusion of modernism and Indian heritage.

Founded in 2015 by Karishma Swali, the **Chanakya Foundation** empowers women through education and skill development, thus helping to preserve India's rich cultural heritage, while the **Chanakya School of Craft** was established in 2016 and offers an 18-month immersive programme in over 300 hand-embroidery techniques. The school supports over 1,200 women and houses a cultural centre with live craft demonstrations. By reimagining craft practices, the Foundation and School promote equality, independence, and craft excellence, ensuring a sustainable future for this heritage.

[Exhibition: 60th Venice Biennale, Salone Verde, Santa Croce 2258, 30135 Venice, 20 Apr 2024 — 24 Nov 2024](#)