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## ART: Take a walk through the astonishing landscapes of artist Aji VN

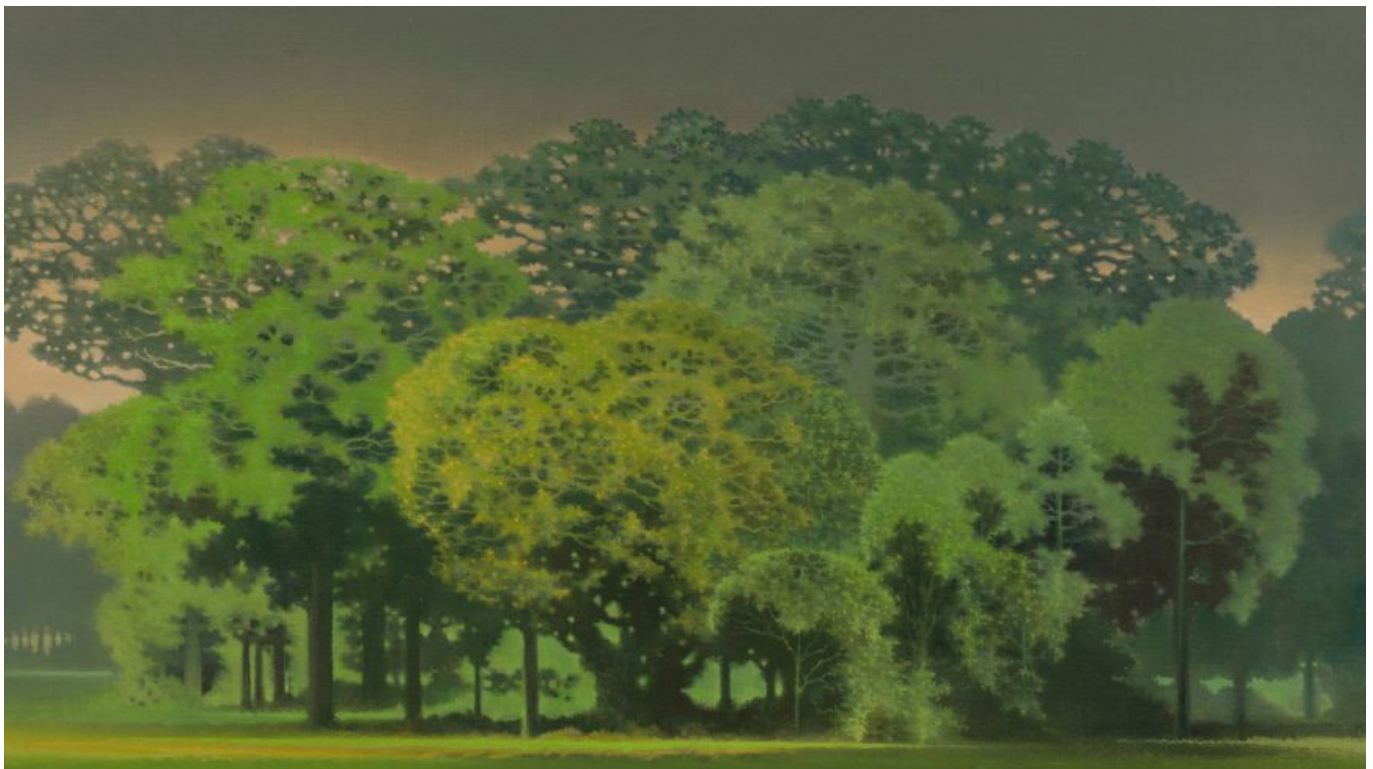
*Dutch dweller Aji VN's oils at Mumbai's Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke is an ode to man's journeys, within and without.*

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Uma Nair | August 7, 2017

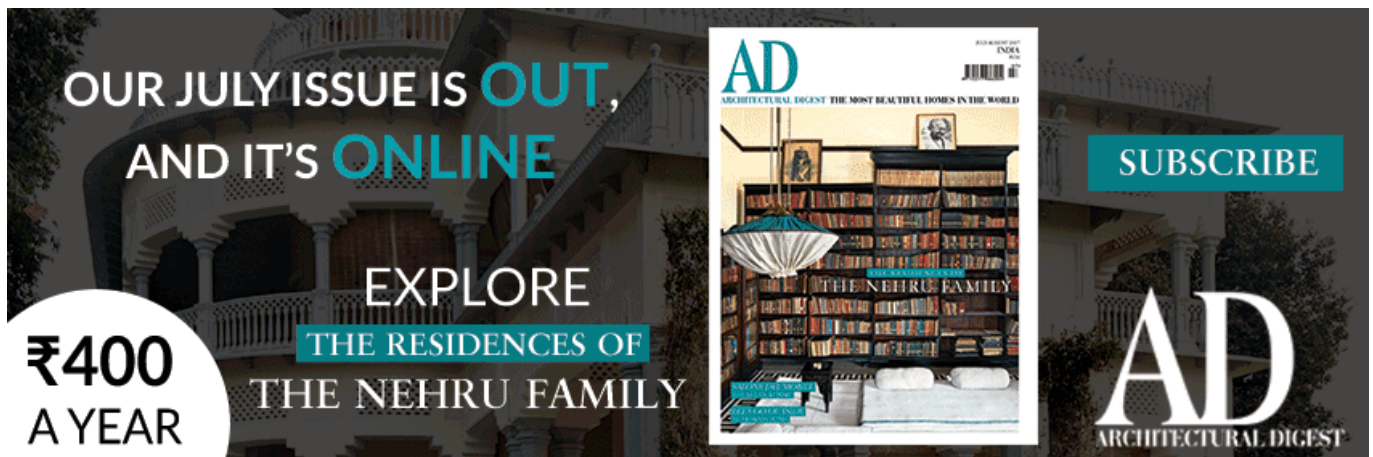
Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke



*Aji. V.N., Untitled, 2017, 45x91 cm, oil on canvas on view at Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke*

## OTHERWORLDLY LANDSCAPES

Kerala born Aji V.N. fills his works with geographical and cultural spaces that lie between the Netherlands and Kerala. His charcoals have in the past had a mythic energy, timeless in its mixing of mutable subject matter and subversive provocation. Here in Mumbai, his oils traverse subterranean fertility as he invites you into realms of otherworldly landscapes of astonishing originality.



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(Right) Aji V.N., *Untitled*, 2014-2015, 120×80 cm, oil on canvas; (Left) Aji V.N., *Untitled*, 2015-2017, 40×30 cm, oil on canvas

Aji has a unique array of techniques whose identification can puzzle scholars; he paints extraordinary, seraphim laced landscapes that knit nature and melancholia with poetic cadences. It is clear that when he takes a realistic composition he

disregards boundaries between mediums to create landscapes of contemporary character.

At first you don't think you are looking at oils: fleshy greens, terracotta browns and crimson tide hues seem washed by an incandescent aura. He gives a rocky pathway distant geographical naturality and backs the tree with a limpid sunset; uncanny how the haze of colour turns parts of landscapes ghostly and makes you wonder if you are looking at a wash and not an oil (painting).



(Right) Aji V.N., *Untitled*, 2017, 40×30 cm, oil on canvas; (Left) Aji V.N., *Untitled*, 2014, 40×30 cm, oil on canvas.

## DENSE FORESTS

There is no ambiguity here—it is only a precision driven perspective that is embedded in the artist's memory when he creates dense wooded forests with labyrinthine rocks and crevices and skylines bathed in a phosphorescent haze that speaks of cinematic accuracy. Distinct and evocative are the palm-fringed lush tropicana that he distills in embers of leaf green.

These untitled works are more than merely concentrated compositions; they are the summation of a thinker who combines the melancholia of paradoxes born in the vignettes of a brooding silence. Atmospheric are the key to these studies—Aji creates islands of annotations to create works that inhale as well as exhale through the identities of both mist and shadow.



*Aji V.N., Untitled, 2015-2017, 41 x 91 cm, oil on canvas*

## **NARRATIVES OF IMAGINATION**

Winter in Netherlands and the monsoons in Kerala can be contrasting studies in climatic reflection. The irresistible fascination of these paintings lies somewhere between the aesthetics of the artist's imagination and the intellectual and scholarly—both reflecting psychological states of being that respond to artistic activity. Kerala's Wayanad and moisture-laden hills conjure a thousand little narratives even as the little soil textures speak of an echo of time.

Between intangible conifers and coconut palms and huts that line the overlapping layers Aji gives us skylines pregnant with possibilities—he also makes us think of the power that invests humans with actions of vast destruction—perhaps an explosion—that will disturb and destroy the tranquil scene.



(Right) Aji V.N., *Untitled*, 2017, 80×60 cm, oil on canvas; (Left) Aji V.N., *Untitled*, 2017, 80×60 cm, oil on canvas

## **BETWEEN NETHERLANDS AND KERALA**

For Aji the location is indeterminate, independent of the Netherlands, independent of Kerala, without any specific geography. Thus physical experience is compacted into a world of thoughts: a philosophical image that is translated into the unity of nature's bounty.

Between his deep observations of dawn and dusk, sunrise and sunset, we are given a surrealist dreamscape in which a confluence of different worlds unravels. Indeed art is not about drums and drama, it is about the majesty of colours created in solitude.



*Aji. V.N., Untitled, 2015- 2016, 42×75 cm, oil on canvas*

*Aji V.N., new oils on canvas, is on view till September 30, 2017 at Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Colaba, Mumbai.*

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