

**"The daily experiences that are happening in the world make you want to clench your fists, grit your teeth, to shout out—in a moment of hysteria"
—Nalini Malani**



Installation Image - Nalini Malani, *Of Woman Born*, 2026, 9 channel iPad Animation Chamber, sound, dimensions variable. Collection - Kiran Nadar Museum of Art © Nalini Malani

[Press Kit](#)

NEW DELHI / VENICE, 07 May 2026—The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) proudly presents *Nalini Malani – Of Woman Born*, a major site-specific commission and an official Collateral Event of the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.

Curated by KNMA Artistic Director and Chief Curator Roobina Karode, the exhibition transforms the historic Magazzini del Sale into a "memory chamber" of sound and moving image. An extension of Malani's pioneering *Animation Chamber* series (2017–present), the site-specific installation features 67 shifting animations that meditate on the intersections of myth, female trauma, and global conflict.

Nalini Malani – Of Woman Born is a profound reflection on the Greek myth of Orestes—the son who murdered his mother, Clytemnestra, to avenge his father Agamemnon's death. Though pursued by the Furies, Orestes was saved from punishment by the goddess Athena. By layering ancient mythology against the backdrop of contemporary global conflict, Malani meditates on themes of male accountability and the burden of patriarchal violence that women bear. Her works expand upon the themes of the gendered impact of the violence of war and the absence of the voices of women and children, the most impacted groups, from these global conversations.

Across nine channels of projection, *Of Woman Born* leads us into a deep, dark cave-like chamber with moving images. Mythic figures, drawings, silhouettes, drifting texts, and apparitions refuse to settle into a single, coherent narrative. A haunting soundscape of twenty minutes courses through the space, superimposing the past and present, myth and memory, justice and impunity. We are invited into this unsettling space not to resolve the story of Orestes, but to live through its afterlives, and to listen to the dispossessed women whose muted histories return here with a demand to be heard.

Projected directly on the salt-encrusted walls are 67 graffiti-style animations, composed of more than 33,000 individual iPad drawings, that flicker, glint, and move. Eschewing the digital stylus for the visceral feel of her own fingers, Malani treats drawing as a form of cellular growth, where images evolve and break away like living organisms, while still allowing for 'pauses' and moments that foreground the "lightness of being", both of which she feels are integral to not just absorbing the work, but also life.

The Skipping Girl

Recurring throughout Nalini Malani's artistic language is the figure of 'The Skipping Girl', one such a symbol of freedom and lightness in life. Her ability to move constantly and to coordinate her movements keeps her free from being controlled and from all coercion. In many ways, 'The Skipping Girl' personifies the artist herself, traversing mythology, memory, and time as a witness and survivor. It resonates both with Malani's feminist perspectives and with the language of her art.

During the Venice Biennale, visitors are invited to 'Follow the Skipping Girl' on posters, banners, and vaporetto signage through the streets of Venice to the Magazzini del Sale. The scannable QR code also allows visitors to download and preserve fragments of Malani's digital animations. This city-wide activation transforms pockets of the city into an interactive animation chamber, turning every encounter with The Skipping Girl into a portal for dialogue and engagement.

Nalini Malani said: *"The daily experiences that are happening in the world make you want to clench your fists, grit your teeth, to shout out—in a moment of hysteria—standing with your back against the wall when the tragedy of life takes the upper hand. Politically engaged, cross-cultural and historical dialogues have been the basis of my art making for sixty years. All the more today I feel it is a pressing necessity as our stories have to be retold, to give us a chance to become a more humane society."*

Kiran Nadar, Founder and Chairperson, KNMA said: *"Nalini Malani is one of the most vital voices in contemporary art today, whose practice has, for decades, articulated a fearless ethical position on violence, displacement, and the silencing of women. 'Nalini Malani – Of Woman Born' is an urgent and uncompromising extension of that vision. KNMA is proud to present this Collateral Event at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, reaffirming our commitment to supporting artists whose work speaks from India while addressing the world."*

Roobina Karode, Artistic Director and Chief Curator, KNMA said: *"Malani compels us to understand that 'Of Woman Born' is not a sentimental invocation, but it is a political demand, a demand that we recognise Janani, the generative mother. She is not just a figure to worship in abstraction but as the one whose labour, suffering, resistance, and premonition must be foregrounded, centred, and honoured. 'In Minor Keys,' Koyo Kouoh's curatorial vision of attunement to subtle frequencies and quiet signals, Malani's repetition, exhaustion, and refusal of closure finally find their proper frame. To listen to women, to hear the voices of the silenced, to witness the violence that patriarchy enacts against the nurturer, requires precisely this willingness to remain in exhaustion."*

For more than fifty years, Malani's practice has functioned as an unsparing critique of majoritarianism and its multiples of violence. Malani has expanded to embrace multiple mediums, formats, and cultures, combining the hand-painted and the digital and bridging the historical and the contemporary. What has informed the artist's expression is not just her lived experiences and the socio-political happenings around her, but also the remnants of the trauma of the partition of India. The impact of the historic event was felt by the artist not as first hand trauma but through a life that started with displacement, a family struggling with daily realities like unfamiliar local languages and building a community.

This individual level impact of these historic events has continued to inform Malani's practice. It is a wound that refuses to be buried in history, making its brutal presence felt again in the communal violence of 1992, 2002, and 2018. Malani's journey from paintings and drawings to Mylar cylinders and iPad animations is not a linear development but a discontinuum of artistic forms, where each form interrupts the apparent naturalness of the previous ones, insisting that meaning erupts through rupture rather than through seamless evolution. Drawing, too, evolved for her into an intimate way of ordering an inner reality: its fears, anxieties, and uncertainties that constitute the lived experience of those who do not hold power.

The Collateral Event **Nalini Malani – Of Woman Born**, organized by KNMA, takes place on the occasion of the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia from Saturday, May 9 to Sunday, November 22, 2026 (pre-opening on May 6, 7, and 8).

Public Programs

KNMA is hosting a robust series of public programs in Venice throughout the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, offering a deeper engagement with Malani's artistic practice. From August to October 2026, the exhibition will be activated by a curated suite of intergenerational workshops designed to engage participants with the themes, materials, and narrative strategies that shape Nalini Malani's practice.

Catalogue

An exhibition publication with contributions from Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Roobina Karode, and Emily Butler offers new scholarly insights into the artist's practice.

KNMA and Nalini Malani : A Long Standing Engagement

KNMA has played a sustained curatorial and scholarly role in the presentation of Nalini Malani's practice. In 2014, KNMA organised the artist's landmark year-long retrospective in three chapters, *You Can't Keep Acid in a Paper Bag*, in New Delhi. The Museum has also supported key international exhibitions, including *The Rebellion of the Dead* at the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2017), and Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Italy (2018). Among the more than 50 institutions worldwide holding Malani's work, KNMA maintains the most comprehensive collection, spanning nearly six decades of her oeuvre, reinforcing the Museum's commitment and subsequent presentation at Venice.

[More Details](#) | For quotes about the exhibition, please click [here](#).

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