

MUMBAI

## P.R. Satheesh

GALERIE MIRCHANDANI + STEINRUECKE

16/18 Mereweather Road, (Behind Taj

Mahal Hotel), Colaba 2 Sunny House

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Eyes—alert and alarmed—pop out of P. R. Satheesh's paintings. Their gazes evoke the aftermath of a tense encounter, its charge still lingering. With this focus on the ocular, and the interplay of consciousness it suggests, the differences between Satheesh's subjects—be they human, fish, or insect—seem not to matter. They all appear troubled or shocked, much like the men and women who bare their teeth in F. N. Souza's paintings, here jostling for space in dense compositions made between 2014 and 2019.

There is an echo of Pollock's movement in Satheesh's skeins of paint, though he is less interested in interrogating the properties of his medium than in depicting the slipperiness of sudden sightings of jungle creatures, which appear in a memorable flash only to immediately conceal or camouflage themselves in painterly incident. Satheesh's obsession with these fugitive encounters emerges from his experience growing up on a cardamom farm bordering a forest in South India. All four of the paintings included in the show—three triptychs and one diptych—present Satheesh's home as a place of hectic activity, colored with anxiety and apprehensions of the unknown.

Looking at Satheesh's paintings, I imagine myself positioned on the ground, gazing up at a blue sky that is overcrowded to the point of closing in. In *Untitled I*, 2017–18, this background flashes orange, drawing our eyes toward a canine figure letting out a pained howl, as if to suggest that the teeming excess elsewhere is slipping into a state of unexpected horror.

—Zeenat Nagree