

NS Harsha: *Camel and the tent times*

Exhibition: 5 June–31 July 2026

16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW



NS Harsha
Camel and the tent times, 2025
Acrylic on canvas
190 x 150 cm
74 3/4 x 59 in
© NS Harsha
Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

Victoria Miro is delighted to present an exhibition of new paintings by renowned Indian artist NS Harsha.

The works on view elaborate on the artist's celebrated, ongoing 'lamp grid' series. The paintings all feature diyas – lamps traditionally made from clay that are lit during rituals, prayers, ceremonies, celebrations – with flames and trails of smoke together creating patterns that guide the eye around each canvas: rising as a column (*Workers having a break*); ascending the legs of a table (*Camel and the tent times*); dancing shoal-like (*Journey through water marks*); or delineating a series of fluid brush strokes (*Harvest as a water mark*).

The emerging narratives pivot between aspects of work and rest, the small yet heroic figure of the worker appearing in agricultural or industrial scenarios that springboard into larger philosophical questions. *Workers having a break* takes inspiration from the well-known 1932 photograph *Lunch atop a Skyscraper*,

depicting ironworkers sitting on a beam of the RCA Building during the construction of the Rockefeller Center in Manhattan. Harsha's diverse workforce takes its break held aloft by trails from a central column of lamps that extend into a nocturnal sky, suggesting a more mysterious interlude or escape into the nightly realm of dreams. The composition is echoed in the fiery *A chandelier of our time*, which the artist describes as 'a chandelier studded with eternal human labour'.

Workers in ostensibly rural settings, such as in *Harvest as a water mark*, inspired by a visit to a paddy field, find themselves in the company of suited middlemen counting money, or birds feeding on insects and cows grazing, indicative of other ecosystems. This theme is picked up in *Again, and again, and again* where stooped rice field workers and ascending flames are counterpoints in a composition of rhythmic insistence.

Often the paintings explore the interplay between a static, harmonising structure – in essence, a grid or succession of diyas, figures and other motifs, depicted in a shallow space on backgrounds of a single, strong colour – and fleeting natural forces. Harsha describes his intent to capture a momentary event passing through a collective framework, much like a gentle breeze causing flames to twist, turn and flicker in their struggle to remain alight. He finds beauty in the dynamic tension between stability and flux, especially when viewed as part of a wider consideration of the structures of knowledge, belief and power, and the potential of an invisible force to reshape and drive change.

About the artist

Born in 1969, NS Harsha lives and works in Mysore, India. He was a recipient of the prestigious DAAD Scholarship in 2012 and was awarded the Artes Mundi Prize in 2008.

Solo institutional exhibitions and projects have taken place at international venues including Naoshima New Museum of Art, Japan (2025); NS Harsha: *Gathering Delights*, CHAT (Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile), Hong Kong, China (2019); NS Harsha: *Facing*, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea, Wales, UK (2018); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2017) the Dallas Museum of Art, TX, USA (2015–16). Harsha's work has featured in recent group exhibitions at venues including the Tokyo National Museum Hyokeikan, Japan (2025); The Box, Plymouth, UK (2024); MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, UK (2023); Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, Belgium (2021–21).

His work is in permanent collections including the Glynn Vivian Gallery, Swansea, UK; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, India; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan; Muhka Museum, Antwerp, Belgium; National Museum of Cardiff, UK; and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia.

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