

Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum presents  
In collaboration with Goethe Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan, Mumbai

## Landscape Plays

*The first solo exhibition in India by internationally acclaimed artist, composer, and theatre-maker Heiner Goebbels.*

Curatorial Advisor: Tasneem Zakaria Mehta

Preview: March 14, 2026

On view: March 15 to May 31, 2026

**Heiner Goebbels** (b. 1952, lives in Frankfurt am Main and Berlin) is amongst the most important exponents of the contemporary music and theatre scene. His compositions for ensembles and big orchestras published by Ricordi Berlin are performed worldwide along with several of his music theatre works and staged concerts.

He has created internationally celebrated compositions for ensemble and large orchestras (Surrogate Cities, A House Of Call), music-theatre pieces (Max Black, Eraritjaritjaka), staged concerts (Songs of Wars I have Seen), radio plays, sound and video installations (Documenta, Centre Pompidou, Museo da Arte Bogota, Museo Reina Sofia Madrid, MMCA Seoul - among others).

Regarding his first solo in India, Heiner Goebbels said, *"I am very honoured to have the opportunity to show Landscape Plays in a dialogue with the numerous treasures of the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum in Mumbai. I am especially excited, how the sounds and all the things and objects in the Landscape Plays: monuments, instruments, paintings, and the elements: water, wind, fog and ice - communicate with the precious objects of the museum. There will also be living performers to be seen. But if so - and in contradiction to more traditional forms of the performing arts - they are not necessarily in the centre of attention. They move, they arrange things, they are 'in relation' as much as the visitors are 'in relation' to what they see and what they hear."*

The installation on view at the Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum – 'Landscape Plays' is inspired by the writings of American author Gertrude Stein (1874-1946). In fact, the term Landscape plays was coined by Stein to describe her plays, that circumvented linear narration and traditional structures in order to change the course of traditional theatre, with emphasized representation. On stage, there is no consistency or message or plot. Rather, Stein insists on the separate reality of her texts, on the free play of words, forms, colours, movement, and meanings that render the viewer sovereign. Just as when viewing a landscape in nature or an image of a landscape, the viewer may decide where to focus his or her attention.

*"A landscape does not move nothing really moves in a landscape but things are there, and I put into the play the things that were there. Magpies are in the landscape that is they are in*

the sky of a landscape, they are black and white and they are in the sky of the landscape. “ Gertrude Stein: Plays, in: Lectures in America.

For the exhibition in Mumbai, Goebbels has selected several works in which among other components, animals and the play of the elements themselves (for example, fog, water) enter 'the stage'.

Tasneem Mehta, Managing Trustee & Director of Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum, and curatorial advisor of the exhibition, said the following about the work *“Through this exhibition, Heiner orchestrates a compelling symphony, dissolving the boundaries between theatre and visual art. Challenging conventional modes of viewing, 'Landscape Plays' invites visitors to move beyond passive observation and actively navigate the interplay of light, sound and movement. In doing so, the exhibition frames the Museum as a dynamic space, continuing our commitment to contemporary interventions that expand its narrative.”*

The installation consists of the following works, 7 Columns and The Last Painting, Landscape 3, Stiftern Dinge / Stifter's Things – together these works question collective memory, human-nonhuman tensions, and human-technology relations. Heiner Goebbels has also premiered a new work in this exhibition titled 'Eagles'. Shot in Mumbai in 2025, this work offers an anachronical conversation about time against the historical photos of Bombay from the museum's collection.

Landscape Plays by Heiner Goebbels is a play on the proximity between contemporary performing arts and visual art, which is characteristic of Heiner Goebbels world-renowned musical theatre pieces.

According to Björn Ketels, Director of Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Mumbai, this exhibition offers, *“a rare opportunity to experience the work of legendary contemporary composer and theatre maker – Heiner Goebbels, whose site specific immersive installations bring together contemporary sound, and multiple other components to create thought provoking experiences for audiences. The Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum provides the perfect setting, with its contemporary programming and historic architecture. This solo presentation marks a significant moment for contemporary sound and performance art in the region.”* By situating Goebbels' practice within a museum framework, the Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum and Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Mumbai continue their commitment to fostering international artistic exchange and expanding the boundaries of exhibition-making.

Public programs accompanying the exhibition will be announced in due course.

### **About Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum**

The Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum is Mumbai's oldest museum, established in 1857, and is the erstwhile Victoria and Albert Museum, Bombay. The chief cornerstone of the Museum was laid on 19 November 1862 and the Museum opened to the public at the present site on 2 May 1872. The Museum building has been recently renovated by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, and was opened to the public by the Honourable Chief Minister, Shri Devendra Fadnavis on January 8, 2025.

In 2003 the BMC set up a public trust to manage and promote the Museum through a pioneering public-private partnership. At the same time, the Museum building and collections underwent a comprehensive, UNESCO-Award winning restoration, that was spearheaded by the Museum Director, Tasneem Zakaria Mehta and supported by the BMC and the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation. It opened to the public in 2008, and has pioneered the promotion of contemporary art and design which is presented in the extraordinary 19th-century building, one of the finest in India, in an attempt to rethink obsolete notions and challenge colonial and European enlightenment precepts.

The Museum's robust exhibition and outreach programme invites artists and experts to engage with the collections and archives to bring new readings to both. Over 85 exhibitions have been presented, over the past 15 years. These include collaborations with both local and international institutions and organisations. Past exhibitions have showcased creative practices in contemporary art and design, crafts and textiles, architecture, urbanism, and film and video art.

Tasneem Zakaria Mehta, Managing Trustee and Director of the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, is an art historian, curator, designer, conservationist, and cultural activist. She is the former Vice Chairman and Mumbai Convenor of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage). She has successfully pioneered the revival and restoration of several cultural sites in Mumbai, most notably leading the restoration of the Museum, which received UNESCO's 2005 Asia Pacific Award of Excellence for Cultural Restoration. She serves on the Modern and Contemporary Art Councils at both The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and is a member of Asia Society India Centre's Advisory Council for Arts and Culture and a founding trustee of the Kochi Muziris Biennale and current Advisory Board member. She was the past Chair of the CII National Committee on Art and Culture, and has curated and presented over 85 exhibitions of contemporary and historical art at the Museum. She was invited to speak at the World Economic Forum in Davos and curated an exhibition of Contemporary Indian Art there. She has served on several national museum boards and government expert committees. She is a member of the Academic Council of the Sir JJ University of Art. She has written numerous articles and books on art and culture. Her most recent publication, *Mumbai: A City Through Objects – 101 Stories from the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum* (Harper Design, 2022), released on the occasion of the Museum's 150th anniversary, has won several awards, including Art Book of the Year.

### **About Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Mumbai**

Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Mumbai is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. The Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Mumbai promotes the study of German abroad and encourages international cultural exchange and also fosters knowledge about Germany by providing information on its cultural, social and political life.

**The exhibition is on view at:** Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Botanical Udyan and Zoo (Rani Bagh), 31-A, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Road, Byculla (E), Mumbai – 400027

Timings: 10 am to 5:30 pm | Closed all Wednesdays and certain public holidays  
Museum entry tickets applicable.

**Please contact:** Maithilee Gotpagar ([mgotpagar@bdlmuseum.org](mailto:mgotpagar@bdlmuseum.org); [enquiry@bdlmuseum.org](mailto:enquiry@bdlmuseum.org)) from Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum or Amruta Nemivant ([Amruta.Nemivant@goethe.de](mailto:Amruta.Nemivant@goethe.de)) from Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Mumbai for further information about the exhibition.