

Tracing gold's journey from Kochi to the Gulf

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1. Leading the week: 'Like Gold' takes Emirati artists to Kochi, India

A view of "Like Gold" exhibition in Kochi, India. (Courtesy of Rizq Art Initiative)

Taking place as a collateral event during the sixth edition of the **Kochi-Muziris Biennale** in the coastal town of Kochi, India, "**Like Gold**," curated by **Murtaza Vali**, explores how gold has historically linked Kochi and India's Malabar Coast to geographies across the Indian Ocean, particularly the glistening cities of the Arabian Gulf. The exhibition traces the shared **histories** and circulating **journeys of gold** through works by Indian artists alongside several **Dubai-based and Emirati creators**, including Nujoom Alghanem, Khalifa Ahmed, Dina Nazmi Korchid, Roudha Hamad, Sara D. Alahbabi and Reem Mubarak, as well as Iraqi-Canadian artist Rand Abdul Jabbar (based in Abu Dhabi) and Beirut-born, Mumbai-raised artist and educator Vikram Divecha, who is based in Dubai.

Presented by the UAE-based **Rizq Art Initiative**, the exhibition charts gold's journey from antiquity through colonial eras to today, culminating in Dubai's rise as the "City of Gold."

"As a curator whose biography straddles the Gulf and India, I'm always looking for ways to explore their intertwined histories and cultures," **Vali told Al-Monitor**. "And gold seemed like a fairly obvious one. The urban forms of many Gulf cities, especially Dubai ... are anchored with a gold souk, and gold looms large in our urban landscapes as well as through advertisements for gold jewelry, many of which are actually Indian companies that rose after India's economy was liberalized in the early 1990s."

The works on show reflect the idea of gold as both **myth** and **material**, exploring the magical dimensions of its transactional and transmutational nature.

“As I started to do more research, I realized that there are other metaphors of gold that link the two [regions],” adds Vali. “The idea of the city of gold — of opportunity — that then draws many migrants from India and other parts of South Asia to it in search of fortune.”

The exhibition’s title stems from a **Malayalam colloquialism** expressing the deep care and attention, both emotional and material, that a parent bestows on a child. In this sense, gold carries a spectrum of meanings, evoking excess, success, shortfall, pride and even disappointment.

Date: Until March 31, 2026

Location: K.M. Building, Calvathy Road, Fort Kochi, Kerala

Find more information [here](#).