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☀️ **Divine in the Contemporary: Nandini Valli Muthiah's 'So Far and Henceforth'**

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A brilliant idea, made visible through light

There are rare moments in art where **vision, execution, and emotion** align so precisely that the result feels both timeless and urgent. At the **Lalit Kala Akademi**, such an experience unfolds before viewers through the lens of **Nandini Valli Muthiah**, a contemporary photographer whose exhibition "*So Far and Henceforth*" stands as a **luminous threshold between mythology and modernity, divinity and the everyday**.

Trained at the **Arts Institute in Bournemouth, UK**, Muthiah brings both technical brilliance and emotional sensitivity to her work. Her photographs are not simply captured — they are **composed**, like paintings. They resonate with the weight of tradition while daring to reimagine its boundaries.

Gods Walk Among Us — And We See Ourselves in Them

The most striking feature of this collection is its **reincarnation of gods — not in celestial settings but in the contemporary human world**. We see Krishna in an urban alley, in a fluorescent-lit apartment, in a city car. Yet these are not deconstructions; they are **reconsecrations**. The divine is not trivialized — it is **humanized**, perhaps even **liberated**.

In a world often too cynical to engage with the sacred, Muthiah reintroduces **godliness not as myth, but as presence** — in grief, glamour, and solitude.

A Painter's Eye Behind the Camera

What distinguishes Muthiah's photographic art is its **painterly depth**. The lighting — soft yet deliberate — carves out an emotional topography. Subjects are staged, but never static. Like classical oil paintings, her frames **breathe with suggestion**, layering mood, memory, and metaphysical stillness.

The result? Photographs that **feel like portals**. One does not merely view them — one *enters* them.

They recall the grandeur of Raja Ravi Varma, the theatricality of Baroque, the silence of Vermeer — yet with distinctly **Tamil urban roots**. The **costuming, posture, and gaze** all hint at stories half-told and deeply felt.

Bridging the Visible and the Unseen

"So Far and Henceforth" invites viewers into a **liminal space**, where gods are not above or beyond us — they are *with* us, and *in* us. This is not just mythology reimagined — it is **mythos re-embodied**. The staged environments are not fabrications; they are **revelations**, exposing the profound beauty and contradiction of the human condition.

Muthiah's lens does what the finest art aspires to: **it opens a passageway** — from the material to the mystical, from the present to the eternal.

Final Reflections

Nandini Valli Muthiah's work is not merely a photographic project — it is a **philosophical meditation** on what it means to be human and divine in the same breath. "*So Far and Henceforth*" is a title that itself suggests **temporal transcendence** — a journey not just from past to future, but from form to essence.

In a time where art often battles for relevance, her work chooses resonance. And in doing so, it **reminds us to look again — not at gods, but at ourselves**.

Exhibition at Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai. Don't miss the chance to witness a conversation between time, tradition, and truth — through the eye of one of India's most original contemporary photographers.









