

KALA SUTRA

2014

ROOTS AND FRUITS IN NEW AGE AESTHETICS





KALASUTRA

2014



ROOTS AND FRUITS IN NEW AGE AESTHETICS

Curated by Arun Ghose

Arpana Caur	Jayasri Burman	Jogen Chowdhury
Neeraj Goswami	Paresh Maity	Ram Kumar
Sakti Burman	Satish Gujral	Thota Vaikuntam



22nd - 25th May 2014



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ROOTS AND FRUITS IN NEW AGE AESTHETICS

*Everybody has eyes.
Only a few could see.*

Curator's note

Paul Klee, in his Bauhaus days, had used a simile of a tree to explain the process of artistic creation. The trunk of the tree, according to him, is the artist himself who grows its roots deep into the soil of its origin to draw the sap. Artistic idea that lies behind all act of creative art is the sap for the artist and it undergoes radical transformation in the eye and mind of the artist in the same way as the sap is chemically transformed in the trunk of the tree. The result is the foliage, flowers and fruits that has little resemblance with the roots and the trunk but are umbilically linked. The simile holds well in the case of most of the artists chosen for this show but not without major differences, too. Each of them is significantly different from all others in having grown their roots simultaneously in countries that are poles apart. They thus are able to draw their 'sap of artistic inputs' from cultural soil of the East and that of the West in variable measure. In India there is such a tree, called Banyan tree that has aerial roots dangling down from extended branches. Eventually the tree grows so vast that

that the roots from the branches become multiple trunks that simultaneously draw the sap from a large tract of land to help the foliage growth atop. Artists today are comparable to similar, organic, growth of huge Banyan trees with its aerial roots spread wide apart and grown deep into lands of different origin. What is indeed of much critical interest is the variation of fruits they bear even with 'sap' of the same soil.

Images are essential in art. Role of image-making in art, however, did not remain stagnant but has undergone series of changes often giving rise to concepts that were unknown and even unthinkable earlier. Visual art, as stated in all formats of artistic activity, is reflective of thinking in terms of images created in the mind's eye of the artist concerned. Modern art goes a step ahead by putting techniques of image-making as equally important, perhaps even more important, than images so created. Almost all the 'isms' of modern art in the West, from Impressionism to Cubism and so on, were actually involved in charting various techniques to visually

depict 'seen' objects. Post-modern art today often substitutes the role of images with the concept of creating images as the single most important criterion of art. Whatever it may be, there is no art without images. The purpose of images in art is to help channelize various visualizations of objects into symbols - aimed at clarifying the unknown by means of the known. Such practices, when carried out by dedicated professionals over a sufficiently long period of time (decades into centuries) gives birth to set of artistic codes, acceptable to both artists and the connoisseurs alike, that are collectively known as aesthetics.

'Kala-Sutra', when viewed under such aesthetic considerations, easily evokes a sense of timeless continuity and is therefore definable as the essential thread of aesthetic foundation over which rises art of a Nation in various eras. This gives rise to yet another set of questions and the least important of them is to know what then the need of making new art today when one may easily depend on what has happened in the past and claim such inheritance as pedigreed heritage of art. The pride and the

prejudice that a Nation as a whole acquires with its art heritage is not insignificant and the need to continue creating art (often with questionable degree of success) thus merits a closer debate. This debate is even more relevant in Indian perspective as its past wealth of art and architecture is indeed difficult to match, if not impossible altogether, by the practising artists today. Let us examine the issue with greater detail.

Art of painting and sculpture, collectively referred as visual art along with other medium of art-making, always remain within the fold of individualised creativity but, at the same time, is universally accepted as the index of human progress made by the society they belong to. Art in ancient India, or that in Egypt or Greece, represent the civilised attainment of the Hindus and Egyptians and the Greeks respectively. Continuation of artistic creativity in these Nations is a compulsive burden that the contemporary population in these societies has to bear in order to retain their preferred status of being at the top earlier than the rest. The invisible

presence of such a thread of artistic productivity, in a pan-Indian scenario, is therefore a reality demanding closer scholastic attention to trace uniqueness as well as continuity of strength.

Inherited heritage of art thus serves as the soil in which artists of today have their individual roots but the fruits they bear, the artistic output they create, are often loaded with acquired fragrances not essentially restricted to their roots. 'Kala-Sutra' in art today is therefore a curious metamorphosis of roots and fruits.

Contemporary art in India, as is the case universally, still remains largely alienated from the intelligentsia and also from the common masses even though it received, in the very recent past, a dubious boost of fiscal investment which

did not last long. In this background of conflicting evaluation of social role in art, and that of artists' role in society they belong to, this exhibition offers an opportunity of assessing the significance of a few chosen practitioners who wish to bring back popular sympathy and understanding into contemporary art.

Linear times, in the time-line of contemporary society, acquires its complex multiplicity by its preferred ability to multi-tasking in which scores of things are dealt with simultaneously, independent yet not without bearing shades of effect on each other as they happen. A linear narration of story, on the other hand, in the life of people who matter and that of artists we wish to take a closer look at, is also possible but hardly desirable. Their life, and views on life as reflected in their art, have always betrayed an angle of observation from a near opposite end, as if viewed upside down. Exposition of the essence of linear times thus appears in visual art as if embedded in varying degrees of shades between the two extremities.

Artists, they say, is the mirror of the society. Today these mirrors have undergone technological makeover and no longer reflect what they view.

Images coming out of their individualised 'mirrored-surface' offer a filtered version pregnant with personal preferences. Various attempts have been made to define Post-modern aesthetics which challenge the assumption that beauty is central to art and aesthetics. Art of the preferred nine, selected in this show, further illustrates this continuing debate in contemporary Indian Art. This selection also aims to reveal their preoccupation with artistic skill, and its use in developing a visual language full of communicable ideals, without sacrificing their individual artistic positioning in post-modern pan-Indianness.

Urban sophistication and rural simplicity, complexity of pictorial metaphor and

readability of scripted text, dimensional presence of elegantly crafted sculpture in the art of Satish Gujral, and the horizontal spread of painted canvas by Ram Kumar, all such visual creations merges effortlessly to tell almost nothing but, at the same time, manages to invoke stories buried under layers of psychic residues in viewers' sub-conscious self. There is a lot more in their art than just that and they have managed to generate a heightened degree of understated intensity in their work that merits close, and repeated, viewing.

Ram Kumar's canvases are like long poems, easy to read but not easy enough to decipher the coded message with casual viewing. He is easily inspired by the layers of accumulated memories, generated and carefully stored in his mental data-bank, about his long association with the holy city of Varanasi spent often in company with friend Husain. In the limited world he lives in, he feels free to use sub-conscious images, and fond memories, of the past etched deep into the sub-conscious. Seashells and marine remnants, water lilies in bloom and the rounded spread of its delicate leaves, and such other

relics that smells of environmental tranquillity appears in his canvases with unpredictable regularity. While these alone are enough to offer an accumulated image (of life that shines after the rains) the artist in him starts to explore other, mostly pictorial, avenues to create an art that aspires to scale greater heights by incorporating a multi-spiritual approach to art.

Ram Kumar, with his personalised idiom of multi-layered abstraction, thus offers an additional visual link to what was attempted in the first compilation of art under this theme. The present version, titled 'Kala-Sutra – 2014' offers a total of nine artists from India. They, with their varied age-profile and equally divergent technique to paint, ably illustrate the issue of symbolic representation of observed reality in different idiosyncratic style that shares a common link with the art of their ancestors. Hovering between docufiction and intimism, this curated assemblage, gathered for this show, positions the contemporary art of India in its true perspective. Artists on show besides Ram Kumar are, Jogen Chowdhury and Sakti Burman, Satish Gujral and

Thota Vaikuntam, Paresh Maity, Neeraj Goswami, Arpana Caur and Jayasri Burman

A painting is essentially static. Dynamism lies in the way it is painted. Each artist in this show serves as a visual link that forms a continuous chain in which dynamic rhythm vibrates with static vigour. Continuity of this thread re-establishes the strength and Indianness of Indian art, today.

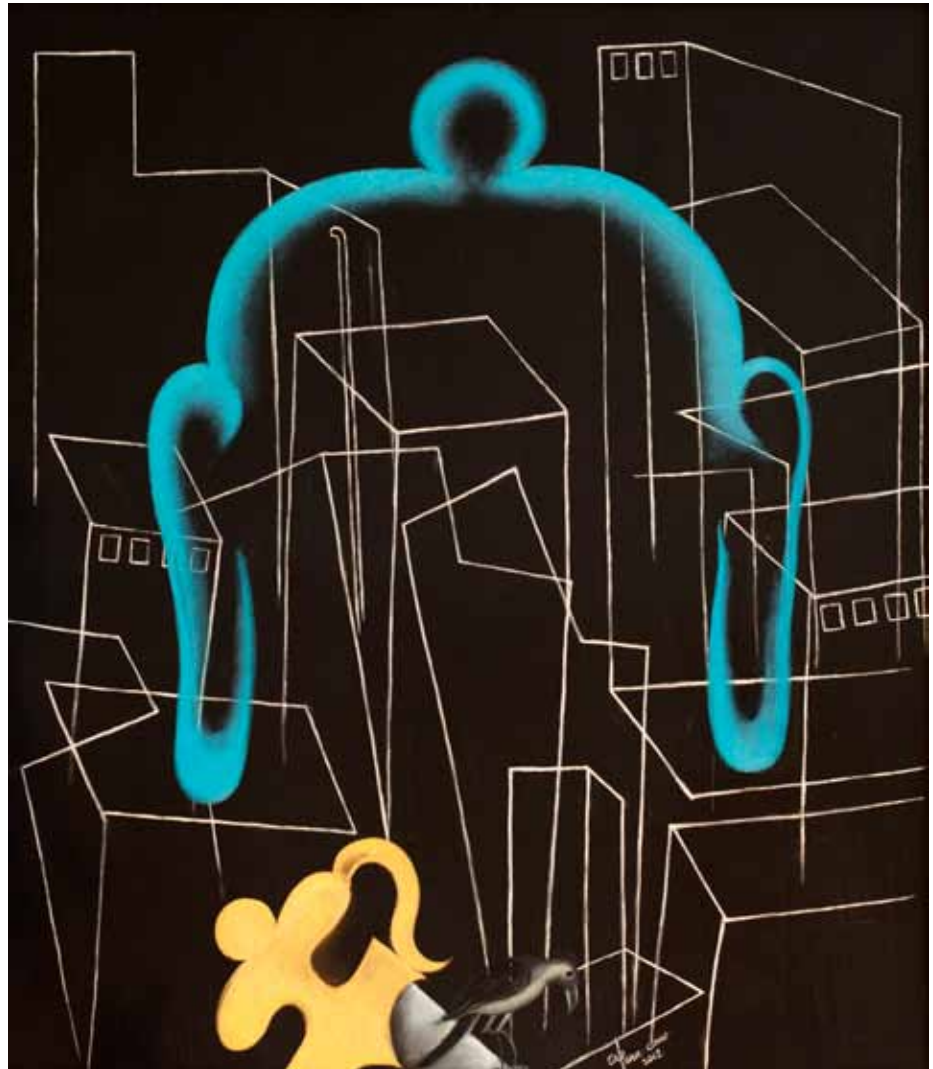


ARUN GHOSE | KOLKATA

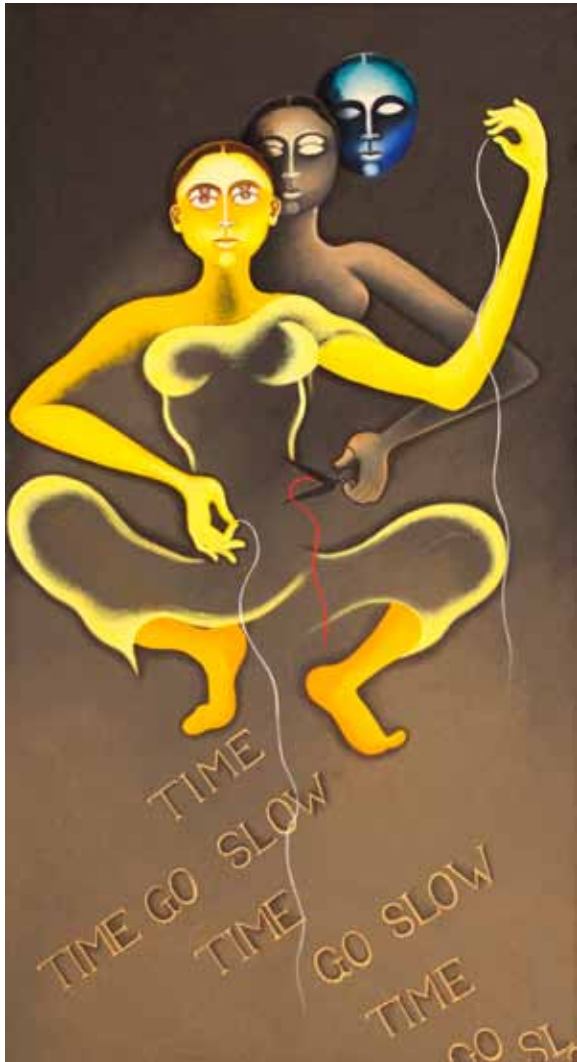


Arpana Caur

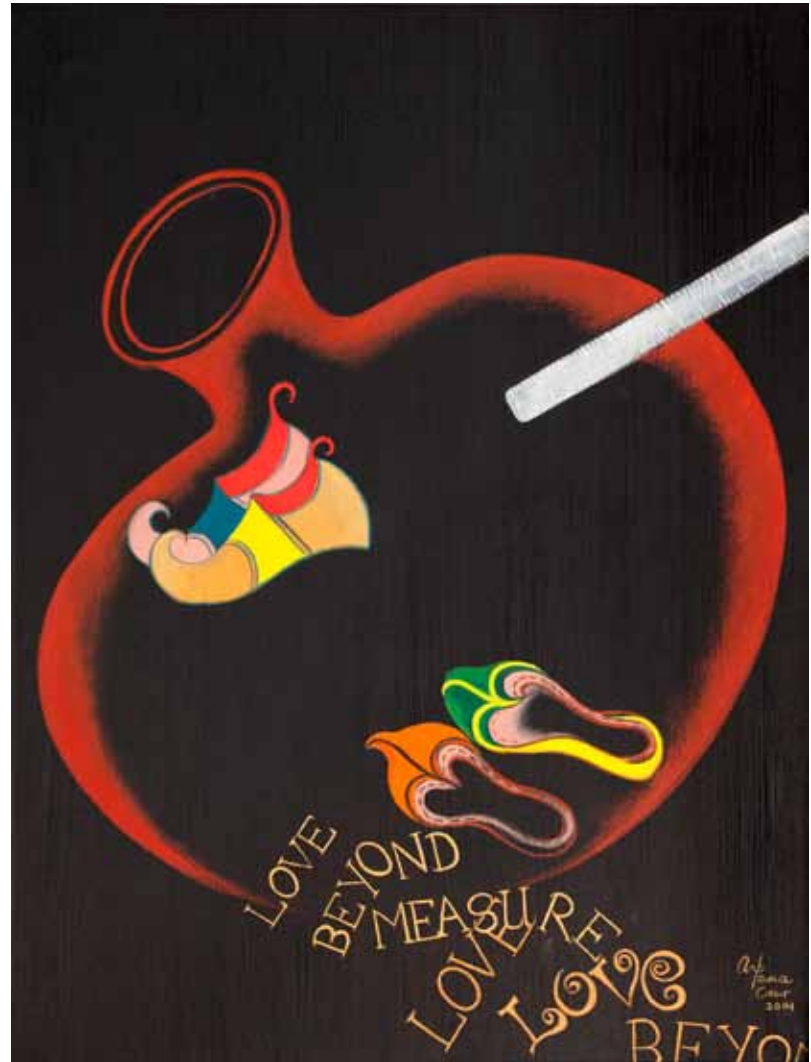
Art of Arpana Caur conveys her intended message of cycle of life by means of imagery not originally intended for the same level of communicability. Like Kandinsky, she also firmly believes that only the spiritual art can be modern as it has the potential of expressing the new, the uncharted, and the unexplored. Her faith in use of images however, unlike Kandinsky, yields in her art a heightened intensity of spiritual potential along with a curious mix of art-idiom that is conservative yet contemporary, symbolic but unburdened with associated complexities. Arpana's use of color is yet another feather in her much-awarded cap as it invariably sets the mood of human feelings she wants to portray, from ecstatic bliss to inflicted despair, that in turn generates the intended 'rasa' in her art.



Arpana Caur | Buddha and Ashoka | 42in x 48in | Oil on Canvas | 2012



Arpana Caur | Day & Night | 36in x 66in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



Arpana Caur | Love Beyond Measure | 36in x 48in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



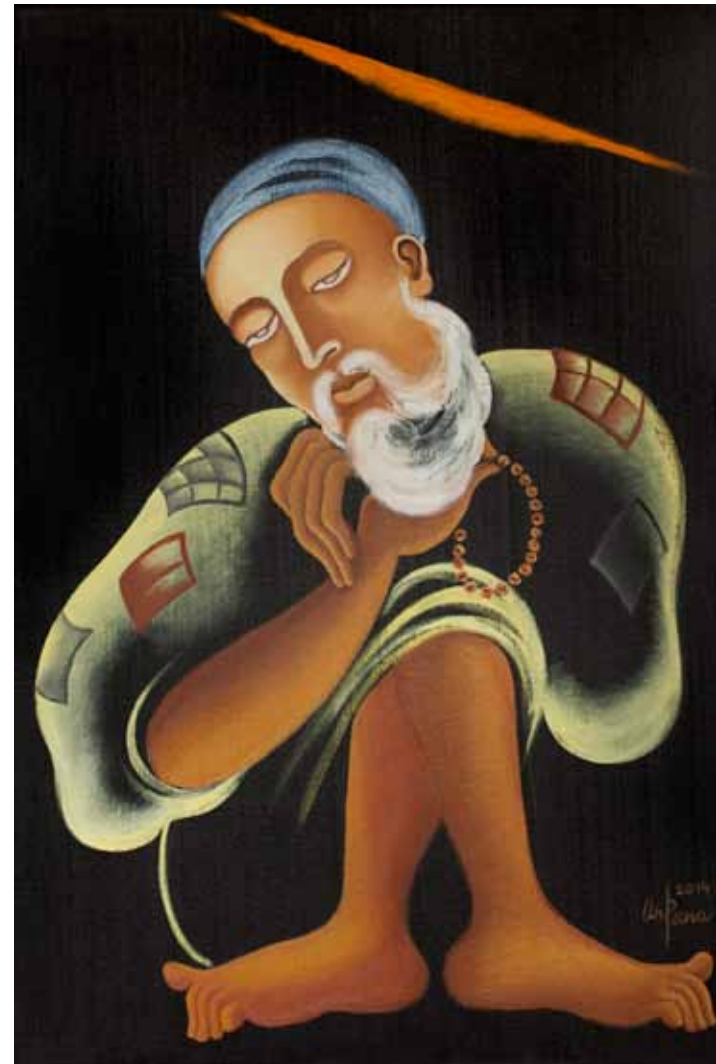
Arpana Caur | Love Beyond Measure | 40in x70in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



Arpana Caur | Touch | 37in x 40in | Oil on Canvas | 2012



Arpana Caur | Love Beyond Measure | 36in x 60in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



Arpana Caur | Nanak ji | 36in x 24in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



Jayasri Burman

Armed with the sensitive empathy that typifies success in female artists in all ages, and more so in modern times, Jayasri has experimented with various art forms before settling down with her preferred idiom that openly proclaims her admiration to Indian folk tradition in visual art. Her bronzes, in recent years, bear her inimitable style and together, with her paintings and drawings, convey her concern for Indian womanhood poised at the cross-road of tradition and modernity. Her art, in perfect sync, easily combines complex imagery with charmingly simplified visual metaphor.



Jayasri Burman | Aashirwad | 48in x 48in | Watercolour Pen and Ink on Paper | 2014



Jayasri Burman | Avaneesh | 36in x 18in | Watercolour Pen and Ink on Paper | 2013



Jayasri Burmann | Eshanputra (Son of Lord Shiva) | 36in x 18in | Watercolour Pen and Ink on Paper | 2013



Jayasri Burman | Uma Putra | 36in x 18in | Watercolour Pen and Ink on Paper | 2014



Jayasri Burman | Binodini | 37in x 35.5in | Watercolour, Pen and Ink on Paper | 2014



Jayasri Burman | Sankha Lata | 36in x 36in | Watercolour Pen and Ink on Paper | 2014

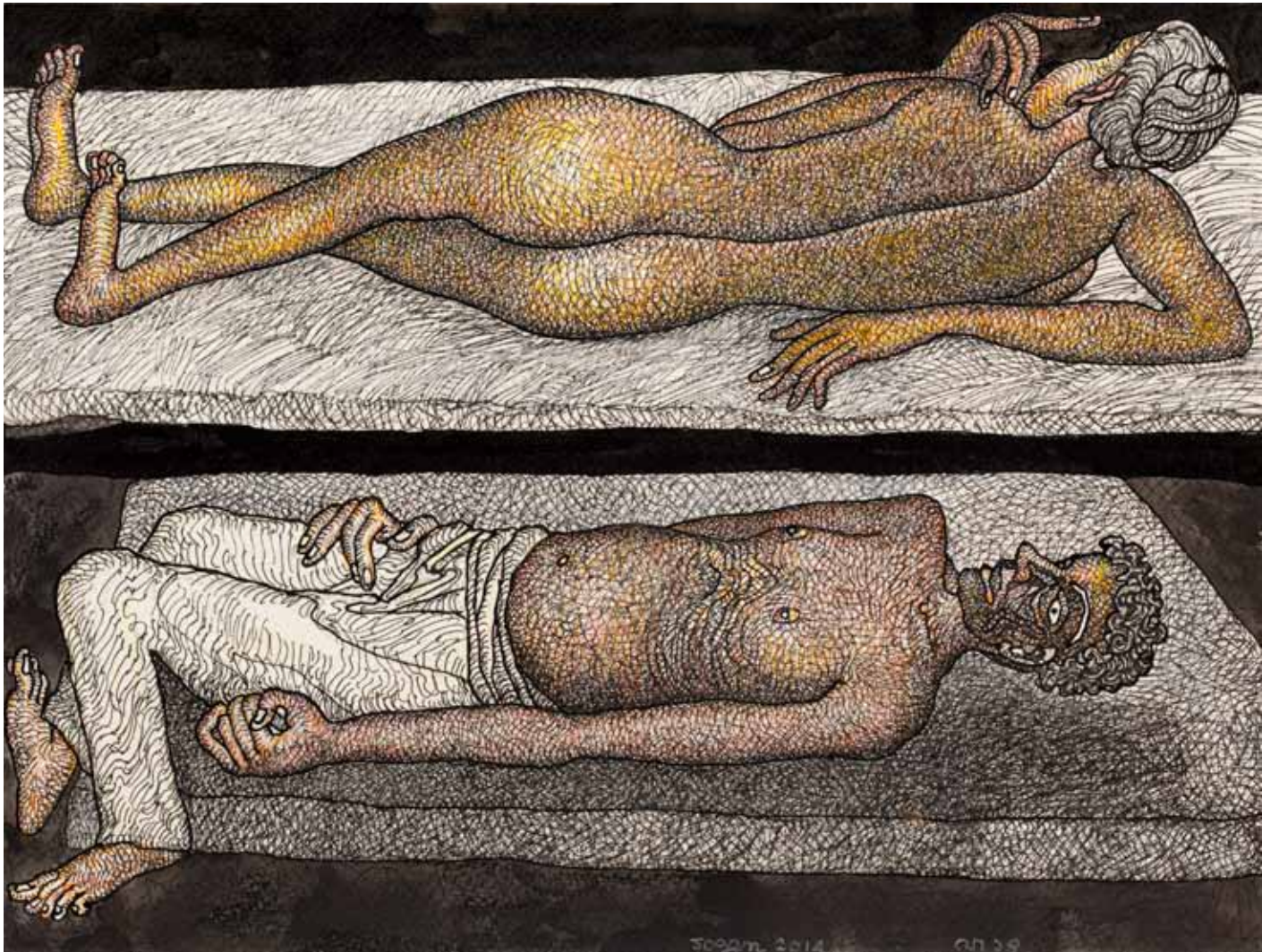


Jayasri Burman | Parivar | 36in x 48in | Watercolour Pen and Ink on Paper | 2014



Jogen Chowdhury

Born in 1939 in neighbouring Bangladesh, he had to undergo the life of a refugee during the difficult and troubled days of Partition of Bengal and has risen since then to the undeniably top echelon of art in India today. His inimitable style in portraying human figures easily conveys the intended message of spineless immorality and pervasive dishonesty in public life. His idiosyncratic style also retains its umbilical link to the art of the past in which lyrical linearity predominates.



Jogen Chowdhury | Untitled | 9in x 12in | Pen and Ink, Coloured Pencil and Oil Pastel on Paper | 2014



Jogen Chowdhury | Bakasur - IV (D) | 13.7in x 16.1in | Pen and Ink, Coloured Pen and Pencil on Paper | 2014



Jogen Chowdhury | Man Lying on a Khat | 9in x 12in | Pen and Ink, Coloured Pencil and Oil Pastel on Paper | 2014



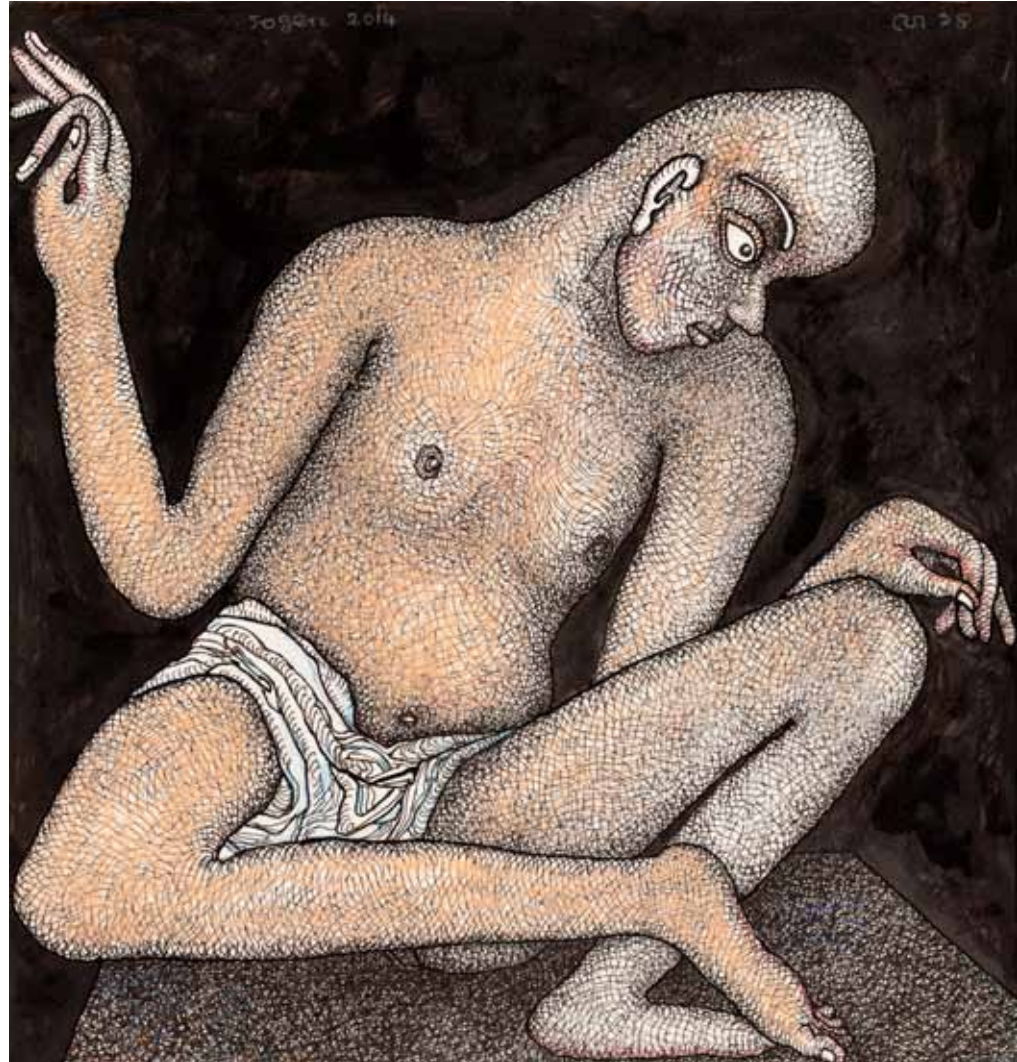
Jogen Chowdhury | Young Boy | 12in x 9in | Pen and Ink, Coloured Pencil and Oil Pastel on Paper | 2014



Jogen Chowdhury | Face of a Girl | 11in x 7.5in | Pen and Ink, Coloured Pencil and Oil Pastel on Paper | 2014



Jogen Chowdhury | Untitled | 22in x 15in | Pen and Ink, Coloured Pencil and Oil Pastel on Paper | 2014



Jogen Chowdhury | Man Seated on the Floor | 10.3in x 9.8in | Ink Pencil and Oil Pastel on Paper | 2014



Neeraj Goswami

Neeraj's painterly journey starts deep inside his mind, during his daily meditation, in which images emerge in his purified soul. His paintings reveal this gradual growth taking place on the surface of his canvases with ever-increasing clarity of thought and matching execution. His palette, and simplified rendering of meditative humans, together portrays a unique tradition in Indian art in which spiritual feeling predominates. Tradition and modernity of painterly style co-exists in his art that carefully conceals his complex method of applying paint and drawing lines, leaving only a surface of infinite bliss.



Neeraj Goswami | Musical Rhapsody | 30in x 72in | Gold Leaf and Acrylic on Canvas | 2014



Neeraj Goswami | Vacation | 48in x 36in | Oil on Canvas | 2013



Neeraj Goswami | Walk by Night | 60in x 36in | Acrylic and Oil on Canvas | 2012



Neeraj Goswami | The First Step | 36in x 48in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2014



Neeraj Goswami | Play | 36in x 48in | Oil on Canvas | 2013



Neeraj Goswami | Young Girl | 36 in x 24 in | Oil on Canvas | 2013



Neeraj Goswami | a

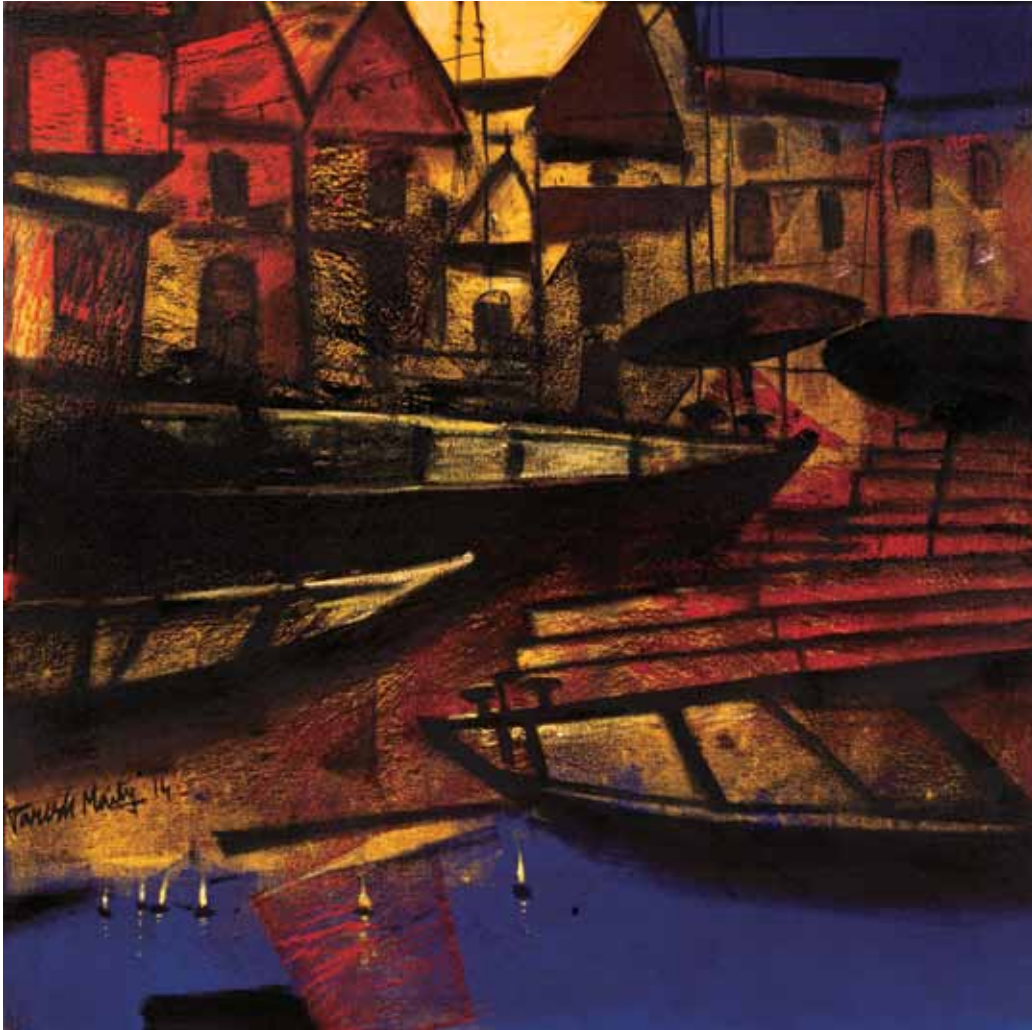


Paresh Maity

Over the last two decades and perhaps even more, art of Paresh Maity remains singularly devoted to exploit the beauty of lines, fluid and rigid together, that easily reveals the continuity of lyrical quality of line in Indian art of the past era. His mastery over colour has added the right balance to his art which visibly pulsates with the love and warmth of the land and life he witnessed in the desert flats of Rajasthan. Exhibited and awarded almost all over the world, Paresh has established himself in the world of art today with solid foundation and mesmerising skill.



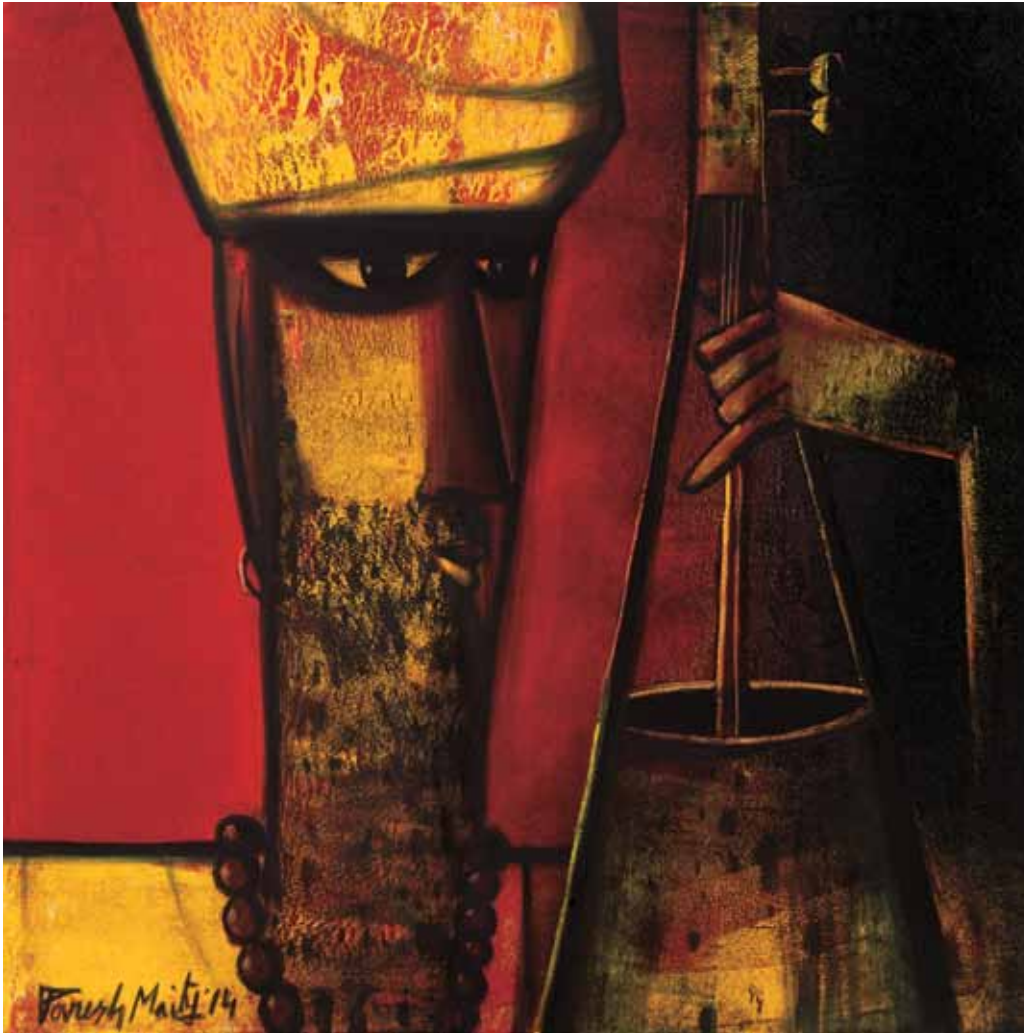
Paresh Maity | Intamacy | 36in x 36in | Oil on Canvas | 2011



Paresh Maity | Eternal Light | 48in x 48in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



Paresh Maity | Floating Love | 36in x 72in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



Paresh Maity | Musician in Tune | 36in x 36in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



Paresh Maity | The Musician | 60in x 60in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



Paresh Maity | The Vision | 42in x 30in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



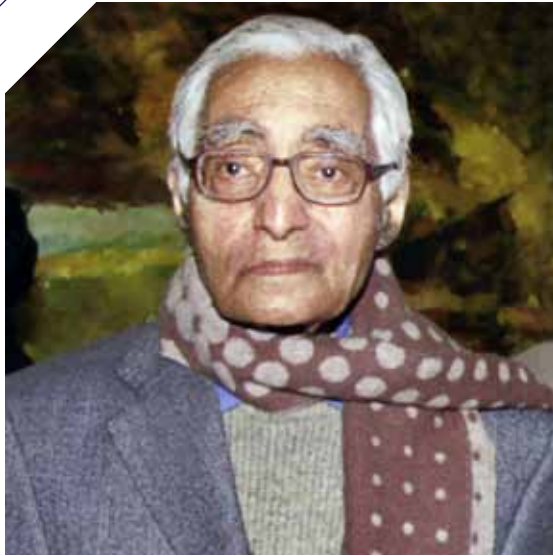
Paresh Maity | The Vision of Life | 36in x 72in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



Paresh Maity | Attraction (Male) | 28in x 16in x 11in | Bronze



Paresh Maity | Attraction (Female) | 27in x 22in x 11in | Bronze



Ram Kumar

Ram Kumar's canvases are like long poems, easy to read but not easy enough to decipher the coded message with casual viewing. He is easily inspired by the layers of accumulated memories, generated and carefully stored in his mental databank, about his long association with the holy city of Varanasi spent often in company with friend Husain. In the limited world he lives in, he feels free to use sub-conscious images, and fond memories, of the past etched deep into the sub-conscious. Seashells and marine remnants, water lilies in bloom and the rounded spread of its delicate leaves, and such other relics that smells of environmental tranquility appears in his canvases with unpredictable regularity.



Ram Kumar | Untitled | 32in x 21.6in | Oil on Canvas | 1960



Ram Kumar | Untitled | 36in x 36in | Oil on Canvas | 2013



Ram Kumar | Untitled | 24in x 36in | Oil on Canvas | 2013



Ram Kumar | Untitled | 22in x 30in | Acrylic on Paper | 2007



Ram Kumar | Untitled | 22in x 30in | Acrylic on Paper | 2011



Ram Kumar | Untitled | 10.5in x 14.3in | Acrylic on Paper | 1996



Ram Kumar | Untitled | 10.5in x 14.3in | Acrylic on Paper | 1996



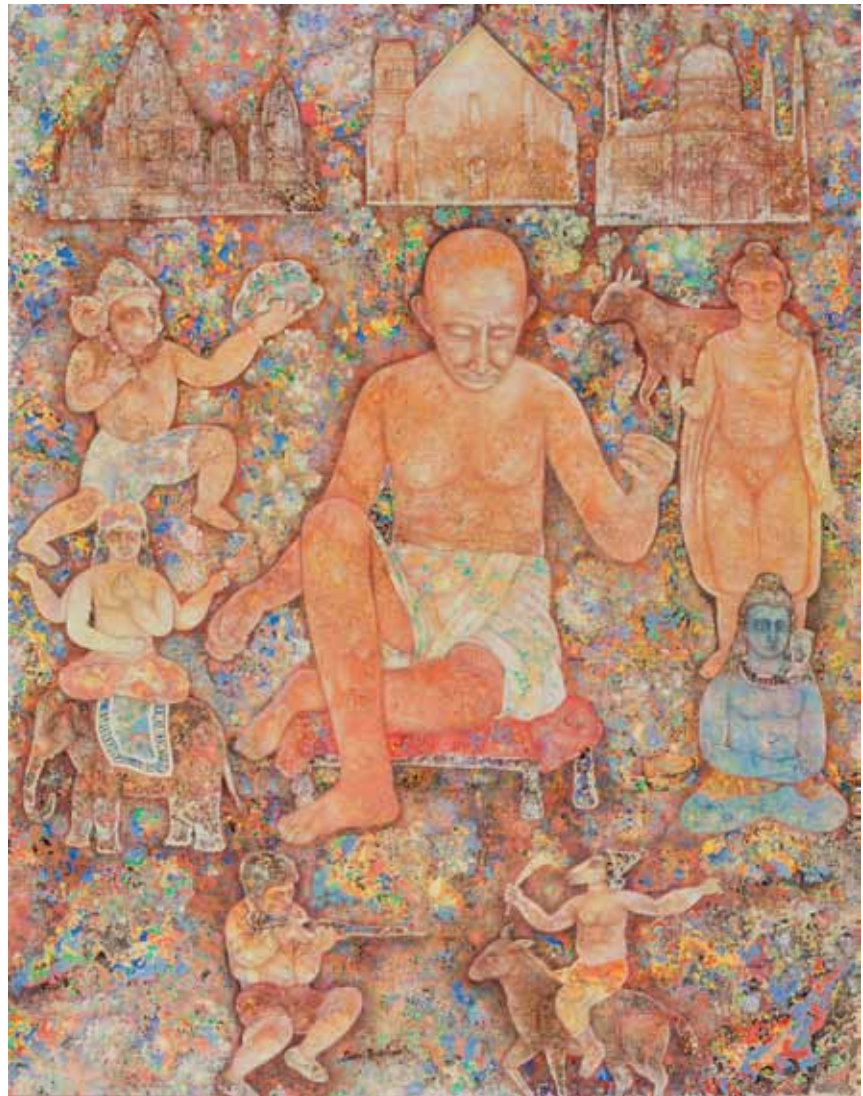
Ram Kumar | Untitled | 23.1in x 17.9in | Acrylic on Paper | 1989





Sakti Burman

Sakti had the opportunity to soak in the tales and myths of ancient folklore from the family elders which they narrated for the benefit of the young kids in the family and Sakti was exceptionally sensitive to such stories, which fired his imagination. The effect of 'marbling', his invented technique that distinguishes his art as his idiosyncratic style, had helped him to create a vision of realism and surrealism, fragmentation of abstraction and a feeling of dreamscape, simultaneously. With this chancy technique of 'marbling' his art began to talk more of vision of the past with thoughtful views at present. It also reflected a conscious working along with a lot that happened in his sub-conscious self.



Sakti Burman | Gandhi ji - Messenger of Non-Violence | 57.4in x 44.8in | Oil on Canvas | 2011



Sakti Burman | Untitled | 10.6in x 8.7in | Oil on Canvas



Sakti Burman | Shanti Sutra | 36.2in x 28.7in | Oil on Canvas | 2014



Sakti Burman | Untitled | 10.6in x 8.7in | Oil on Canvas | 2013

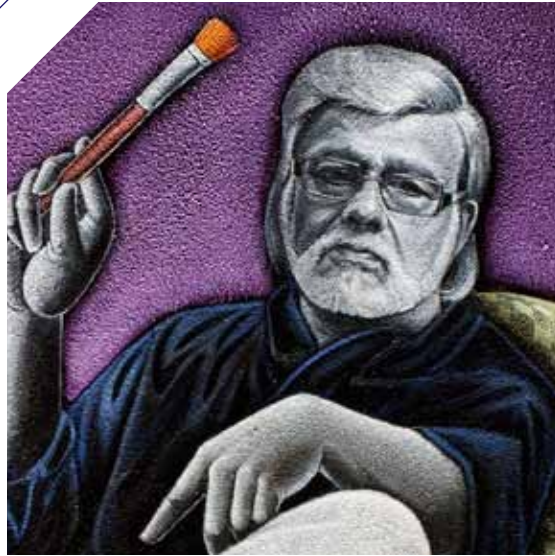


Sakti Burman | Untitled | 10.6in x 8.7in | Oil on Canvas | 2013



Sakti Burman | a



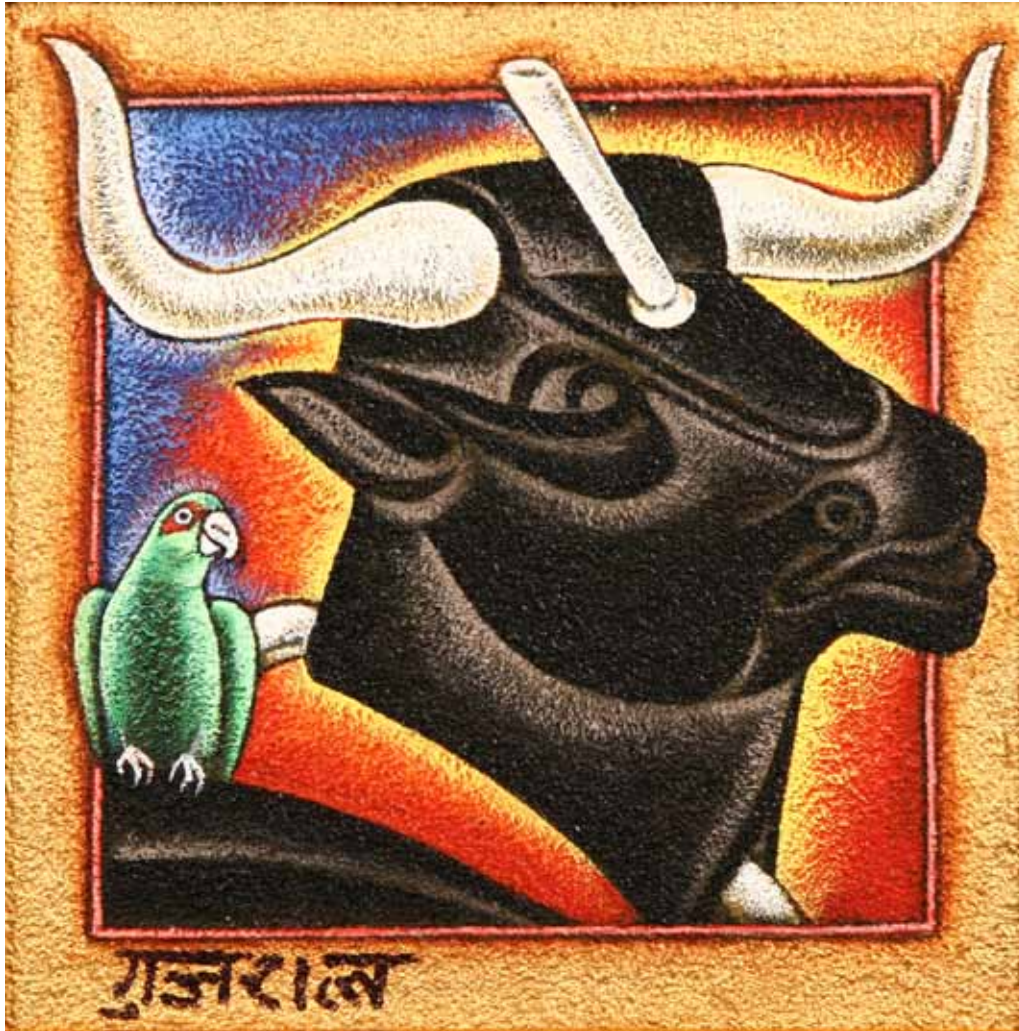


Satish Gujral

Painter, sculptor, muralist, architect & writer, Satish Gujral may easily be described as a living legend; one of the few who have consistently dominated the art scene in India during the entire post independent era. He was born in 1925 and, during 1944-47, came into contact with the Progressive Artists Group in Bombay, which included S.H. Raza, F.N. Souza, P.N. Mago, Jehangir Sabavala, M.F. Husain and others. Satish Gujral could not accept the PAG's total adaptation of techniques and vocabulary of European Expressionism and Cubism. He searched for a kind of modernism rooted in Indian traditions.



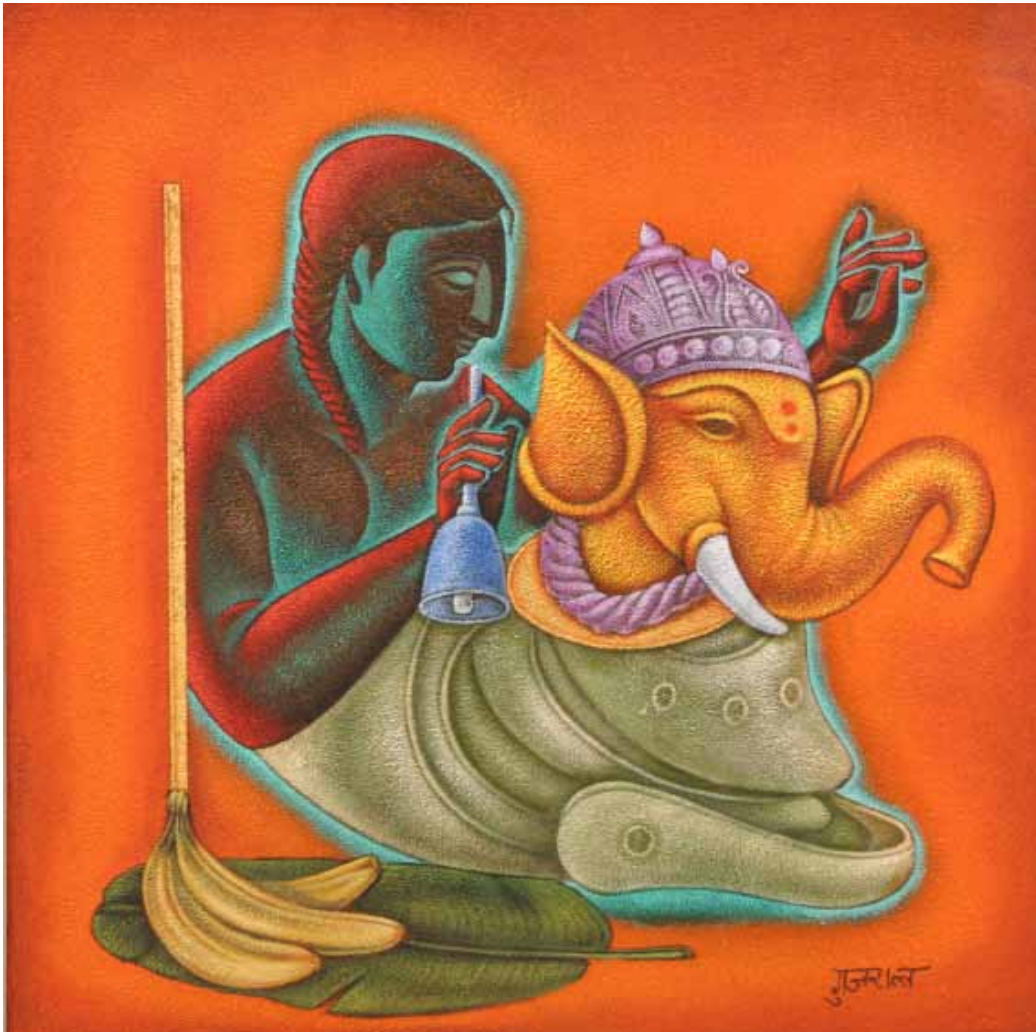
Satish Gujral | Night Gods | 54in x 54in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2006



Satish Gujral | Untitled | 12in x 12in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2009



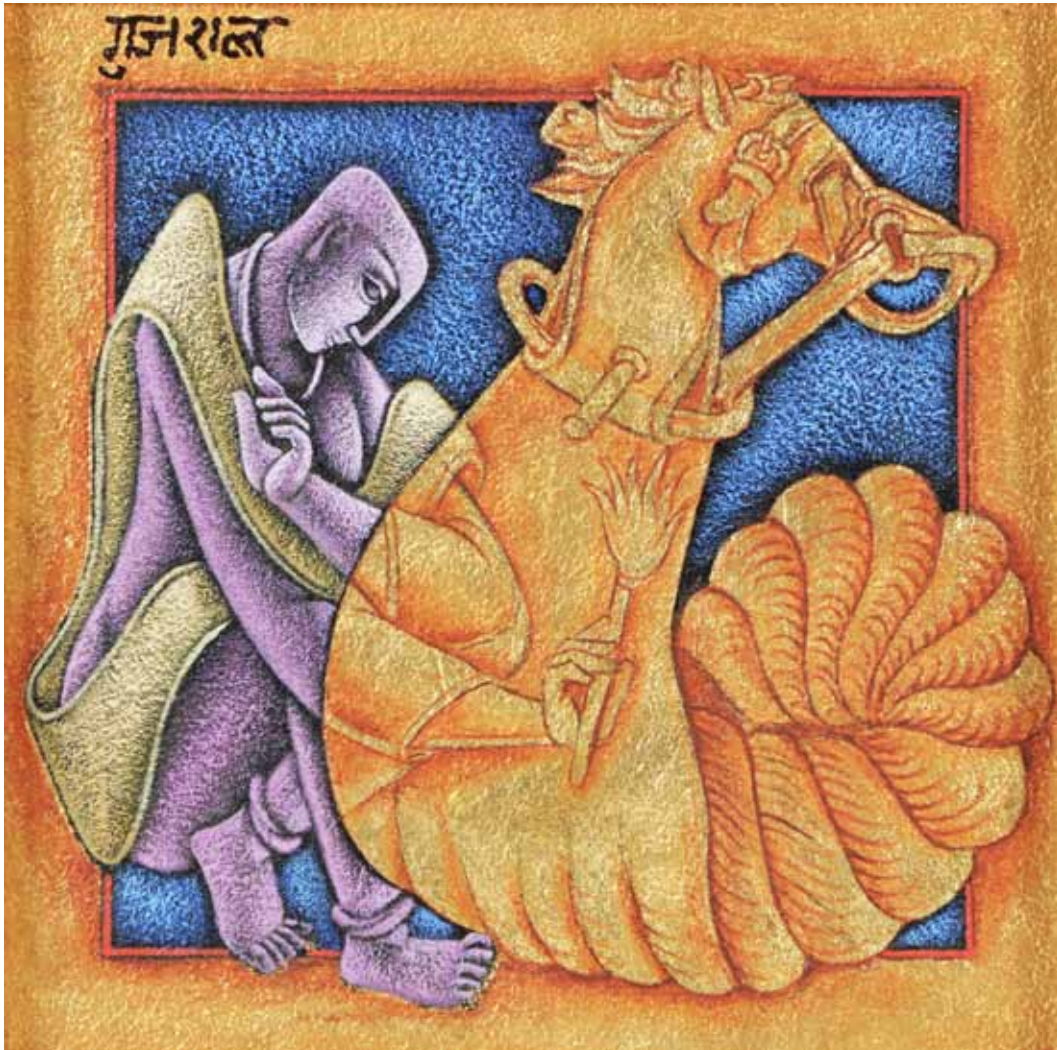
Satish Gujral | Untitled | 12in x 12in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2007



Satish Gujral | Untitled | 30in x 30in | Acrylic and Gold on Canvas | 2007



Satish Gujral | Untitled | 36in x 36in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2010



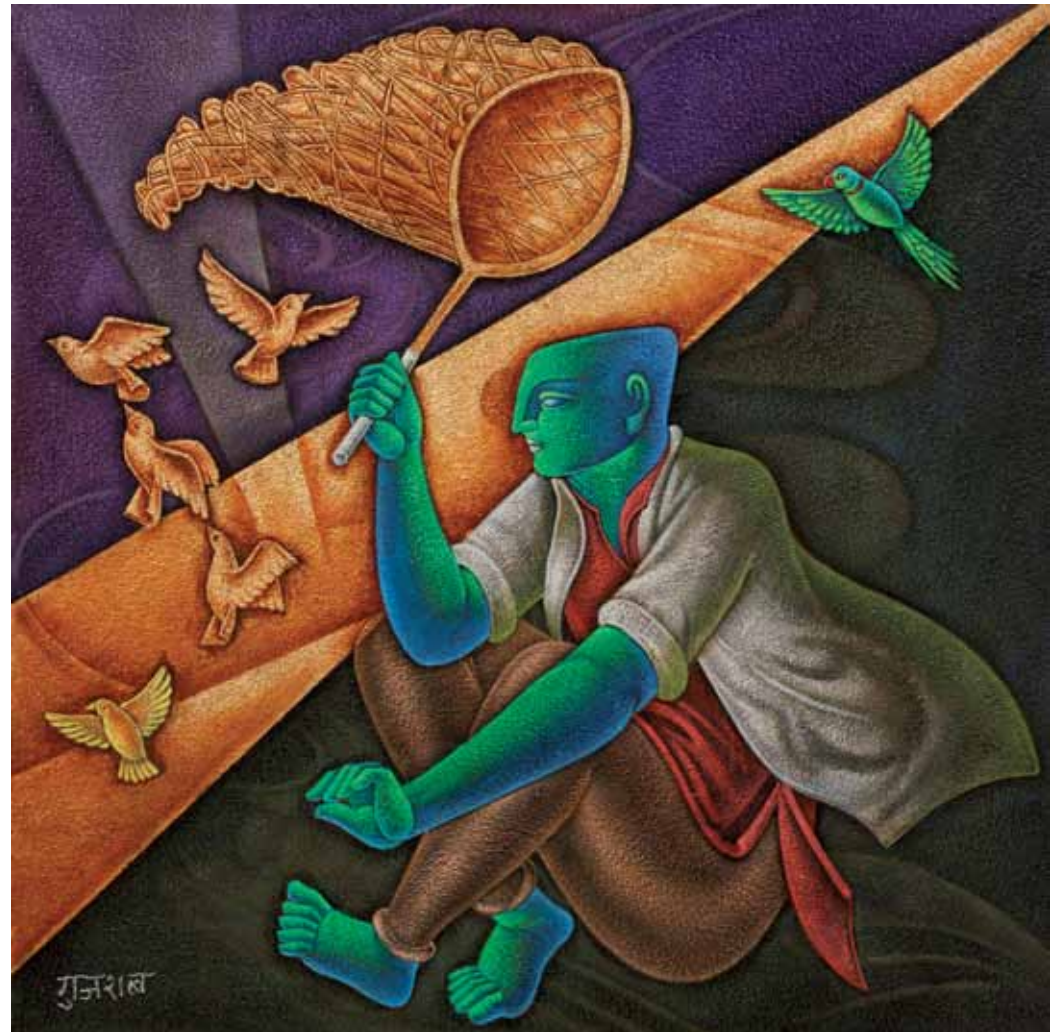
Satish Gujral | Untitled | 12in x 12in | Acrylic and Gold on Canvas | 2012



Satish Gujral | Untitled | 12in x 12in | Acrylic and Gold on Canvas | 2011



Satish Gujral | Untitled | 12in x 12in | Acrylic and Gold on Canvas | 2011



Satish Gujral | Untitled | 24in x 24in | Acrylic and Gold Leaf on Canvas | 2013



Thota Vaikuntam

Thota Vaikuntam hails from Andhra Pradesh, in South India, since childhood he was obsessed, and fascinated, by the male artists who used to impersonate female characters in the travelling theatre groups that performed in his village. He drew inspiration from their loud make-up and admits finding the women of his village very sensuous and that he only attempts to capture their vibrancy. Vaikuntam's art has a sense of strength to it, a power that emanates from the paint or charcoal that he applies to the surface, from his controlled lines, and from the fine strokes that he executes. He has elevated art of his generation to newer heights.



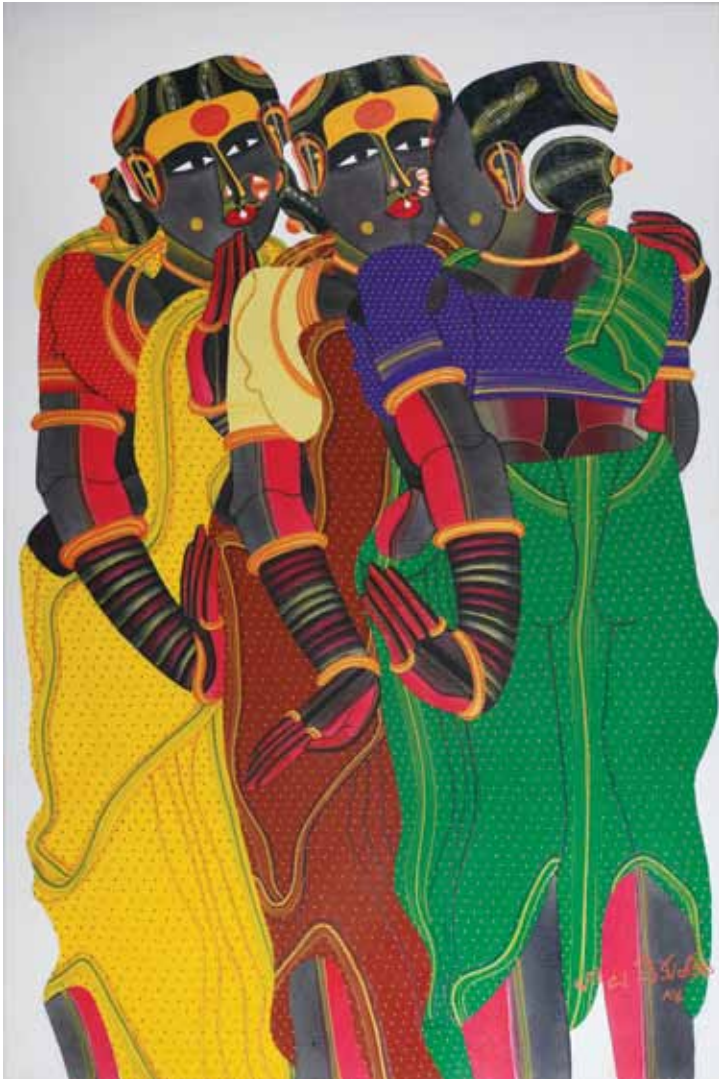
Thota Vaikuntam | Untitled | 48in x 54in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2013



Thota Vaikuntam | Untitled | 20in x 30in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2012



Thota Vaikuntam | Untitled | 18in x 24in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2014



Thota Vaikuntam | Untitled | 36in x 24in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2014



Thota Vaikuntam | Untitled | 36in x 24in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2014



Thota Vaikuntam | Untitled | 36in x 48in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2014



Thota Vaikuntam | Untitled | 36in x 48in | Acrylic on Canvas | 2010



Arun Ghose

All branches of fine art extend their attraction to Arun Ghose yet his responses are far from equal to each of them. He is fascinated a lot more by the study of appreciation of arts, a fact that is supported by the volumes of critical essays he has written so far on artists and their art in India today. Even though he had completed his art training from recognised art institutions in India and abroad, he has stayed away from the creative arts and concentrated on assessment and appreciation, curating and conservation. He has served as the art-critic of a well-known literary magazine in Bengal and has introduced more than a hundred art exhibitions with his critical input besides authoring several books on life and art of veteran artists like Somenath Hore, Paritosh Sen and Sakti Burman. Recently, he also wrote a book on leading contemporary artist, Neeraj Goswami, which has been subject to much acclaim and praise. He, since last ten years, coordinates a post-graduate diploma course on 'Appreciation of Indian Art' at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture

at Kolkata and has delivered lectures in numerous national seminars on art, museology and conservation.

His professional career had an equally varied mix. He has served with due distinction in museums of repute for nearly thirty years before opting for being an independent art-expert since the beginning of the present millennia. He has, as ex-Curator of the Government of India's programme called 'Festival of India', organised important exhibitions of contemporary Indian Art abroad. Husain's last two major shows, entitled '88 Oils On His 88th Birthday' and 'The Lost Empire' had him closely working with the ageing artist both in India and London. His interest in conservation of paintings had resulted in his first book entitled 'Conservation And Restoration Of Cultural Heritage', published at Delhi in 1980.

He lives in Kolkata and works not being limited to this city alone.



Phi Events

Founded in 2004 and based in Singapore Phi Events takes a focussed approach to promoting, designing and flawlessly executing Indian-themed events. They have successfully hosted, exclusive art shows to panel discussions with Indian Masters of Art, alumni meets to lifestyle events, business events to theatre shows, Bollywood shows to charity events. Phi Events' objective to their clients is to provide signature services which exceed their expectations. The company's events have drawn widespread acclaim not only from the Indian community but also from Indophiles among the local and international communities based in Singapore. Over the years, Phi Events has built an excellent reputation amongst its clients and patrons including sponsors and attendees as an organisation that promotes high quality events with an eye for detail,

making sure that the event is a rewarding experience for all the stake holders.

Phi Events has a highly committed team, repeatedly producing a seamless event planning experience for their patrons. Phi Events', founders and partners are Kavita Raha and Ritika Khattar. Ritika is a well known personality within the TV/ Media Industry in India, where she spent 6 years pursuing an acting career before moving to Singapore. Kavita has 25 years of experience as a senior banker and a hotelier both in India and Singapore, wherein she developed skills in managing large corporate relationships as well as planning and organizing corporate events and conferences. For more information please visit www.phievents.com



SANCHIT ART

Sanchit Art

Sanchit Art represents the best of contemporary Indian art and it specializes in showcasing quality artworks by artists of various age groups. It also aims to bridge the gap between artists working in India and abroad by establishing a platform to show contemporary European art in India while reciprocating the same with curated shows of contemporary Indian art abroad.

Sanchit Art now has two galleries in Delhi and Agra and both are spacious with full complement of necessary fittings necessary for display of contemporary art to its discerning and international clientele. It also has partnered InvesArt Gallery of Spain to show Picasso and Braque, among others, at the India Art Fair. One of our major shows at Singapore in April 2013, curated by Arun Ghose with works of nine seniors, was welcomed in the mainstream media of South East Asia in superlative

terms. Sanchit Art is now in the process of firming up its initiative in Singapore with major art programs in the coming months.

Sanchit Art also has a dedicated team of researchers with a matching publication programme and believes in perfection, mutual trust and fairness as the cornerstones of all its interactions and dealings. It has already published a large 'coffee-table' book on art of Neeraj Goswami while its second book on Jogen Chowdhury is under preparation.

Ganesh Pyne, Jayasri Burman, Jogen Chowdhury, K. Laxma Goud, Lalu Prasad Shaw, Neeraj Goswami, Paresh Maity, Ram Kumar, Sakti Burman, Sanjay Bhattacharya, Satish Gujral and Thota Vaikuntam are some of the artists represented by Sanchit Art.



SANCHIT ART

New Delhi

156, DLF South Court, District Centre,
Saket, New Delhi - 110017, India
Tel: +91-11-41408010

info@sanchitart.in

[f](#) / SanchitArtGallery

www.sanchitart.in

Agra

'Foot On Shoes' Bldg., 5th Milestone, NH - 2,
Agra - Delhi Bypass Road, Agra - 282007, India
Tel: +91-562-3209666



Singapore

327, River Valley Road, #19 - 03,
Casuarina, Yong an park, Singapore - 238359
Tel: +65-91522680, +65-98503187

ritika@phievents.com

kavita@phievents.com

www.phievents.com

