

ART AND THE KOSI CATASTROPHE

Profile of Artists whose art were auctioned for
the sake of flood victims of North Bihar



**Samajik Shaikshanik Vikas Kendra
(SSVK)**

P R O L O G U E

In the aftermath of Kosi Floods of August 2008, a group of renowned painters came together under the banner of Saffron art, a renowned auctioneering house for paintings, and pledged to donate the proceeds of the auction of one of their paintings to the cause of the Kosi flood victims. Eminent & Contemporary artists Subodh Gupta and Bharti Kher brought together their 31 celebrity friends as well as India's leading artists for the purpose and an online auction was organized on 11 & 12 Nov. 2008. In total a sum of Rs. Rs 3.93 crore was raised to support victims affected by the recent floods in Bihar and the eastern part of the country. The whole process was initiated and supported by SUBODH GUPTA, BHARTI KHER, NATURE MORTE, TRIDENT HOTEL SAFFRON ART ~~AND SSVK~~. This on line auction of paintings was facilitated by Saffronart and with the sales proceeds it was decided to reach out to the flood victims through grassroots NGOs with a credible presence in the intervention area and with experience of having run relief programmes in the past. Samajik Shaikshanik Vikas Kendra (SSVK) was one of the NGOs approached for reaching out to the Kosi flood victims in recognition of its credibility and capability of carrying out relief operations on a significant scale. Prior to being approached by Saffronart, SSVK had already carried out significant relief work with the Kosi flood victims in Saharsa and Madhepura Districts with financial assistance from agencies like N.M. Budhrani Trust, UnitedWay Mumbai, All India Disaster Management Institute and Swiss Red Cross for periods ranging from 2 weeks to 2 months. Assistance in kind came from UNICEF, Prayas and Tech Mahindra.

In the auction paintings of 31 artist including Mithu Sen, Jitish Kallat, Bharti Kher, T.V. Santosh, Dayanita Singh, Atul Dodiya, Gargi Raina, Shilpa Gupta, Bharat Sikka, Hema Upadhyay, A.Balasubramaniam, Pushpamala N, Vivan Sundaram, Ashim Purkayashtha, Shambhavi Singh, AnjuDodiya, Ram Rahman, Riyas Komu, Manisha Parekh, Sheba Chhachhi, Subodh Gupta, Gigi Scaria, GR Iranna, Sudarshan Shetty, Chintan Upadhyay, Ranbir Singh Kaleka, Probir Gupta, Justin Ponmany, Bose Krishnamachari and Thukral and Tagra participated. All of them are celebrity and an artist of eminence.

● Born in 1971 in West Bengal, Mithu Sen obtained her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in painting from Kala Bhavan at Santiniketan, and later, completed a postgraduate program at the Glasgow School of Art in the United Kingdom on the prestigious Charles Wallace India Trust Award for 2000-2001. An enthusiastic traveler, Sen has explored several countries and many of her works have evolved from her travels and experiences.

● Jitish Kallat, while defining his art has said that "My art is more like a researcher's project who uses quotes rather than an essay, with each painting necessitating a bibliography.". His obsessive use of the self image in his paintings as the main protagonist makes his works autobiographical.

● Initially trained as an art historian and critic, Anita Dube creates photographs, sculptures and installations based on concepts ranging from social memory and history to mythology and related phenomena. Her unrestrained approach to making art allows her to break the barriers of norm and enter uncharted territories. Often working with found objects.

● Bharti Kher's is an art of dislocation and transience, reflecting her own, largely itinerant life. Born and raised in England, the artist moved to New Delhi in the early 1990s after her formal training in the field, and today, like most of her contemporaries, frequently travels the world attending to exhibitions of her art. Consequently, the concept of home as the location of identity and culture is constantly challenged in her body of work. In addition to an autobiographical examination of identity, Kher's unique perspective also facilitates an outsider's ethnographic observation of contemporary life, class and consumerism in urban India.

● Kerala's T V Santhosh is counted among India's prominent artists of the younger generation. Though he has had his first solo show relatively late, at the age of 35, the talented artist has already made a mark on India's art scene.

● Dayanita Singh is a photographer renowned for her elegant portraits and quiet interiors. Depicted mostly in black and white are images of urban middle and upper class families and their environments. These images capture all aspects of everyday life. Moving away from the people within her frame, Singh, more recently, has begun to focus on the physical space which surrounds them. Her impeccable shots are an outcome of sincere observation and utmost patience.

● Born in Mumbai in 1959, Atul Dodiya, one of the most sought after contemporary artists today, completed his Bachelor in Fine Arts from the Sir J. J. School of Arts in 1982. "For a figurative painter like Atul Dodiya the reality is slightly different. His figures are Indian in the sense that they would be dark skinned and they portray the life in India that includes the poverty, the concerns and the reality. But he doesn't make any political statements.

● Using gouache and dry pastels on paper and wood, Gargi Raina works in sequences which follow a narrative, linear in the way it reads but elastic in the way that it enables us to comprehend and examine.

● Shilpa Gupta is essentially a new media artist. Like many of her contemporaries, she considers the 'web' or internet an indispensable part of present day existence, and, consequentially, prefers various forms of cutting-edge technology as the vehicles for her interactions with the viewer. Although Gupta's works are developed largely through technological means, their significance lies in their candid communication the various issues that shape contemporary life, particularly the lives of young adults.

● Born in 1973, Bharat Sikka moved from India to New York to pursue his career in photography and to study at the Parsons School of Design there. He received his Bachelor's degree in photography in 2002, and has since been involved in several commercial projects for various high-profile international magazines. Julian Meijer, who accepted Sikka as a part of his prestigious Julian Meijer photography agency in 2001, says, "There is a thin line between art and photojournalism. His humanity is the strength of his work. It is what I hope people see in his pictures."

● Hema Upadhyay was born in Baroda in 1972, and completed her Bachelor's and Master's

Degrees in painting and print making respectively from the Fine Arts Faculty of the M S University there. In the short time that Hema has had to develop her career (she graduated with her MFA in 1997), she has already taken giant steps and established herself very firmly among the new generation of Indian contemporary artists.

● A. Balasubramaniam's latest works are a play of shadows through which he questions the viewer's belief in the unseen and the unknown - encouraging them to query their own consciousness. After stripping down a form to its bare minimum, Balasubramaniam allows it to grow again through a series of shadows - although seen, intangible to the sense of touch. Each form and its multiple shadows share their own camaraderie with the element of light. With some appearing darker and deeper than others, the notion of transcendental infinity is also established.

● Pushpamala N is particularly known for incorporating popular culture into her work. The artist has adopted various popular personas and ironic roles as a vehicle for examining issues of gender, place and history. The comic aspect of her work carries a particularly sharp edge in her photo-based installations and projections, exposing cultural and gender stereotyping while exploring the complex terrain of contemporary urban life in India

● Vivan Sundaram, painter, sculptor, installer is a key figure in a group of contemporary artists, who have, over the last decade, moved away from the enterprise of easel painting. Opposed to the comfort of looking at art from a drawing-room perspective or with disengagement, Sundaram, is more committed to realising multidimensional projects which invite audience participation as in open-stage theatre where, the distance between spectator and performer is minimal. You can sit inside a room, or on a car-seat or bed or within a sheltered space, for instance, in a hut with live video and music to experience and evoke multiple meanings.

● Ashim Purkayastha sees himself as a social activist as much as a painter and captures the trauma and the problems of his home state, Assam, on canvas. "A respite at Santiniketan, where I studied, gave me temporary relief and I stopped drawing what troubled me in Assam. But a brief stay in Baroda, and then in Delhi city, brought back the imagery of the land that linked my past to my present," he says. In several of his landscapes, Purkayastha uses cut-outs, layering them with three-dimensional compositions that capture the space around them.

● Shambhavi Singh's works, although dream-like, depict emotions quite contrary to their appearance. Raising questions about hope and re-birth, and at the same time, recognising the fears of the unknown, Singh's oeuvre provides an introspective journey for the viewer. Singh's recent series of epic canvases, titled Ghatak, links the microcosmic and macrocosmic - in an effort to open viewers to the propositions that might flow from such connections.

● The self is at the center of Anju Dodiya's works. Though not solipsistic, the majority of her works give the viewer access to private moments, lifted from "the private discourse that goes on within oneself when one is alone". Dodiya initially resisted the lure of self-portraiture: Her early works were extremely abstract, and following her first show ("a fictional autobiography"), she tried to refocus her gaze on railway stations, roadside scenes, and so forth. Yet ultimately she found her original impulse of a painterly introspection was the strongest, and rechanneled her vision into describing situations from her life.

● Photo journalist, artist, curator, designer and activist Ram Rahman, initially studied physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Later, Rahman completed a degree in Graphic Design from Yale University's School of Art in 1979. Rahman is one of the founding members of the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust (SAHMAT) in New Delhi, a leader in the resistance to

communal and sectarian forces in India through its public cultural action. The artist lives and works in New Delhi.

- Riyas Komu was born in 1971 in Kerala, and moved to Mumbai in 1992 to study literature. Dropping out during his final year, Komu eventually obtained his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Fine Art from the Sir J. J. School of Art in 1997 and 1999 respectively. Since his graduation, Komu has been constantly asserting and pushing himself with a strong body of work.
- Having well known painters Manu and Madhavi Parekh for parents, Manisha Parekh grew up surrounded by paints and brushes. She formalized her artistic upbringing with her studies in painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts at M.S. University in Baroda, and at the Royal College of Art, London on an INLAKS scholarship. Today, Parekh has several of her own exhibitions under her belt, whether of her minimal, skillfully executed, works in ink and gouache, her intricate layered pieces on board, or her more ambitious works in the area of conceptual, site-specific installations
- Sheba Chhachhi is a New Delhi based installation artist, photographer, activist and writer who carefully manipulates multiple media and found objects to explore and communicate the power of feminine realization. Issues surrounding women have always been the central focus of Chhachhi's works. The artist has worked individually and in collaboration with other women artists and artisans to bring about awareness of the challenges faced by women at all levels of society.
- Subodh Gupta's works are littered with references to past and present experiences. Swinging from significant information to seemingly irrelevant motifs, Gupta's constructions weave highly eccentric imaginings with public myths and rituals. Drawing mainly from everyday objects and scenarios, his aesthetic delineates the complex inter-relations of India's urban and rural communities. It shows the effects of consumerism and the modernization of traditional Indian society. Taking an ironic swipe at Capitalism's materialist ethic, Gupta nonetheless portrays the social and economic aspirations of rural communities and lower class Indians with an affectionate compassion.
- Gigi Scaria's work draws the viewer's attention towards the painful truths of migrancy and displacement. The issue of non-belonging and unsettlement reverberate between the walls on his canvas. "Gigi's particular position is to investigate how city structures, social constructs, and the view of location is translated in social prejudice and class attitude," says critic and curator Gayatri Sinha.
- G.R. Iranna is an artist whose work transcends the boundaries of time and space. Born in 1970, it's been barely ten years since he started painting professionally, and already his work is mature and profound. Many of Iranna's paintings depict pain as an abstract force that is translated visually in bruised textures and razor sharp cutting edges. His painting has always been far removed from an overriding, postmodern logic. Instead, Iranna uses the idealistic, representative and modernist language of Indian contemporary art. His most recent works are all visions of resistance. In just a glance, one can tell a sense of massive dynamic energy that pervades the surfaces. An energy that is fueled by torment and the struggle against it.
- Sudarshan Shetty has been regularly creating artworks since 90s and mostly works on sculpture and installations. His work envisions a lyrical world full of playfulness and freedom liberated from political issues. It displays an intriguing combination of the representa-

tional and the abstract.

- Painter Chintan Upadhyay resists viewing his work in evolutionary terms, preferring to regard the creation of each work as an independent event proceeding according to its idiosyncratic requirements. He has resisted easy definition from the start. As a young painter, he gained exposure to two rich and divergent styles of painting. Growing up in Rajasthan, Upadhyay was introduced to the tradition of miniature paintings native to the state. More intimately, he became versed in the styles of abstract expressionism through the influence of his father, himself a teacher at the Jaipur School of Art and member of the Takhman 28 group. But Upadhyay resisted the easy assimilation of these influences, leaving the Jaipur School of Art to continue his studies in Baroda. He explains, "I feared that I wouldn't grow there."
 - Ranbir Singh Kaleka's paintings, both on paper and canvas, in oils as well as mixed media, are almost surrealist in their treatment of scenes from everyday life. The lines are suggested, rather than sharply traced, and the colours almost deliberately restrained. Kaleka has also created and exhibited video art, photographs and installations.
 - Probir Gupta's works dwell on negativities such as terror, rebellion and oppression - emotions experienced by those on either side of conflict; like those initiated during times of colonization. His works have always leaned towards political content and activism. In his compositions, both on canvas and sculptural, Gupta displays his sheer disgust over present political situations and, simultaneously, his passionate involvement with human rights issues and his interest in man's constant struggle for justice and equality.
 - A graduate of the Sir J.J. School of Art, Justin Ponmany draws his influences from this city whose landscape is constantly under construction. The domain he deals with ranges from the material "plastic" to a state of mind that is unfortunately plastic; what he would like to term as "Plastic Memory".
 - The French artist Christian Boltanski once remarked: "The task is to create a formal work that is at the same time recognized by the spectator as a sentimentally charged object. Everyone brings his own history to it." Possibly Bose Krishnamachari's current project as an artist too is to present the viewer with a trigger point of images/icons that can, (along with the formal construction of painting/installation), function as symbolic devices with which to speak of an entire culture, its shifting mindsets and, its eclectic borrowings
 - Designer and artist duo Thukral & Tagra's works are executed in a wide variety of media including graphics, videos, music, interiors, product design, paintings, sculpture and installations. Their quirky, kitsch, pop art-like works focus on the influence of popular western ideologies on India's deep-rooted cultural heritage. However, the duo's approach to the subject is refreshingly stylish. Although vibrant and energetic, their compositions raise serious questions about the loss of identity experienced by Indians in their own sub-continent and its repercussions worldwide.
- We are hopeful that this booklet on these artist and their art will be an unique guide for the common man to understand the power of art in social transformation.



MITHUN SEN



Born in 1971 in West Bengal, Mithu Sen obtained her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in painting from Kala Bhavan at Santiniketan, and later, completed a postgraduate program at the Glasgow School of Art in the United Kingdom on the prestigious Charles Wallace India Trust Award for 2000-2001. An enthusiastic traveler, Sen has explored several countries and many of her works have evolved from her travels and experiences.

In her works, Mithu Sen contrasts scale, subject and even genre to give life to her remarkable imagination. Installations and

paintings are an important part of Sen's oeuvre. She works spontaneously in both genres - one mark or symbol leading to another, with no preconceived narrative or definitive meaning ; put down in the style of free association, they consist of a peculiar collection of motifs that playfully subvert commonly held beliefs about femininity and sexuality. Juxtaposing intricate and large forms, conflating animals, humans and inanimate objects, and combining drawing, painting and collage, Sen's works provoke both humour and serious consideration on the part of the viewer. Having participated in numerous shows worldwide, Sen's most recent solo endeavours include 'I Dig, I Look Down' at Albion Gallery, London, in 2008; 'Half Full - Part I' at Bose Pacia, New York, in 2007; 'Half Full - Part II' at Nature Morte, New Delhi, in 2007; 'It's Good to be Queen' at Bose Pacia Artist Space, New York, in 2006; and 'Drawing Room - II' at Gallery Chemould, Mumbai, in 2006. Amongst her recent group shows are, 'Still Moving Image' at the Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi; 'Link' at Sakshi Art Gallery, Mumbai; 'Contradictions and Complexities: Contemporary Art From India' at d.e.n. Contemporary Art and Western Project, Culver City; and 'Shifting Terrains / Altered Realities' at the Shrine Gallery, New Delhi, all held in the year 2008.

Mithun Sen lives and works in New Delhi.



Jitish Kallat

"My art is more like a researcher's project who uses quotes rather than an essay, with each painting necessitating a bibliography,"

Jitish Kallat, while defining his art.

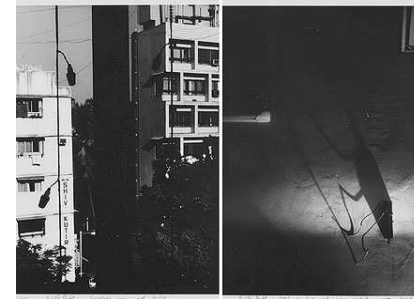
His obsessive use of the self image in his paintings as the main protagonist makes his works autobiographical. The autobiography addresses personal relations as well as the ones he has with his ancestry, time, death ..

He chooses a method that is a very economical, nearly abstract, form of narrative.

Images float around the protagonist, like icons on a computer screen, creating a webwork. The sources are "any visual material relevant to me." Images of the print media are photocopied, transferred on to the surface, hence 'real', as against the painted which he considers fictional. The images are like a picture puzzle, which the viewer has to decode and conclude upon. The treatment of the picture plane is like a battered wall, and refers to the duality in his painting.

The use of text, for titles, which are very important to Jitish, infuse the paintings with a sense of humour. An emblematic, which actually began as a joke on his classmates while at the Sir J.J. School of Art, is ironical for him. "It is like copy-righting an artwork which itself has been appropriated from so many histories, people, collaborations .." It acknowledges an acceptance as well as his critique of the modernist concept of authorship in which he revels.

Anita Dube



Initially trained as an art historian and critic, Anita Dube creates photographs, sculptures and installations based on concepts ranging from social memory and history to mythology and related phenomena. Her unrestrained approach to making art allows her to break the barriers of norm and enter uncharted terri-

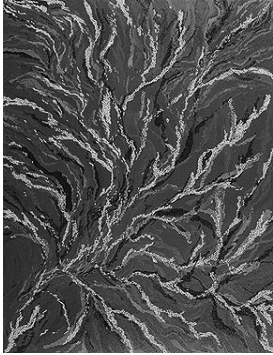
ories. Often working with found objects, Dube epitomizes the 'Indian' approach to recycling.

"Where I come from in India, we save everything, everything is re-used. The logic of capitalism is to have more, to have excess and therefore also to create more waste," says the Lucknow-born artist.

Born in Lucknow in 1958, Anita Dube completed her B.A. in history from the University of Delhi in 1979 and her M.A. in art criticism from the M.S.U. Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda in 1982. She has had solo exhibitions of her works since 1992, with her most recent ones being held at Bose Pacia, New York in 2008; Bombay Art Gallery, Mumbai in 2007; Gallerie Almine Rech, Paris in 2007; and Nature Morte, New Delhi, and Bose Pacia, New York in 2005. Her works have been part of many group exhibitions including 'Santhal Family (positions around one Indian sculpture)', Antwerp, 2008; 'Urban Manners', Hangar Bicocca, Milan, 2007; 'New Delhi - New Wave', Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, 2007; 'India-Public Places/Private Spaces', the Newark Museum, 2007; 'Horn Please', Kunstmuseum, Bern, 2007; 'New Narratives: Contemporary Art from India', Chicago Cultural Centre, 2007; 'Bombay Maximum City', Lille 3000, 2006; and 'India of the Senses', Espace Louis Vuitton, Paris, 2006. In 2007, the artist completed a residency culminating in a group exhibition at the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh.

Dube lives and works in New Delhi

Bharti Kher



Bharti Kher's is an art of dislocation and transience, reflecting her own, largely itinerant life. Born and raised in England, the artist moved to New Delhi in the early 1990s after her formal training in the field, and today, like most of her contemporaries, frequently travels the world attending to exhibitions of her art. Consequently, the concept of home as the location of identity and culture is constantly challenged in her body of work. In addition to an autobiographical examination of identity, Kher's unique perspective also facilitates an outsider's ethnographic observation of contemporary life, class and consumerism in urban

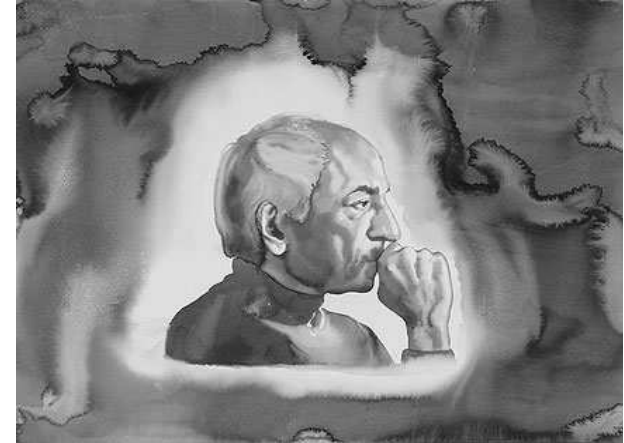
India.

Presently, Kher uses the 'bindi', a dot indicative of the third eye worn by the Indian women on their foreheads, as the central motif and most basic building block in her work. Bharti Kher often refers to her mixed media works with bindis, the mass-produced, yet traditional ornaments, as 'action paintings'. Painstakingly placed on the surface one-by-one to form a design, the multi-coloured bindis represent custom, often inflexible, as well as the dynamic ways in which it is produced and consumed today. The artist is also known for her collection of wild and unusual resin-cast sculptures, embellished with bindis, and her digital photography.

Bharti Kher was born in London in 1969. She studied at Middlesex Polytechnic, London, and went on to receive her Bachelor's degree in Fine Art Painting with honours from New Castle Polytechnic, in 1988. Some of her most recent solo shows include 'Virus' at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, in 2008; 'An Absence of Assignable Cause' at Nature Morte Gallery, New Delhi, and at Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, in 2007; 'Do Not Meddle In The Affairs of Dragons Because You Are Crunchy and Taste Good with Ketchup' at Gallery Ske, Bangalore and Project 88, Mumbai, in 2006; 'Quasi-, mim-, ne-, near-, semi-, -ish, -like' at Gallery Ske, Bangalore, in 2004; and 'Hungry Dogs Eat Dirty Pudding' at Nature Morte, Delhi, also in 2004. She was the recipient of the Sanskriti award in 2003 and has been a part of Khoj since 1997.

The artist lives and works in New Delhi.

T V Santosh



Kerala's T V Santhosh is counted among India's prominent artists of the younger generation. Though he has had his first solo show relatively late, at the age of 35, the talented artist has already made a mark on India's art scene.

Born in 1968, T V Santhosh completed his B. F. A in Sculpture from Kalabhavan, Santiniketan in 1994 and then studied at Faculty of Fine Arts, M. S. U, Baroda till 1997. For him, transition from sculpting to painting has been rather curious. He decided to take up painting full time after his stint at the Kanoria Centre, Ahmedabad. Even while he was sculpting, he always used the human form. Gradually, he began feeling more comfortable expressing himself through paints, although he continues to sculpt. Though he does not have many solo shows to his credit, T V Santhosh has participated in several major group including shows at Sakshi, Bangalore (2003); Saffronart Online show, (2003); 'Art Edge', NGMA, Mumbai & India Habitat Centre, Delhi (2003), 'Trans-figuration', India Habitat Centre, Delhi (2002), 'Words & Images', NGMA, Mumbai (2002); Saffronart Online auction (2002); 'Quotable Stencil', Tao Gallery, Mumbai (2002), 'Cross Currents', Jehangir Gallery (2002); 'Creative Space', India Habitat Centre, Delhi (2002); The Contemporary Asian Art Fair, Singapore (2002); RPG Show, Jehangir (2002); 'Tribute to Picasso', The Guild (2002); 'The Human Factor', Jehangir (2002), 'Excerpts from My Diary Pages', Fine Art Company Gallery (2001); 'Engendering Images of Women', The Guild (2001); 'Harmony Show' (2001 02 & 03), 'Exile & Longing', Lakeeren (2000); Kala Ghoda Show (2000); Group Show, Visual arts Centre, Ahmedabad (1997), Kerala State Exhibition (1997); Bombay Art Society show (1996); Group Show at Birla Academy for Arts & Crafts, Kolkata (1993); AIFACS Exhibition, Delhi (1993).

His first solo show titled 'One Hand Clapping/Siren' presented by the Guild Art Gallery at the Jehangir Art Gallery earlier this year received rave reviews. The title points to a puzzle that needs to be decoded. One hand clapping is one of the Zen Buddhist riddles that are given to disciples to solve. Decoding these riddles takes them to higher levels of enlightenment. 'Siren' refers to the immediacy of our militarized times.

The artist here employs the photo realistic technique. He describes it as a counter language to the paintings He adds to say, "I have done earlier that were stylistic. Whichever language you choose today the question of originality arises. With the photo realistic technique you can deal with the current issues of global and political nature. It has immediacy compared to the stylistic language."

Also, according to him, his paintings work on two levels. On one, it is a photographic reference taken from a magazine, newspaper or a Web site. On the other level, it is metaphorical where the historical and the fictional come together. The artist, using photographic images as a device in his powerful series of work draws various references between the personal and a 'kind of visual journalism', which juxtaposes contemporary issues with that of the past.

The laboratory and battlefield is where the action of the paintings is set. He renders with horrifying clarity the reality of today's wars fought with science and technology. Working with pictorial ready-mades as reference from print media, his images focus on World War II, recent wars, machine guns and roses and mushroom clouds of nuclear fall-out. The adherence to a near-monochromatic, often dichromatic tonal scale conveys the dramatic expressive strength of black-and-white cinema; his paintings resemble stills extracted from old films, tinted and enhanced with additional material.

The artist wants to ask urgent questions of history and seeks viewer involvement. The artist zeroes in on the few hard-hitting details in the wrap-around reality i.e. the global circulation of media images. In fact, his handling is neither photo-realistic nor quasi-photographic. His visuality is far more akin to the cinematic. "The mushroom cloud and nuclear explosion is a point of departure for many contemporary issues that I want to address. That's why it's a metaphor for something beautiful, yet destructive. World War II marks the point where science and technology takes a turn, revealing the negative side," he remarks.

'In Two Men and their Sheep', with the detail of Dutch painter Holbein's work, he talks about the futility of knowledge. The two wise men are explorers who travel the world in search of higher learning. He has put the image of Dolly, the cloned sheep, next to them. "The celebrated experiment proved to be a futile exercise" explains Santhosh, adding, "While scientific development is a positive force, it is often misused. It should always be seen through a humanitarian point of view." When asked why most of his paintings have references from various sources, he replies to say: "Using references is not a new thing, neither is it an easy way out for me. Using references opens up the possibility of reinterpreting an image by putting them in a different context and exploring new meanings."

Apart from the solo show, his work was also featured at NGMA's fifth annual show 'Ideas & Images: The Art in Mumbai' in September 2003 alongside other upcoming talented artists including Riyaz Komu, TV Santhosh, Sunil Gawde and Justin Ponmany. They all made a special collaborative on the city and its people. The section also housed a selection of individual works by these artists.

The artist plans to continue painting. The urge to sculpt is ever-present, but space is a constraint in Mumbai, he reveals. He wants to go in for a change of visual language. He is also keen on making use of the computer in his work.

Dayanita Singh



Sea Scope

Dayanita Singh is a photographer renowned for her elegant portraits and quiet interiors. Depicted mostly in black and white are images of urban middle and upper class families and their environments. These images capture all aspects of everyday life; from the mundane daily activities of work and rest, to the more elaborate commemorations of life and death. Moving away from the people within her frame, Singh, more recently, has begun to focus on the physical space which surrounds them. Her impeccable shots are an outcome of sincere observation and utmost patience.

"Dayanita's work is far from straight forward documentary, neither is it a pictorial catalogue of India's rich and famous. More specifically her family portraits would locate her in the line of Diane Arbus or even Nan Goldin. I would argue that such compar-

isons are simplistic and Dayanita's own development will render them redundant. Dayanita's particular quality is the enigmatic mix of ease and tension that she seems to draw out of her subject, even as she fixes them with a degree of informed objectivity that approximates the documentary style. Yet it is in the absent self that suggests that she is somehow herself within each frame..." explains curator and art critic Gayatri Sinha.

Dayanita Singh was born in New Delhi in 1961. From 1980 to 1986 she studied Visual Communication at the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad, and in 1988, she completed a course in Photojournalism and Documentary Photography at the International Centre of Photography, New York. Having participated in numerous shows worldwide, Dayanita's most recent solo endeavors include 'Dream Villa' at Frith Street Gallery, London; 'Go Away Closer and Sent a Letter' at Hermes Pace, Berlin; and 'Sent a Letter' at Nature Morte, Berlin, all in 2008; Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai, and Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai, in 2007; Nature Morte, New Delhi, in 2006; and 'Beds and Chairs' at Valentina Bonomo Gallery, Rome, also in 2006. Her most recent group shows include, 'Indian Highway' at Serpentine Gallery, London, in 2008; 'Wedded Bliss: The Marriage of Art and Ceremony' at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, in 2008; 'Philosophy of the Bedroom' at the Chelsea Art Museum, New York, the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, and the Leeds City Art Gallery, in 2007; and 'Summer Exhibition' at Frith Street Gallery, London, in 2006.

In 2008, Dayanita received the Prince Claus Award, Amsterdam, and the Robert Gadner Fellowship, from Harvard University, Boston.

The artist lives and works in New Delhi.



Puspamala N The Chinese Bar

Puspamala N was born in Bangalore. She attended Bangalore University from 1976-77, where she studied under Balan Nambiar and then studied Sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University, Baroda. She completed her Bachelors and then her Masters degree in 1985.

At Baroda, she was influenced by the sculptor Raghav Kaneria, as well as by Bhupen Khakhar and K.G. Subramanyan. Her first solo exhibition was at the Venkatappa Art Gallery in Bangalore in 1983.

Her major solo shows have been at Walsh Gallery, Chicago (2003); 'Golden Dreams', photographs, solo show, Gallery Sumukha, Bangalore (2002); 'Golden Dreams' Gallery Chemould, Mumbai (2001); 'Phantom Lady or Kismet', a photo romance, Gallery Chemould, Mumbai and Artistis Studio, Bangalore (1998); 'Excavations', solo show of sculpture, Gallery Chemould, Mumbai (1994).

Her selective participations include 'New Indian Art', Manchester Art Gallery, UK (2002); 'Ways of Resisting', Sahmat, New Delhi (2002); Art Action for Gujarat, art show and raffle, Bangalore (2002); 'Century City' Tate Modern, London, UK (2001); 'Moving Ideas' Hoopoe Curatorial, Montreal and Vancouver, Canada (2001); Khoj International Residency, New Delhi (2001); Open Circle International Workshop, Mumbai (2000). In 1999 she curated an exhibition of large site specific works, Sthala Puranagalu, Bangalore.

Her work has been exhibited internationally in shows including: 'Seven Young Sculptors' Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi (1985); 2nd International Women's Festival Bangkok (1992); 'Timeless Art', Times of India (V.T.Station, Mumbai); '100 Years of NGMA' National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi (1995); 'Africus-Johannesburg Biennale' South Africa (1995); 'Telling Tales' Bath Festival Trust, traveling exhibition, England (1997). She has taught and lectured widely on arts.

The artist is particularly known for incorporating popular culture into her work. The artist has adopted various popular personas and ironic roles as a vehicle for examining issues of gender, place and history. The comic aspect of her work carries a particularly sharp edge in her photo-based installations and projections, exposing cultural and gender stereotyping while exploring the complex terrain of contemporary urban life in India.

The emphasis on theatricality was shared by the artist who reinvented herself as the vampish heroine of her own cinematic 'photoromance', which she set in Mumbai and captured in a series of black-and-white photographs for the 'Century City' show.

Puspamala N is the recipient of many honors, including the National Award (1984); the gold medal at the Sixth New Delhi Triennale (1986); the Charles Wallace Trust Fellowship for residency at St. Martin's School of Art, London (1992-93); the Senior Fellowship, Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development (1995-97).

Formerly from Mumbai, she now lives and works in Bangalore.

Ashim Purkayashta

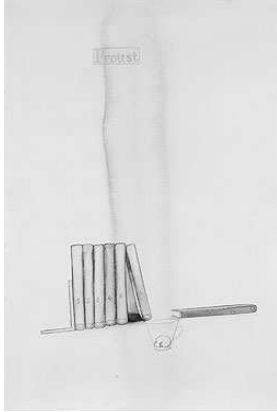


"I don't see myself just as an artist, but as an activist, who is trying to draw attention to the dying arts. The Supreme Courts judgment three years ago, allowing the commercial use of forest resources has left lakhs unemployed in Assam. "The clay and straw goddesses of 6 to 9 feet have been replaced by images of permanent material like stone and concrete of 13 to 16 ft. in height. A layer of poisonous gases emitted

by the oil refinery covers Digboi, my hometown. The fire of the inflammable gasses is seen in the paddy fields. Time is measured by the factory whistle. The agricultural fields are being turned into tea gardens. Hills are being created by waste material."

Ashim Purkayashta sees himself as a social activist as much as a painter and captures the trauma and the problems of his home state, Assam, on canvas. "A respite at Santiniketan, where I studied, gave me temporary relief and I stopped drawing what troubled me in Assam. But a brief stay in Baroda, and then in Delhi city, brought back the imagery of the land that linked my past to my present," he says.

In several of his landscapes, Purkayashta uses cut-outs, layering them with three-dimensional compositions that capture the space around them. "My work is not nostalgic," he insists, "it takes on the problems of an industrialising society head-on." Purkayashta grew up in the oil town of Digboi in Assam, and went on to study art at Santiniketan, where he was a student of the well-known painter Jogen Chowdhury. At Santiniketan, he studied and also painted various folk traditions and did a comparative study of popular art. These influences go into making some of his works. He has also drawn inspiration from Delhi, and he often uses images like the closed cubes of a city, the television set and every-day use articles. Ashim Purkayashta lives and works in Delhi.



Proust (from the series Pale Ancestors)

Atul Dodiya

"For a figurative painter like me, the reality is slightly different. I live in Ghatkopar, my figures are Indian in the sense that they would be dark skinned and they portray the life in India that includes the poverty, the concerns and the reality. But I don't make any political statements."

Born in Mumbai in 1959, Atul Dodiya, one of the most sought after contemporary artists today, completed his Bachelor in Fine Arts from the Sir J. J. School of Arts in 1982. He says, "I was passionate about painting from childhood. I come from a liberal Kathiawadi family and was brought up on old Guru Dutt (Legendary Indian Film maker) movies and classical music of Kumar Gandharva (Classical Singer). Even though nobody in the family has an aesthetic background, they were very supportive. When I was 13, my father, a civil contractor, bought me a first class local train pass, so that I could go for art exhibitions. One of my elder sisters wanted me to be an architect. But I failed my Secondary School Certificate exams twice because I was weak in math. Finally, they allowed me to join the Sir J.J. School of Art."

Atul met his wife Anju --- also an artist --- at the Sir J. J. School of Art where he used to teach after completing his graduation. She was his student. "We are critical of each other's work. It's a great thing because it means a lot to have an opinion you can completely trust, coming from someone who understands you completely and knows what you are trying to say",

Both work out of what used to be Atul's father's home in Ghatkopar, in Central Mumbai. "While I work, neighbors keep coming in to look at my paintings and comment on them. These people, with their various priorities and concerns, do not come to the painting with any prejudice. They may say the work look like their bed cover. I do not consider their response useless. It can be hilarious and also very enlightening," he says.

Atul came into prominence in 1999 with his series on Mahatma Gandhi, where the painter sought to reconstruct images from a forgotten biography of the leader. His watercolors led the Mahatma out of the tumultuous pages of history into the gentle sepia-washed terrain of his canvas. Gandhi was given a new lease of life with sensitive brush strokes. A rich burnt sienna reaffirmed the strength and spirit of Gandhi beneath the frail 'minimalist' body. Luminous yellow-whites merged into deep ambers. Says Atul, "There was a strong sense of aesthetics running through Gandhi's life --- whether it is khadi, (homespun fabric) his choice of dress, the architecture of the Sabarmati ashram, fasting, non-cooperation or the charkha (the wheel used for spinning the yarn). He had a fine artistic way of doing things."

His other series that got him international acclaim was the Bombay:labyrinth/laboratory show at the Japan Foundation Asia Center in Tokyo. It included a selection of the artist's paintings on store shutters, and other works created with ready-made objects that, reflect his concern with Indian middle-class aspirations and the impact of globalization on traditions underlying each individual reality, evoking images of closure, disruption and the storm beneath the calm," affirms Atul.

At most times, a pluralist and fragmentative mood dominates his compositions, with his images telling stories as he goes along. Atul draws heavily on historical influences that he both accepts and internalizes. Unlike earlier painters, there is no interrogation of western influences of artistic statement.

Reality affects his sensibilities a lot, and thus his art. Confesses Atul, "It is impossible to close your eyes to the world around you, however much you try. The blasts in March 1993 affected me a lot. They shattered my sense of wholeness and peace. They made me realize that certain truths have to be faced. They are reflected in my paintings in the form of peeling plasters and cracks."

Rendered in bold realism and drawing on pop art iconography, Atul's work reveals his attempt to go back to his roots. Like his exhibition on kitsch art, that he held in New Delhi some years ago. He says, "In India, the majority live with this kind of gaudy chamkila (shiny) stuff - it is very normal. I do enjoy it. I explore the visual possibilities. I also like what they do with space, form, texture, and I like the colors of kitsch,"

But the turning point in his work, says Atul, was his trip to the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. "I saw paintings from the early Renaissance onward to modern times. I was overwhelmed by the thickness of the centuries old paint, and wondered how could my work begin to measure up to the masters. I learnt to see things differently, not merely to create within a context, but to create a context." For almost three years after he returned, he began questioning the relevance of his work. "And then memories of the young boy who drew for the sheer joy of it, penetrated his bleakness. Paris was so different from Mumbai, from my reality, that my art and that of the Masters had to be different too."

When Atul came back, his work had changed. He dropped the earlier photo realistic approach to replace it with a more flexible mode. The result was the 1994 'The Bombay Buccaneer', an oil, acrylic and wood on canvas effort, a take off on the poster for the film 'Baazigaar'. In 1999, the artist won the Sotheby's Prize for Contemporary Art. He says, "It was a great feeling. It is nice to know people are interested in my work and the fact that I attempt to create a new image."

The crowning glory was his works being shown at the Tate Museum, London, in 2000, as part of the exhibition 'Centuries Cities: Art And Culture in Modern Metropolis'. He is one of the Indian artists whose work was shown at the museum as part of a major exhibition on nine cities of the world.

A slow worker, Atul does about six to eight paintings a year. He works on one painting at a time, for two months, for eight to ten hours a day. Every two years he holds an exhibition. "I experience the pain and suffering when doing a painting and feel drained after finishing it. An image remains in my mind for about three years before I put it down. It undergoes several modifications."

When he is not painting, Atul likes to travel. "But the last three or four years have been so hectic. I have not had the time. I do have a passion for reading and watching films. I place Satyajit Ray films on top of the list. They are marvelous; his vision of life and command over the technique is unique. Then there are others like Tarkovsky, Antonioni and Kurosawa."

One day he wants to make a film. "I think cinema is a complete medium without, sound, visuals or movement," he emphasizes. He is influenced by work of painters like M.F. Husain and Bhupen Khakkar. "There is a lot of fun in Khakkar's work. He depicts it the way I am familiar with. There is a lot of Indianness in his works. If you go to rural India, you will find things exactly the way he has portrayed them."

Besides having held several solo exhibitions in Mumbai, Kolkata, New Delhi and Amsterdam, he has participated in many group exhibitions both in India and abroad. Atul Dodiya lives and works in Mumbai.

Shambhavi Singh



Ghatak

Shambhavi Singh's works, although dream-like, depict emotions quite contrary to their appearance. Raising questions about hope and re-birth, and at the same time, recognising the fears of the unknown, Singh's oeuvre provides an introspective journey for the viewer.

Singh's recent series of epic canvases, titled Ghatak, links the microcosmic and macrocosmic - in an effort to open viewers to the propositions that might flow from such connections. The artist cites both the 15th century mystic Kabir and a scene from Satyajit Ray's film, 'Pather Panchali', as her inspirations for the series. In a poem that explores the fundamental components of a 'ghatak' or pot - clay and space - to explore the gamut of human experience. We, of course, are the original clay vessels. The scene from Pather Panchali takes us to a related area: an eye appears, blinking in the darkness, leaving the film-goer momentarily confounded as to context, before another frame reveals that the peeper belongs to a girl who is looking into a ghatak. The corollary: for an instant, we, the audience, were

part of the dark interior void into which the child peered - perhaps, even, we were the void (adapted from Sara Bancroft, Lullaby, Talwar Gallery, New Delhi, 2008).

Through her large-format paintings depicting nebulous skies, and her immaculate sculptures bearing cyclical shadows, the artist entices her viewer into a journey of self-exploration, bringing back countless memories of survival and livelihood.

Shambhavi Singh was born in 1966 in Patna, Bihar. She received her Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts and Crafts, Patna, in 1986, and her Master's degree in the same after moving to New Delhi from the College of Arts there in 1992. In 2001, Singh was artist in residence at Greatmore Studios in Cape Town, South Africa. Her works have been exhibited worldwide in a number of solo shows including, 'Lullaby' at Talwar Gallery, New Delhi, in 2008; 'A Bird and 2000 Echoes' at Talwar Gallery, New York, in 2007; Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2002; and 'Passage from India' at the Association for Visual Arts (AVA), Cape Town, in 1998. Amongst her group shows are 'Abstraction is Alive and Kicking' at Gallery Beyond, Mumbai, in 2005; 'We Are Like This Only' at Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2005; 'Amrita Shergil Revisited: Celebrations of Women by Women Artists' at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi, in 2004; and 'Unshackled Spirit' at the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, in 2003.

Singh lives and works in New Delhi.

Anju Dodiya



Bali Study

The self is at the center of Anju Dodiya's works. Though not solipsistic, the majority of her works give the viewer access to private moments, lifted from "the private discourse that goes on within oneself when one is alone". Dodiya initially resisted the lure of self-portraiture: Her early works were extremely

abstract, and following her first show ("a fictional autobiography"), she tried to refocus her gaze on railway stations, roadside scenes, and so forth. Yet ultimately she found her original impulse of a painterly introspection was the strongest, and rechanneled her vision into describing situations from her life.

Dodiya describes her relationship with contemporary Western art as ambivalent. To her, the practice of conceptual art as seen in India seems more a response to international fashions than an authentic portrayal of the art process. Her own art remains rooted in the figurative, and her debts to the West are mostly to Giotto, Massacio, and other painters of the Italian Renaissance. As with those painters, all elements within her paintings are charged with an emotional value. "Often," she says, "I use furniture or, say, a curtain or a door to speak".

Gargi Raina



Periyar

Using gouache and dry pastels on paper and wood, Raina works in sequences which follow a narrative, linear in the way it reads but elastic in the way that it enables us to comprehend and examine - "I've been working with the idea of stretching time. It's like seeing something in slow motion or looking at one thing and stretching that time, being able to go backwards and forwards and doing it at a very, very slow pace. I think that has been very crucial to a lot of the work that I have been doing recently."

The objects and images, repeated with an almost mesmerizing intensity, are taken from the repertoire of the domestic, though the essential equation arises out of their necessary persistence in our lives. Though simple in themselves, a transmutation occurs as the eye progresses from frame to frame, as does the potential for interpretation; moving "from an absence to a presence - from a hole to a mountain, a navel to a breast until it becomes a spinning top". Certain symbols emerge, obvious in some ways but potent in that they form the basis of collective memory; myths of creation and origin unfolding with movement in time or with the action being performed.

Shilpa Gupta



Shilpa Gupta is essentially a new media artist. Like many of her contemporaries, she considers the 'web' or internet an indispensable part of present day existence, and, consequently, prefers various forms of cutting-edge technology as the vehicles for her interactions with the viewer. In a unique and humorous manner, Gupta continues to remind us of that which

we are in danger of taking for granted - that it is indeed technology that connects us to each other and to the world. Although Gupta's works are developed largely through technological means, their significance lies in their candid communication the various issues that shape contemporary life, particularly the lives of young adults. In her works, Gupta touches on aspects of current, universal issues including environmental degradation, globalization, terrorism, war, intolerance, gender politics and human rights.

Shilpa Gupta was born in Mumbai in 1976, and, in 1997, graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the sculpture department of the Sir J.J. School of Art in the same city. Amongst Gupta's important solo and museum shows are those hosted by the Apeejay Media Gallery, New Delhi, in 2007; Sakshi Gallery Mumbai, in 2007; Bose Pacia Gallery, New York, in 2006; the Queens Museum, New York, in 2005; and the Tate Modern, London, in 2001. Gupta's 'Blessed Bandwidth.net', an interactive internet project completed in 2003, was commissioned by the Tate online. In 2004, Gupta received the prestigious Transmediale Award in Berlin and the Sanskriti Prathisthan Award in New Delhi, and was recognized as International Artist of the Year by the South Asian Visual Artists Collective of Canada. Shilpa Gupta lives and works in Mumbai, India.

Ram Rahman



Bhavai Actor

Photojournalist, artist, curator, designer and activist Ram Rahman, initially studied physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Later, Rahman completed a degree in Graphic Design from Yale University's School of Art in 1979.

Born in 1955, Rahman has shown his photographs in individual and group shows in India and around the world. His most recent solo shows include, 'Bioscope: Scenes from an Eventful Life' presented by Bodhi Art at Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi, in 2008; Apparao Infinity, Chennai, in 2007; 'Photo Studio / Cutouts' at India International Center, New Delhi, in 2003; and 'Visions of India: Photographs by Ram Rahman' at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, in 2002. Amongst his group shows, the most recent are 'Still Moving Images' at the Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon, in 2008; 'Click: Contemporary Photography from India' at Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2007; 'I Fear, I Believe, I Desire' at Gallery Espace, New Delhi, also in 2007; and 'Middle Age Spread at the National Museum, New Delhi, in 2004. Amongst the shows Rahman has curated are 'Heat - Moving Pictures Visions, Phantasms and Nightmares' at Bose Pacia, New York, in 2003; 'Noor - Devyani Krishna, A Retrospective' at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, in 2000; and 'Sunil Janah Photographs, A Retrospective' at Gallery 678, New York, in 1998.

Rahman is one of the founding members of the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust (SAHMAT) in New Delhi, a leader in the resistance to communal and sectarian forces in India through its public cultural action. The artist lives and works in New Delhi.

Riyas Komu



Uttara - II

Riyas Komu was born in 1971 in Kerala, and moved to Mumbai in 1992 to study literature. Dropping out during his final year, Komu eventually obtained his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Fine Art from the Sir J. J. School of Art in 1997 and 1999 respectively. Since his graduation, Komu has been constantly asserting and pushing himself with a strong body of work.

The artist's oeuvre, spanning several different media and genres, is particularly noticed for its strong political overtones. His paintings, to put it in his own words, carry a protest symbol one way or the other. He has remarked, "I strongly feel it is my duty to be political. I believe that my paintings should look back at the viewer rather than just tell a story or hang on the wall."

Influenced by his father's political leanings and his own brief associations with political student groups, Komu is keen on using his work to "ring alarm bells" about the explosive urban situation he encountered in Mumbai. His body of work references the paradoxes of the urban situation, where on one hand, there is glamour, and on the other, abject poverty. Creating his pieces with equal doses of compassion and cynicism, Komu's work reflects both hope and dejection - a tribute to the spirit of all those who continue to survive the city and its paradoxes.

Some of Komu's recent solo shows include ones of his photographic works at the Guild Gallery, Mumbai, in 2008 and 2005, and two exhibitions held at Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, in 2005 and 2002. His works have also been featured in group exhibitions held at Saffronart and the Guild Gallery, Mumbai, in 2004; the Harmony Show, Mumbai, in 2003, where he won the 'Excellence Award for Emerging Artist of the Year'; the Fine Art Company, Mumbai, in 2002; the Guild Gallery, Mumbai, in 2001 and 2002; Lakeeren and Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai, in 2000; and the National Gallery of Modern Art annual shows in 1999 and 2000. In 1997, Komu received the two year long K. K. Hebbar Foundation Society Scholarship, and has also been honoured with the Bombay Art Society Award in 1996 and the Maharashtra State Art Prize in 1995. The artist lives and works in Mumbai.

Bharat Sikka



Born in 1973, Bharat Sikka moved from India to New York to pursue his career in photography and to study at the Parsons School of Design there. He received his Bachelor's degree in photography in 2002, and has since been involved in several commercial projects for various high-profile international magazines. Julian Meijer,

who accepted Sikka as a part of his prestigious Julian Meijer photography agency in 2001, says, "There is a thin line between art and photojournalism. His humanity is the strength of his work. It is what I hope people see in his pictures."

Sikka's approach to portrait photography is unlike that of a conventional photographer and more like that of an artist. His portfolio comprises of portraits of other artists, men in and out of their habitual environments, and frames that capture the simplicity everyday life. Capturing all aspects of humanity, Sikka's images raise a strong sense of compassion in the hearts of his audience.

Bharat Sikka's recent solo shows include 'Indian Men' at the Otto Zoo, Milan, in 2008; 'Space In Between' at Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai, in 2008; shows at the National Museum and Nature Morte, New Delhi, in 2008; 'Space In Between' at Nature Morte and Bose Pacia, Kolkata, in 2007; and 'Families' at Galerie Valérie Cueto, Paris, in 2005. Amongst his group shows are those held at 1x1 Gallery, Dubai, in 2008; Le Festival des rencontres d'Arles, in 2007; Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, also in 2007; and 'Maharaja's' at Espace Louis Vuitton, Paris, in 2006. In March 2002, Sikka was featured as one of PDN's 30 most talented Emerging Photographers. In 2003, he was listed amongst the 50 most Influential Photographers by the magazine Flash Art, and in 2005 he won an award for Best Photograph from Time Magazine.

Hema Upadhyay



"I like to tell any stories, whether real or imaginative. These are even reflections of one's phobias, shortcomings. The recurring theme in my work is autobiographical. In addition, it is the cathartic factor that becomes the reason to take these objects and convert their ability. Yes...my work is cathartic in process."

Hema Upadhyay was born in Baroda in 1972, and completed her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in painting and printmaking respectively from the Fine Arts Faculty of the M S University there. In the short time that Hema has had to develop her career (she graduated with her MFA in 1997), she has already taken giant steps and established herself very firmly among the new generation of Indian contemporary artists.

Upadhyay was the recipient of a National Scholarship from the Ministry of Human Resources, and also has to her credit annual awards from the Gujarat Lalit Kala Academy and the national Lalit Kala Academy for her work in the 10th International Triennale - India hosted in New Delhi.

Her talent was immediately recognized and Hema has been invited to show

case in her work in many group shows, even whilst she was in college, the most prestigious being the 4th and 5th annual 'Harmony' shows, 'Ideas and Images 2' at the NGMA, Mumbai and 'Mumbai Metaphor' hosted by the Tao Art Gallery.

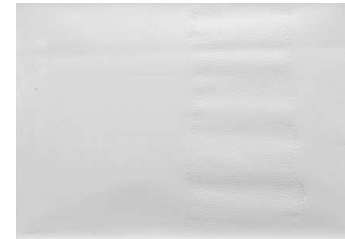
Now settled and working in Mumbai, this Baroda artist and her painter husband, Chintan Upadhyay, have collaborated and worked together for many exhibitions. Most recently the duo worked jointly to create billboard and poster art for a show called 'Parthenogenesis' at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery on the campus of the Australian University of New South Wales. Labeled as 'kitsch' by some viewers and critics, the work Hema and Chintan produced is definitely a tongue-in-cheek statement, not necessarily against, but about the mass production and popular imagery that has taken over almost every aspect of urban life. Hema explains, saying, "Besides using pop imagery, our posters take a dig at our hybrid 'global' lifestyle."

Earlier, in 2001, Hema for the first time exhibited her work abroad, also in Australia. For an installation titled 'The Nymph and the Adult', she sculpted nearly 2000 lifelike cockroaches, infesting the gallery with them, to draw repulsion as well as fascination from her viewers. There was a purpose, however, to this display. At a very politically and militarily tense time in the South Asian Subcontinent, it raised the question on everyone's mind. Would cockroaches be the only survivors?

In the same year, Upadhyay held her first solo exhibition at the Chemould Art Gallery in Mumbai. Titled 'Sweet - Sweat Memories', the large mixed media on paper works on display were inspired by the suicide of one of her neighbours as well as the confusion that arose in her as a result of living in an urban sprawl where dream and aspirations are both excited and forcefully repressed. The title work in this show encapsulates these feelings perfectly. It is a close up of a mouth, wide and smiling, only to reveal the decay and decadence that lurks everywhere.

Hema Upadhyay lives and works in Mumbai.

A Balasubramaniaam



"I like to be called a person who creates art, and not merely a painter, printmaker or a sculptor."

Balasubramaniam's latest works are a play of shadows through which he questions the viewer's belief in the unseen and the unknown - encouraging them to

query their own consciousness. After stripping down a form to its bare minimum, Balasubramaniam allows it to grow again through a series of shadows - although seen, intangible to the sense of touch. Each form and its multiple shadows share their own camaraderie with the element of light. With some appearing darker and deeper than others, the notion of transcendental infinity is also established. "Despite the strong visual affirmation involved in witnessing Bala's works, we are nevertheless challenged to believe what we see. Our sense of perception, of reality, is questioned and at times evokes a contradictory realization" says Deepak Talwar of Talwar Gallery, Delhi and New York. Born in Tamil Nadu in 1971, Balasubramaniam received his Bachelor's degree in fine arts from the Government College of Arts, Chennai, in 1995. In 1998, he studied printmaking at EPW Edinburgh, UK, after which he pursued his love for the genre at the Universitat fur Angewandte Kunst in Wien, Austria. He has travelled extensively and exhibited in France, Spain, Egypt, Japan, Malaysia, Finland, Norway and USA. Amongst his solo shows are '(In)Visible' at Talwar Gallery, New Delhi, in 2007; Talwar Gallery, New York, in 2007; '(Desi)re' at Talwar Gallery, New York, in 2005; 'Transition and Transformation' at the Fine Arts Museum, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, also in 2005; and Talwar Gallery, New York, in 2004. His most recent group endeavors include 'Freedom 2008 - Sixty Years after Indian Independence' at the Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata, in 2008; 'The Inverted Tree' at Gallery Threshold, New Delhi, in 2005; 'Indian Summer' at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris, also in 2005; and 'Solitude' at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, in 2003.

The artist lives and works in Bangalore.

Vivan Sundaram



Fly

Vivan Sundaram, painter, sculptor, installer is a key figure in a group of contemporary artists, who have, over the last decade, moved away from the enterprise of easel painting.

Opposed to the comfort of looking at art from a drawing-room perspective or with disengagement, Sundaram, is more committed to realising multi-dimensional projects which invite audi-

ence participation as in open-stage theatre where, the distance between spectator and performer is minimal. You can sit inside a room, or on a car-seat or bed or within a sheltered space, for instance, in a hut with live video and music to experience and evoke multiple meanings.

Sundaram's work is conceived as a cultural product or debate rather than fine art to hang on the wall. It crucially relates to social and political history, the environment and to historiography itself. The viewer can take part in looking and thinking about event and issue and story in response to painted, crafted constructions and enclosures which are placed as excavated phenomena on the stage or, what can be a museum-like gallery space. Alternatively, the exhibition arena resembles an abandoned machine workshop or the karkhana (factory, in Urdu) of a toy-maker.

Sundaram's monumental artworks or relic-like objects acquire different meanings on different sites. An industrial landscape, is polemically represented as a

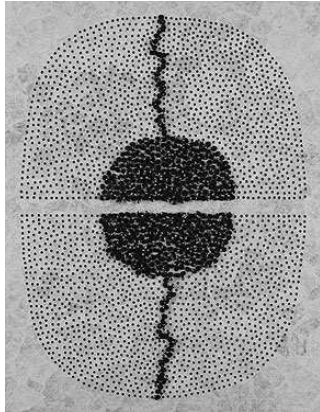
totem-like structure, made with charcoal on paper and a tray of gleaming engine oil; the body of a man, killed in a communal riot, photographed by a reporter is an appropriated image, used by Sundaram as a "Fallen Man" emblem for many exhibitions; the memorial cum gateway, (a recurrent theme) made with tin trunks, the dwellings, cast as the House/Boat compositions or the dilapidated trawler-boat and its fragments are the image-structures which recur as the grammar of the environmental condition he models and re-models. The sculptures are erected and dismantled for shows in different cities. Their architectural instability, their incompleteness, along with the recently, added animistic exhibits of a bed with soft toys and the shell of an old fiat car with velvet seat and neon lights, point to a willful narration about strife, about the seduction and control of mechanical-electronic paraphernalia and about wishing and dreaming.

Unsettling the gaze of the viewer is towards a purpose. It is to solicit an intellection to invite participation in the construction of history, and to jostle personal memories his and ours-so that the installation area becomes a speaking space.

Sundaram had put up a mammoth installation at the Durbar Hall, Victoria Memorial, (A British-built building in Calcutta, which houses one of the largest libraries in Asia) in 1999. This site specific, turn-of-the-millennium endeavour was an alternative look at history, seen through artifacts of the colonial period and after, put together as cinematic montage and illumined as fragments of a mis-en-scene. (A theatrical- cinematic term, literally, 'to put into a scene') In his latest venture, shelter the structure of the cube, the boat, the carcass-shell of the car, turned into a sofa or turned into an advertisement-object with blinking lights, an odoriferous bunk bed reeking with childhood memories, are things and forms which become a collection to be re-used and hauled from one exhibition into another. The shows demonstrate the aspiration to the condition of architecture, theatre, and the cinema where, remembrance is the key motif and the solid objects are like images in a pop up picture book. In the manner of an itinerant bard, Sundaram rephrases, transforms, renews his artworks as he exposes the deeds and words he has witnessed, heard or conjured himself. In the role of narrator, or a cine-theatrical director, he eliminates himself as author/individual artist. He collaborates with workmen as carpenters, masons, stone-cutters and photographers and video film makers so that the collective effort of many persons is dramatised as though he were unraveling hero-lauds.

The actors, in the scenario are expectedly, the visitors to his exhibition. Sundaram has made space for that : To view and walk through the gallery or location in a way so as to be able to re-construct time and saga, individually, and by means of his contrary, often ragged artwork-documents .

Manisha Parekh



A Crawl

Having well known painters Manu and Madhavi Parekh for parents, Manisha Parekh grew up surrounded by paints and brushes. She formalized her artistic upbringing with her studies in painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts at M.S. University in Baroda, and at the Royal College of Art, London on an INLAKS scholarship. Today, Parekh has several of her own exhibitions under her belt, whether of her minimal, skillfully executed works in ink and gouache, her intricate layered pieces on board, or her more ambitious works in the area of conceptual, site-specific installations.

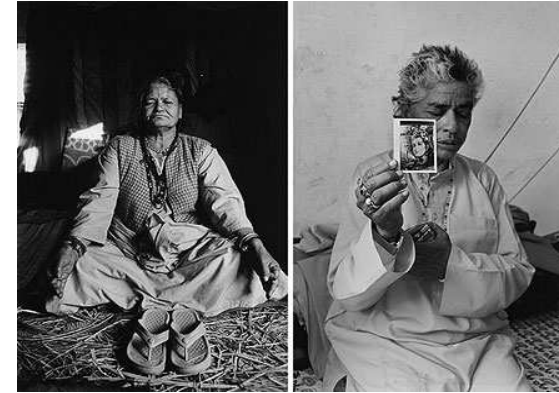
The essence of Parekh's works, whether limited to, or extending beyond the canvas or board, has always been the fluid rhythmic structure she creates through her use of harmonious forms. The main thrust of Parekh's style has always been that of clear, scientific structure. She has always shown a marked preference for form and texture, which has

allowed her to concentrate on these elements over colour and tone. Exploring the densities, opacity and transparency of inks and papers, she is fascinated by the life they take on when in contact with various surfaces, seeming as if to almost animate it.

Using minimal color, she uses harmonious forms that are linked and unfold a larger vision. Sometimes an oval and a line meet and become something new. She has a continuing fascination with vessels, and breathes life into inanimate objects, which themselves take on connotations of the human body. Her earlier rugged brushwork has gradually evolved into loose strokes, and the handling of figures in her work in now done "to relax muscular as well as pictorial tension," as she says.

Parekh has exhibited extensively in India, Germany and the United Kingdom. She has also completed a stint as a teacher teaching at the M. S. University in Baroda. Some of Parekh's solo exhibitions include 'Wonder Woods' at Bodhi Art, New York, in 2008; 'Shadow Gardens' at Berkeley Square Gallery and Saffronart, London, in 2006; 'Memory Membrane' at Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, in 2006; Nature Morte, New Delhi, in 2004, 2002, 2000 and 1999; Gallery Foundation for Indian Artists, Amsterdam, in 1999; Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai, in 1996; Goethe-Institute, Bonn, in 1995; and IFA Gallery, Bonn, in 1995. Her work has been included in exhibits such as the Havana Biennale of 2001 and the Istanbul Biennale of 1999, and she has taken part in several residencies including the Erasmus exchange in Berlin and the Heinrich- Boll fellowship in Bonn. The artist lives and works in New Delhi.

Sheba Chhachhi



Shanti Giri

Pabli

Sheba Chhachhi is a New Delhi based installation artist, photographer, activist and writer who carefully manipulates multiple media and found objects to explore and communicate the power of feminine realization. Issues surrounding women have always been the central focus of Chhachhi's works. The artist has worked individually and in collaboration with other women artists and artisans to bring about awareness of the challenges faced by women at all levels of society.

Sheba Chhachhi began her artistic journey with documentary photography, initiating a series of works based on the women's movement in India. With every new compilation of works, she reinvents her practice, experimenting alternately with photography, video, sound and light - in an effort to make her ideologies more and more tangible to her audience.

Born in 1958 in Harare, Ethiopia, Chhachhi was educated at Delhi University after which she attended the National Institute of Design (NID) in Ahmedabad. She has participated in numerous solo shows including 'Sheba Chhachhi' at Walsh Gallery, Chicago, in 2008-2009; 'Winged Pilgrims: A Chronicle from Asia' at Nature Morte, New Delhi, in 2007-2008; 'Women of the Cloth: Photographic Conversations' at Nature Morte, New Delhi, in 2007; 'Ganga's Daughters, Nellkanth: Poison/Nectar, When the Gun is Raised, Dialogue Stops' at the Townsend Centre, University of California, Berkeley, in 2005; and 'Ganga's Daughters: Meetings with Women Ascetics 1992-2004' at Nature Morte, New Delhi, in 2004. Amongst her most recent group shows are 'Still Moving Images' at the Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon; 'Contradictions and Complexities: Contemporary Art from India' at d.e.n Contemporary Art, Culver City; 'Neti - Neti (or the Comforts of Cultural Determinacy)' at Bose Pacia, New York; and 'India Time' at Paolo Curti / Annamaria Gambuzzi and Co., Milan, all in 2008.

GR Iranna



GR Iranna is an artist whose work transcends the boundaries of time and space. Born in 1970, it's been barely ten years since he started painting professionally, and already his work is mature and profound.

Many of Iranna's paintings depict pain as an abstract force that is translated visually in bruised textures and razor sharp cutting edges. His painting has always been far removed from an overriding, postmodern logic. Instead, Iranna uses the idealistic, representative and modernist language of Indian contemporary art. His most recent works are all visions of resistance. In just a glance, one can tell a sense of massive dynamic energy that pervades the surfaces. An energy that is fueled by torment and the struggle against it. Upon further inspection, one sees that these conflicts being played out on the surface are present also in those between one colour and another,

between figure and hue, and between the crudeness and the expertise employed.

These works, set on canvas as well as tarpaulin, are symbolic of an important change in Iranna's work. Maybe symbolic even of an attempt to break free from an establishment, or a style that is beginning to become claustrophobic. The large, fundamental figure that used to appear in Iranna's early paintings emerges only twice in this later series, and though the artist continues to employ repeated motifs in his work, they seem now to be less figurative, leaning more towards form.

These pieces seem to have an almost romantic undertone: the result of Iranna's attempt to break away from his own mould and reform his work. They cater to contemporary expectations, and reflect his need to pander many contradictory demands. Those of society as well as those of the artist himself.

In 1992, GR Iranna acquired his Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the College of Visual Art, in Gulbarga. Two years later, he got his Master's degree in painting from the College of Art, New Delhi. Between 1999 and 2000 he acted as artist-in-residence at Wimbledon School of Art, London.

Iranna's first one-man show was held in 1992 at the College of Visual Art, Gulbarga. Since then, he has shown at: Delhi Art Gallery and Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai in 1995; Gallery Espace, New Delhi in 1998; 'In the Shadow of Buddha' at Gallery Martini, Hong Kong in 1999; Wimbledon School of Art, London in 2000; Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture, Cairo in 2000 and The British Council & The Guild Art Gallery in 2001. Iranna has also participated in several group shows including at the Chitra Kala Parishad, Bangalore in 1990; Schoo's Gallery, Amsterdam, Holland in 1995; Vedanta Art Gallery, Chicago, U.S.A. in 1998; 'Icons of the Millennium' at Gallery Lakeeren, Mumbai in 1999 and 'Black & White' at Art Today, New Delhi in 2000.

Iranna has received national and international recognition throughout his career. His awards include those at the All India Exhibition in Mysore and the College of Visual Art, New Delhi in 1992-92, the Bansi Parmimu Memorial Committee, New Delhi and the Delhi College of Art in 1993. In the same year, he won the MF Husain and Ram Kumar selection award at 'In Search of Talent' by Vadhera Art Gallery, New Delhi. He has also been honoured in 1997 with a National Award from the Lalit Kala Academy and the AIFACS Award, at the show '50 years of Art in Independent India' in New Delhi.

Probir Gupta



All in the Landscape

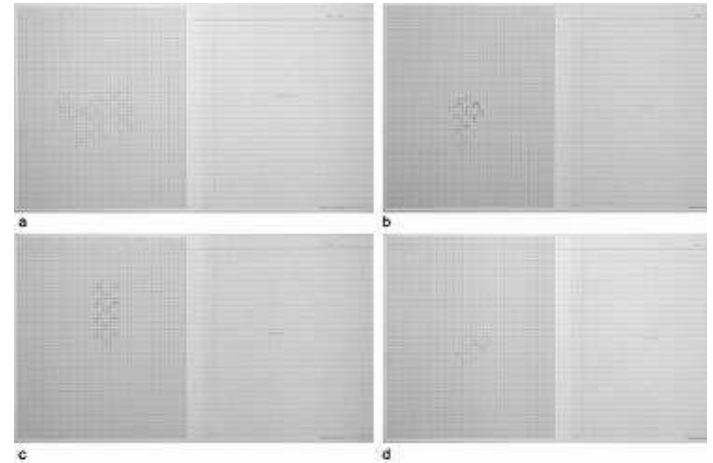
Probir Gupta's works dwell on negativities such as terror, rebellion and oppression - emotions experienced by those on either side of conflict; like those initiated during times of coloniza-

tion. His works have always leaned towards political content and activism. In his compositions, both on canvas and sculptural, Gupta displays his sheer disgust over present political situations and, simultaneously, his passionate involvement with human rights issues and his interest in man's constant struggle for justice and equality.

Recently, Gupta has begun to combine his narratives of political struggle with the predatory concept and figure of the arthropod. His fascination for these jointed insect species started with a series of multi-layered works on canvas, where he used the crusty creatures to aid him in his portrayal of horror.

Born in 1960, Gupta studied painting and mural design at the Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata, graduating from the institution in 1981. In 1987 he pursued his love for painting at the prestigious Ecole Nationale Supérieure Des Beaux Arts, Paris. Gupta's most recent solo shows include those at the Alexia Goethe Gallery, London, in 2008; 'To Whomsoever it May Concern' at Bodhi Art, New York, in 2007; Anant Art Gallery at the Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata, in 2007; 'At Half Mast' at Bose Pacia, Kolkata, in 2007; 'At Half Mast', organized by Nature Morte at the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, in 2004; and 'Transparencies in Black and White' at the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, in 2003. Amongst his group endeavors, the most recent ones are 'Keep Drawing' at Gallery Espace, New Delhi, in 2008; 'Private / Corporate IV' at Daimler Chrysler Contemporary, Berlin, in 2007; 'I Fear, I Believe, I Desire' at Gallery Espace, New Delhi, also in 2007; and 'Ways of Resisting' at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, in 2002. The artist lives and works in New Delhi.

Justin Ponmany



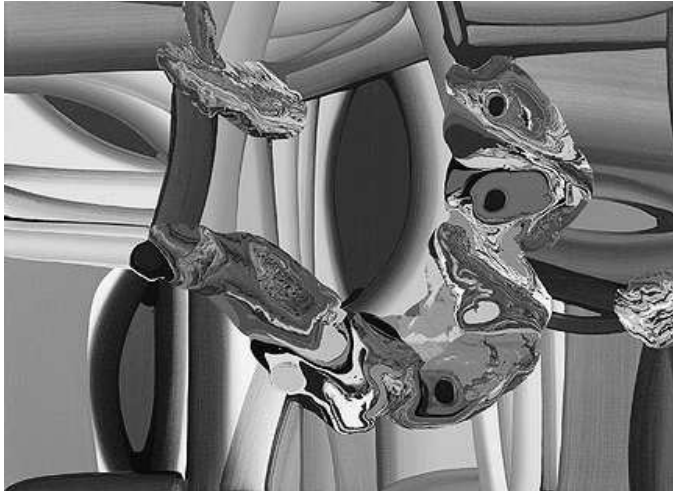
(a) Substance (b) & (d) Untitled (c) Monolith

A graduate of the Sir J.J. School of Art, Justin draws his influences from this city whose landscape is constantly under construction. The domain he deals with ranges from the material "plastic" to a state of mind that is unfortunately plastic; what he would like to term as "Plastic Memory".

Born in Kerala, India in 1974, Justin has had several shows in India and abroad. Awardees' Bose Pacia Gallery, New York, 'Highlights' Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, 'Crosscurrents' Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, 'Debt' The Guild Art Gallery, Mumbai. His awards list includes; In 1997 - 98 fellowship at Sir J.J School of Art, Mumbai, In 2000 West railway centenary Prize at NGMA, Mumbai, and in the year 2003 he was the 1st Runners up at the 4th Bose Pacia Prize for Contemporary Art.

He lives and works in Mumbai.

Bose Krishnamachari



Stretched Bodies Of history and its tales

Anupa Mehta responds to Bose Krishnamachari's new works

The French artist Christian Boltanski once remarked: "The task is to create a formal work that is at the same time recognized by the spectator as a sentimentally charged object. Everyone brings his own history to it."

Possibly Bose Krishnamachari's current project as an artist too is to present the viewer with a trigger point of images/icons that can, (along with the formal construction of painting/installation), function as symbolic devices with which to speak of an entire culture, its shifting mindsets and, its eclectic borrowings.

Born in Kerala in 1963, Bose recently completed his MFA from Goldsmiths College, University of London. His work, thus reinforced by a 'here and now' understanding and awareness of contemporary culture, borrows effortlessly from various disciplines, including literature and design, and time periods.

This current body of work spotlights figures (and by dint of association, cultures) as varied as those of the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo and her husband Diego Rivera, the Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky, and Rabindranath Tagore. Spirituality, epic style and (in Kahlo's case) a focus on the self as means to explore larger concerns, are some features that engage the viewer. However, it would be a mistake to read these works as "tributes" to the icons, as Bose uses the device (in this case, figures from art/history) more to draw attention to his own project.

Interestingly, Bose pays as much attention to form as he does to conceptual and/or contextual concerns. Startling planes of flat color juxtaposed against skilful, almost photographic, representations of identifiable persona, imbue the work with an 'international' sensibility. Bose admits to combining western image-making techniques (such as the installation) with the vernacular, in a bid to arrive at an idiom that is entirely contemporary and brisk. In an earlier interview, he has said: "I refine my color to brightness. I have learnt this usage from the alternately subdued and lavish color codes of Indian ceremonies and ritual performances; the costumes, the gestures of enactment..." The current body however, brings with it a whiff of minimalism. There is little room for excess. But the minimalism is effective.

Conceptualized and Organized Four Major Exhibitions:

Kaam, Double-Enders, Bombay Boys, Bombay x 17

Curator:

2009 Guest Curator for 'Indian Highway', at Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo

2009 'Panorama: India', ARCOmadrd, Spain

2009 'Relative Space', Bodhi Art, Bodhi Space, Mumbai

2008 'Everything: 12 Artists from India', Willem Baars Project, Amsterdam

2008 'Af-fair', 1X1 Contemporary and 1X1 Gallery, Dubai

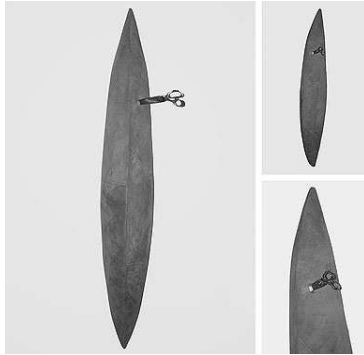
2007 'Everyone Is a Camera', Talvin Singh, Bombay Art Gallery, Mumbai

2007 'Spy', organized by The Guild at Museum Art Gallery, Mumbai

2007 'Soft Spoken', Presented by Bombay Art Gallery at Jehangir Nicholson Gallery, National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai

2006 'Maarkers', Bodhi Art, Mumbai

Sudarshan Shetty



Born in 1961 in Mangalore, Sudarshan Shetty completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts, Sir J.J. School of Art, Mumbai (1980 to 85). He received Fellowship at the Kanoria Centre for Arts, Ahmedabad.

Sudarshan Shetty has been regularly creating artworks since 90s and mostly works on sculpture and installations. His work envisions a lyrical world full of playfulness and freedom liberated from political issues. It displays an intriguing combination of the representational and the abstract.

The Fukuoka Asian Art Museum invited Sudarshan Shetty for the series of exhi-

bition, 'Contemporary Asian Artist' in September 2001. In the exhibition, the installation consisted of chairs, a desk, boats, stringed instrument, airplane, all with mechanical device and movable. In the installation composed of those objects 'For Here or To Go', Shetty created a new kaleidoscopic story. In the 'Amusement Parlor' created by him, anticipation for future possibilities as well as anxieties for irrationality and unknown precincts, or eeriness behind contemporary society and amusements were projected.

The artist strives to escape from the social framework, and at the same time, tries to collect scattered fragments of daily life. Through the process of editing and applying these (fragments), he superimposes various facets of contemporary society. In fact, though formally trained as a painter, Shetty progressively became interested in sculpture and installation, and began to combine his paintings with found objects that he painted. In 1996 he attended a sculpture workshop in Scotland that resulted in a spontaneous showing of swiftly executed watercolors; sketches in which the predominant leit motif was that of a carrier bag embellished by whimsical images and memories of the surroundings.

His art-world reflects contemporary urban life. By stimulating the memories of people's childhood and their playful-mind filled with curiosity, he cleverly escapes from the globalism that homogenizes the world and innocently plots to overthrow the value system led by politics and the economy.

He is also attracting a great deal of public attention as one of the leading artist in the Indian art scene internationally. He participated in the 'Private Mythology: Contemporary Art from India' (Tokyo) in 1998, 'Kwangju Biennale' (Korea) in 2000, and 'Century City' (UK) in 2001. Among his major art exhibitions are III Biennale of Indian Art, Roopankar Museum, Bhopal (1990), Solo show at the Holland Art Gallery, Rotterdam (1993), 'Paper Moon', solo show at Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai (1995), 'Tryst with Destiny', Singapore Art Museum (1997), 'Art in the World', hosted by Beaux Arts Magazine, Paris (1998) and 'Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis', Tate Modern (2001) Sudarshan Shetty is currently based in Mumbai.

Chintan Upadhyay



Painter Chintan Upadhyay resists viewing his work in evolutionary terms, preferring to regard the creation of each work as an independent event proceeding according to its idiosyncratic requirements. He has resisted easy definition from the start. As a young painter, he gained exposure to two rich and divergent styles of painting. Growing up in Rajasthan, Upadhyay was introduced to the tradition of miniature paintings native to the state. More intimately, he became versed in the styles of abstract expressionism through the influence of his father, himself a teacher at the Jaipur School of Art and member of the Takhman 28 group. But Upadhyay resisted the easy assimilation of these influences, leaving the Jaipur School of Art to continue his studies in Baroda. He explains, "I feared that I wouldn't grow there."

In Baroda, he found that a narrative style of painting was in vogue, as emblemized by Gulam Shaikh and Bhoopain Kulkar. He cites the two artists as great influences, yet he decided to move in a different direction with his own work. Intrigued by the scope for meaningful juxtapositions, he began experimenting with a series of still lifes. "When you place two objects together, you create a relationship. In my paintings, I sought to analyze this relationship."

In his final year at art school, Upadhyay says that he "found my metaphor: to depict objects in a phallic manner," in order to communicate the commodification of sexuality. In one untitled work, he depicts a telephone as a phallus, a representation intended to exemplify masculine consumerism. Among his influences during this period he names the images of roadside advertisements, and kitsch. On finishing his studies, Upadhyay moved to Mumbai, attracted by the cosmopolitan tenor of the city. "Bombay has a different kind of energy from the north, one that triggers physical and psychological effects on the body." When he arrived in the city, he experienced a sense of alienation from its inhabitants which he translated into "pictures that are alien-like". He began experimenting with caricature, satirizing the world around him in a series of paintings busy with visual jokes and puns.

Upadhyay created "eerie images," intended to "hammer an established aesthetics". Effectively, his paintings are themselves "critiques of painterly, established norms." He regularly leaves parts of his canvases unfinished, in order to indicate "my interest in present time." He explains that to him, an unfinished painting suggests the possibility that the artist may return to complete the piece, and thus creates a tension within the work. In each painting, he seeks to instill a sense of movement and possibility.

This philosophy equally describes his own approach to art, which is that of a quick-change artist. "After four or five paintings, I usually switch to a new style." He states that "I don't want my paintings to be a signature," explaining that when an artist develops a distinctive style, it is a form of self-parody or self-caricature that is more of an economic response to the world than an artistic one. "A signature is created for the market - people want a signature" style. It is this marketability that Upadhyay resists.

Currently, Upadhyay has begun working with collage, culling pornographic images from magazines and incorporating them into paintings. Additionally, he has created several soft-form, toy-like sculptures of multi-colored snakes. At heart, however, he identifies himself as a painter.

"My philosophy is created work by work. I don't decide beforehand what I will do; I have to go through the process of painting." When painting, he "starts with color. Many layers and forms come and go until I get something, and develop it. I end with the surface that I intended."

Ranbir Singh Kaleka



Man with torch

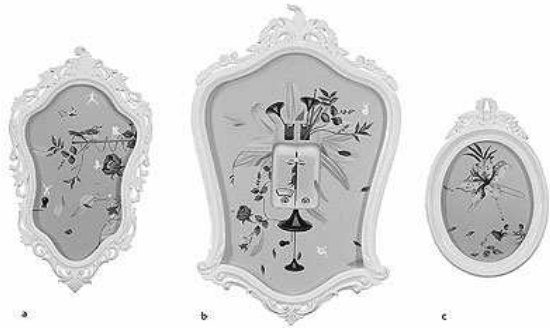
Ranbir Singh Kaleka was born in Patiala, Punjab University in Chandigarh, and subsequently took on a teaching assignment at the Punjabi university and College of Art in New Delhi. He later obtained his Master's degree in painting from the Royal College of Art in London. He has also taught in the college of art in Delhi.

Kaleka's paintings, both on paper and canvas, in oils as well as mixed media, are almost surrealist in their treatment of scenes from everyday life. The lines are suggested, rather than sharply traced, and the colours almost deliberately restrained. Kaleka has also created and exhibited video art, photographs and installations.

The artist's work has been widely exhibited in India and abroad. His most recent solo and group shows include Chalo India at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, in 2008; a multimedia installation commissioned to the permanent collection of the Spertus Museum, Chicago, in 2007; the Sydney Biennale, 2008; Urban Manners at Hangar Bicocca, Milan, in 2007; New Narratives: Contemporary Art from India at the Chicago Cultural Center in 2007; Horn Please: The Narrative in Contemporary Indian Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, in 2007; Art Video Lounge at Art Basel Miami Beach, Miami, in 2006; Hungry God: Indian Contemporary Art at Busan Museum of Modern Art, South Korea in 2006; iCon: India Contemporary at the Venice Biennale, 2005; Edge of Desire: Recent Art in India at the Asia Society, New York, in 2005;

Culturgeist-Lisbon in 2004; Zoom! Art in Contemporary India, Lisbon, in 2004; and subTerrain: Indian Contemporary Art at the House of World Culture, Berlin, in 2003. Ranbir Kaleka currently lives and works in New Delhi.

Thukral and Tagra



Somnium Genero - Canor

Designer and artist duo Thukral & Tagra's works are executed in a wide variety of media including graphics, videos, music, interiors, product design, paintings, sculpture and installations. Their quirky, kitsch, pop art-like works focus on the influence of popular western ideologies on India's deep-rooted cultural heritage. However, the duo's approach to the subject is refreshingly stylish. Although vibrant and energetic, their compositions raise serious questions about the loss of identity experienced by Indians in their own sub-continent and its repercussions worldwide.

Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra, branded as Thukral & Tagra, have worked as a team since the turn of the millennium. Born in 1976 in Jalandar, Thukral completed his Bachelor's degree in Fine Art at Chandigarh College of Arts, and his Master's degree in the same at the Delhi College of Art. Tagra was born in New Delhi in 1979. He completed his Bachelor's degree in Fine Art at the Delhi College of Art and then went on to postgraduate studies in Communication Design at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad.

Amongst their solo shows are 'Somnium Genero' at Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney, in 2008; 'Thukral & Tagra' at Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai, in 2008; 'Put It On' at Bose Pacia, New York, in 2007; 'Everyday Bosedk' at Nature Morte, New Delhi, in 2007; 'Bosedkdesigns.com' at Nature Morte, New Delhi, in 2005; and 'Its About the Art Which Is Behind and Around the Art' at Nature Morte, New Delhi, also in 2005. Some of their most recent group shows include, 'Passage to India' at Initial Access - the Frank Cohen Collection, Wolverhampton, in 2008; 'Imaginary Realities: Constructed Worlds in Abstract and Figurative Painting' at Max Wigram Gallery, London, also in 2008; 'Animamix: From Modernity to Eternity' at MOCA Shanghai; 'Pink' at Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai; and 'Does Size Matter?' at Art Konsult, New Delhi, all in 2007.

The duo has also received numerous awards and was recently singled out by Wallpaper Magazine as one of the 101 best emerging international designers. Both of the artists live and work in New Delhi.

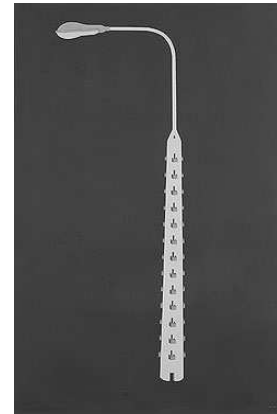
Subodh Gupta



Subodh Gupta's works are littered with references to past and present experiences. Swinging from significant information to seemingly irrelevant motifs, Gupta's constructions weave highly eccentric imaginings with public myths and rituals. Drawing mainly from everyday objects and scenarios, his aesthetic delineates the complex inter-relations of India's urban and rural communities. It shows the effects of consumerism and the modernization of traditional Indian society. Taking an ironic swipe at Capitalism's materialist ethic, Gupta nonetheless portrays the social and economic aspirations of rural communities and lower class Indians with an affectionate compassion.

Subodh Gupta born in Khagaul, Bihar and studied at the College of Arts and Crafts, Patna. From 1997 onwards, the artist has held solo exhibitions of his paintings and sculptural installations in Delhi, Mumbai, Amsterdam and New York. Group exhibitions include: 'The Tree from the Seed', Henie Onstad, Kunstsenter, Oslo (2003); 'Under Construction', The Japan Foundation/Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (2002); 'Post Production' (Sampling, Programming & Displaying) Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Italy (2001) and the Triangle International Artists workshop, New York (1997). He received the 'Emerging Artist Award', which comprised of a solo exhibition at Bose Pacia Modern Gallery in New York (1997) and was awarded a scholarship from Lalit Kala Academy for residency at Ghari Studios for one year. The artist lives and works in Delhi.

Gigi Scaria



Born in 1973 in Kothanalloor, Kerala, Gigi Scaria completed his Bachelor's degree in painting from the College of Fine Arts, Thiruvananthapuram, in 1995, and his Master's degree in the same from Jamia Millia University, New Delhi, in 1998.

Gigi Scaria's work draws the viewer's attention towards the painful truths of migrancy and displacement. The issue of non-belonging and unsettle-

ment reverberate between the walls on his canvas. "Gigi's particular position is to investigate how city structures, social constructs, and the view of location is translated in social prejudice and class attitude," says critic and curator Gayatri Sinha.

Scaria's solo shows include 'Absence of an Architect' at Palette Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2007; 'Where are the Amerindians?' at Inter America Space, Trinidad, in 2005 following his residency at CCA7 there; the Art Inc., New Delhi, in 2001; and Great Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 1998. Amongst his group shows, the most recent include, 'Popular Reality' at the Stainless Gallery, New Delhi, Jam Jar, Dubai, and Clark House, Mumbai, in 2008-2009; 'Keep Drawing' at Gallery Espace, New Delhi; 'Walk On Line' at Avanthy Contemporary, Zurich; 'Indiavata (India + Avatar): Contemporary Artists from India' at Gallery Sun Contemporary, Korea; 'Young Contemporary Indian Artists' at 1x1 Gallery, Dubai; 'Click! Contemporary Photography in India' at Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi; and 'Who Knows Mr. Gandhi?' at Aicon Gallery, London, all in 2008. Scaria also completed residencies in Biella, Italy in 2002 and New Delhi in 2004. In 2005, the artist was honoured with the Sanskriti Award in Visual Art. Scaria lives and works in New Delhi.

