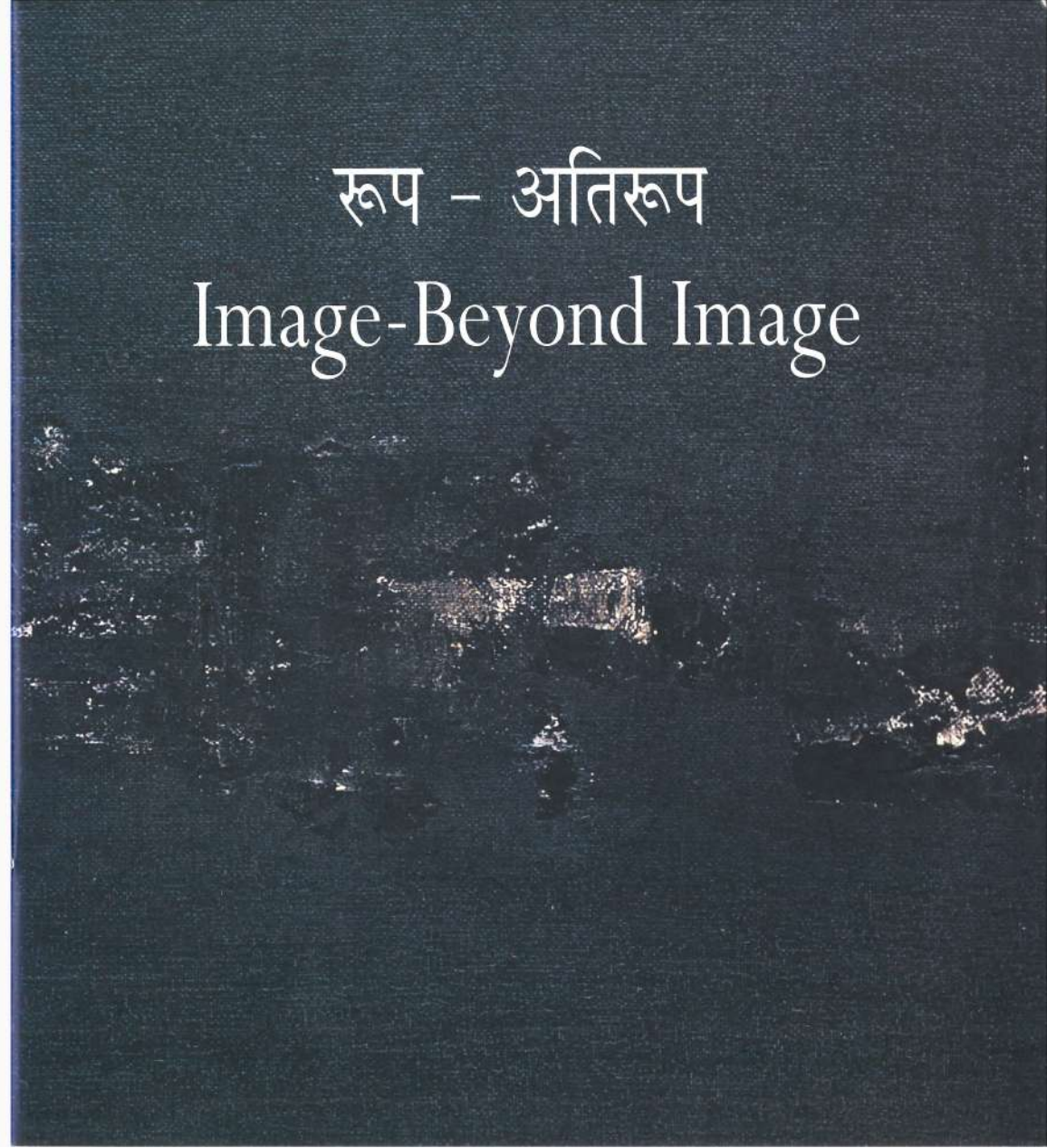


रूप – अतिरूप

Image-Beyond Image



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Image-Beyond Image
Contemporary Indian Paintings

From The collection of Glenbarra Art Museum Japan

NEW DELHI

January 4-January 25, 1997

National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

CALCUTTA

February 5-February 16, 1997

Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Calcutta

BANGALORE

March 15-April 5, 1997

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishad, Bangalore

MUMBAI

April 26-May 17, 1997

National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai

PREFACE

It is a great honour for me to be able to exhibit in this show, *Image-Beyond Image*, a selection of works from the Glenbarra Art Museum collection in India during its celebration of 50 years of Independence. Many of these works have never been exhibited in India before, as they were collected directly from artists' studios, private collectors, galleries and auction houses in both India and abroad.

My first visit to India was in 1975 at the age of twenty-two. I was immediately charmed by the country and its people and became a frequent visitor. Nevertheless it took more than fifteen years of travelling in India for me to wake up to the existence of contemporary Indian art. Once I did discover it, however, my appreciation of the paintings and the contact I had with many of the artists enabled me to learn much more about both India and myself. At the same time I also began to realize that the contemporary art of India was not well-known outside of the country in spite of its strength and sensitivity.

For this reason I felt compelled to start collecting a variety of works and then, in 1991, to establish a museum in a wing of the Glenbarra Japan Co. in Himeji. The Museum has a permanent display of Indian contemporary art and has also held one man shows from time to time. In addition, I have been invited on several occasions to participate in exhibitions in Yokohama, Saitama, Hiroshima and Kobe. In 1993 the Glenbarra Art Museum published *Contemporary Indian Art*, a catalogue of many of the works in the Museum's collection. Paintings illustrated in this exhibition's catalogue, however, exclude those reproduced in the earlier one.

Perhaps due to the diversity and depth of Indian culture, people carry many different images of India. Contemporary art can act as a common language to reveal the India beyond the images and to lead us to a greater understanding within, for there is something that transcends the diversity of images, a spirit that is contemporary and a presence that is universal, even in its Indianness, above all there is a sense of creative adventure that reaches out to something beyond the image, through the image, be it figurative or abstract. This, I feel, is what captivated me — the glimpse of a window in the image, opening to a space beyond.

I am extremely grateful to Mr Ashok Vajpeyi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, for this wonderful opportunity to exhibit part of my collection in India. I also want to thank Ms. Anjali Sen of the National Gallery of Modern Art who made it possible to have the exhibition in both New Delhi and Mumbai, and the authorities of The Birla Academy of Art and Culture in Calcutta and Karnataka Chitrakala Parishad in Bangalore for allowing me to exhibit the works there, too. Thanks are also due to many friends including Mr. Arun Vadehra and Mr. Surrinder Singh of New Delhi, Mr. Dadiba Pundale of Bombay and Dr. Prakash Kejriwal of Calcutta for their help, without which I would not have dared to try to hold these shows. And finally, I wish to extend special thanks to ABC India Ltd. for being the official national carriers.

Masanori Fukuoka

FOREWARD

I am delighted to be associated with this important exhibition offered by Mr. Masanori Fukuoka of Glenberra Art Museum. I have known Mr. Masanori Fukuoka for five years and the passion with which he collects Indian contemporary art is seldom seen. What impresses me most is the sheer and unconditional love he has for Indian contemporary art.

The collection is an important statement of the modern attitude towards painting in India. It shows the varieties of human experience which are embodied in the paintings. Indian culture is a mix of various cultures and each artist's emotional responsiveness to the diverse environment which surrounds him shows through his imaginative formulation and his own unique interpretation which he expresses through his art. The panorama and the mystery, the constant struggle between tradition and modernity, the old and the new, the rural and the urban, the vast gap between the classes, exclusive to India influences the very being of each one of us, and the sensitivity it arouses is what influences the art itself. In that understanding the flavour of Indian art is as unique as India itself.

The exhibition starts from Delhi travels to Calcutta, Bangalore and Mumbai gives an opportunity to art lovers all over the country to see part of one of the finest collections of Indian contemporary art.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude and thanks to Mr. Ashok Vajpeyi of Ministry of Culture and Mrs. Anjali Sen, Director National Gallery of Modern Art who have made this exhibition possible.

Arun Vadehra

THE LIBERATION OF IMAGINATION

As we reflect over the works of these stylistically dissimilar group of painters, else bemoan their departure from an identifiable earlier Indian artistic tradition, it would be salutary to remember that they too perform function within the parameters of the modern. Now if at all we insist on postulating a modern 'tradition', we must say that it is a paradoxical, ambiguous, untraditional tradition. Such modernism strongly implies some sort of historical discontinuity, either a liberation from inherited patterns of extreme deprivation and disinheritance. This radically anti-cultural bias seems to be the most important attribute of the modern imagination. Committed to everything in human experience that militates against custom, abstract order, or even reason itself art, in an age of change, has elevated individual existence over social man, unconscious feeling over conscious perception, passion and will over intellectual and systematic morality, dynamic vision over practical reality. In these and other ways, the bias has made the most of its break with the hoary past. It is really an inborn challenge to established culture. Interwoven with the excess of knowledge, the experimental verve, and the personal urgency, and the artist of the day may be in a sense of loss, alienation and despair. These are the two faces, positive and negative, of the modern and the anti-traditional; freedom and deprivation, seemingly a living present and a dead past.

The paradoxical task of the now globally modern imagination, whether liberated or alienated has been to stand both inside and outside itself, to articulate its own formlessness, to formulate its own extravagant possibilities. An age of confusing change finds its character by confronting the past and including this confrontation within itself as a part of a single total experience. It is, however at its best, more than a cultivation of immediacy, of free of tormented awareness; it can be the embodiment in current imagery of a situation always larger than the present, and as such it is a containment of the resources and the perils of the present by recovering all the relevant past. In this sense, modernism is synthetic in its very indeterminacy. Modern artists, working often without established models and bent on originality, have at times been traditionalists in their own fashion.

Here then is a fluid intellectual world, and to which Indian artists are party. It is very evident that plurality and heterogeneity are generally the hallmark of Indian art as well, as much of the works included in this exhibition by a lover of Indian art. It is for this reason that we have conflicting varieties of styles. Over here, all indicative of the myriad selves we have within an otherwise increasingly uniform and homogenized urban community. The freedom of temperaments is legion. The determined mingling and tensions of these styles can be fruitful at its best.

For instance, to take up some samples, there are the symbolists who seem instinctively to hold that human imagination constructs the world we perceive, at least more than half way and does not merely reflect the given forms of external objects. Among artist who are in this line we have some extraordinary ones in this show. There are, to name only a few, Biren De, G.R. Santosh, Gaitonde, Swaminathan, Akkittam Narayan, Achutan Udalur and Rameshwar Broota, some of these, to my mind, are the highwater marks of this exposition.

But then, there are those of the school of realism or semi-realism in which objectivity of some kind is maintained. The realist, in his most elementary guise, wishes to present 'reality' by allowing characters or images to appear in his work with as little personal intervention as possible. While he does not deny the imaginative faculty, he often minimises its importance, who are the artists here who may answer to such description? Often, these are figurative artists with some social concern at heart. It could be a Tyeb Mehta of a fine vintage, and it could also be Akbar Padamsee in his figurative; or else Badri Narayan, Anupam Sud, Nalini Malani and even M.F. Husain in certain of his works. One would not normally count Laxma Goud in this section, but some of the works over here, surprisingly enough, make us see him in that light. Rasik Raval, Dharamnarayn Dasgupta and the splendid Ganesh Pyne don't fit in here. Theirs, far more, are dream worlds, reveries really — sometimes superb at their best. And so also, Francis Souza when he takes off over religious lore or landscape.

These realists or semi realists oppose symbolist or surrealist predictions for an esoteric subject matter, for perfection of form and for an elite audience. So, for the realist offers his works as a mean of communication among men. Dealing with large subjects in a comprehensible way, so that form is subordinated to content. The realist is essentially a social man and the symbolist, or surrealist, a solitary mind. Even Jogen Choudhury, in all the excellence of his foremost works, is no symbolist but a communicator of human foibles or ironies.

But there are still other modes or moods, for instance of those closely engaged with the natural world that still surrounds us. Even though immediate contact with nature has become a relatively small part of modern experience, ideas of nature—at least in India — even now bulk large in artistic consciousness. And so, we have Ramkumar with his landscapes; and most surprisingly, Bhupen Khakar with his trees. But there are at least a few other with traces of nature, or of animal life.

There are artists like Madhvi Parekh, to give but one instance, who draw upon the riches of the simple, but still vital folk tradition and do a lovely job of it; and in a different way, even Arpita Singh in her archly naive manner does so.

Art of course ought be various, but not fugitive — a quality we see in those arts or artefacts of the day that merely or passingly, entertain us in moments of exhaustion.. but, thankfully, in this show we only meet with an art that either elevates us, or sensuously delights us. Some of these works are at their best; and there are several other which are not simply a matter of particular technique but born of self-reflecting thoughts. These latter works are certainly charged with the creative spark as fires, our feelings and imagination.

This set of artists may be called modern because they draw their inspiration from contemporary subjects or objects, but that is all. None of them attaches too large an importance to novelties in art. Theirs may well be new themes, but, as said, they really cater to those of the feelings that make us human. And that is what one ought expect from all sound art.

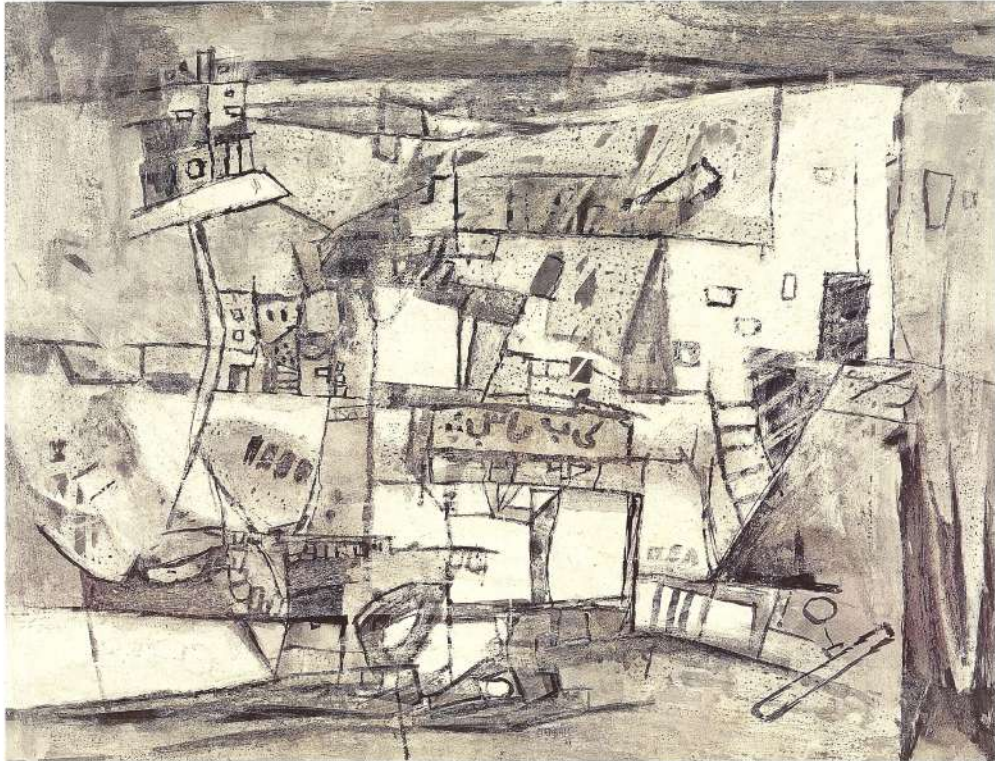
Keshav Malik



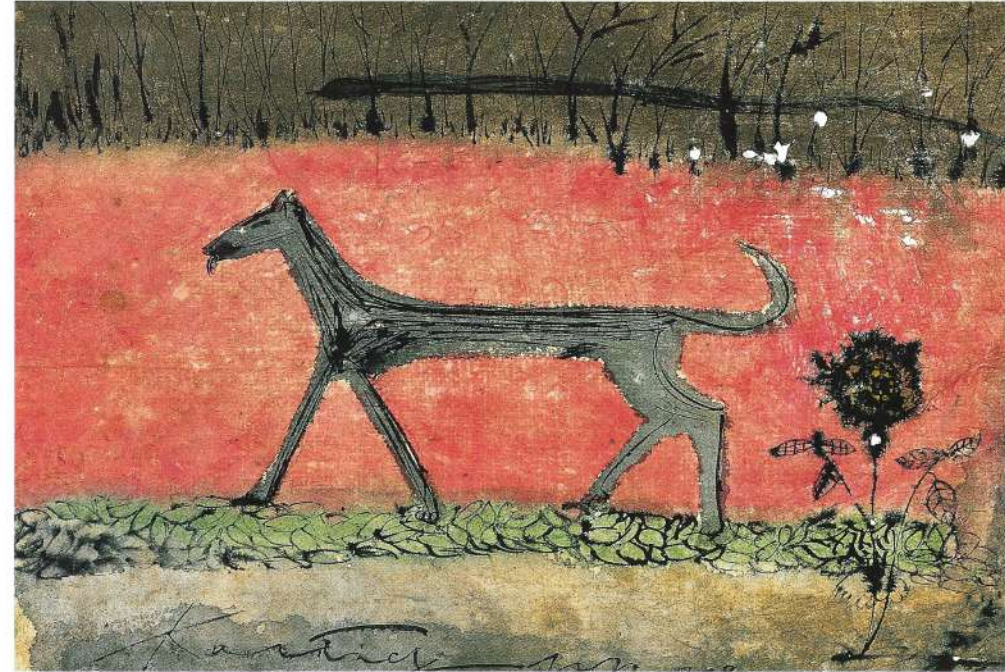
Akbar Padamsee - Metascape, oil on canvas, 122 x 173 cm, 1972



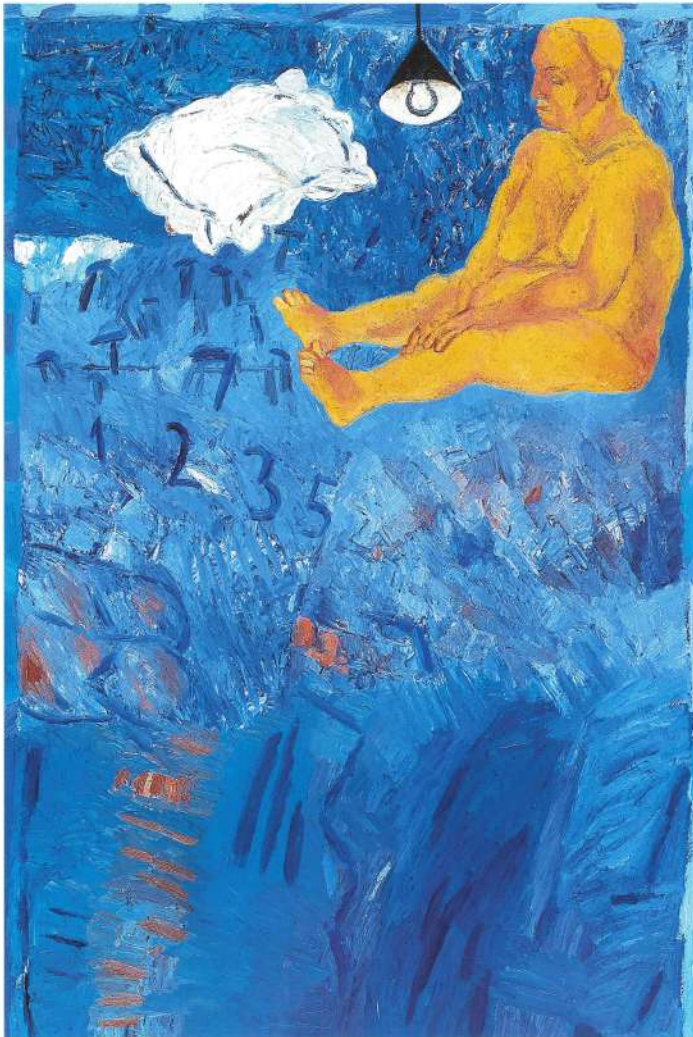
Satish Gujral - "Rebel", mixed media on canvas, 85cm x 70cm



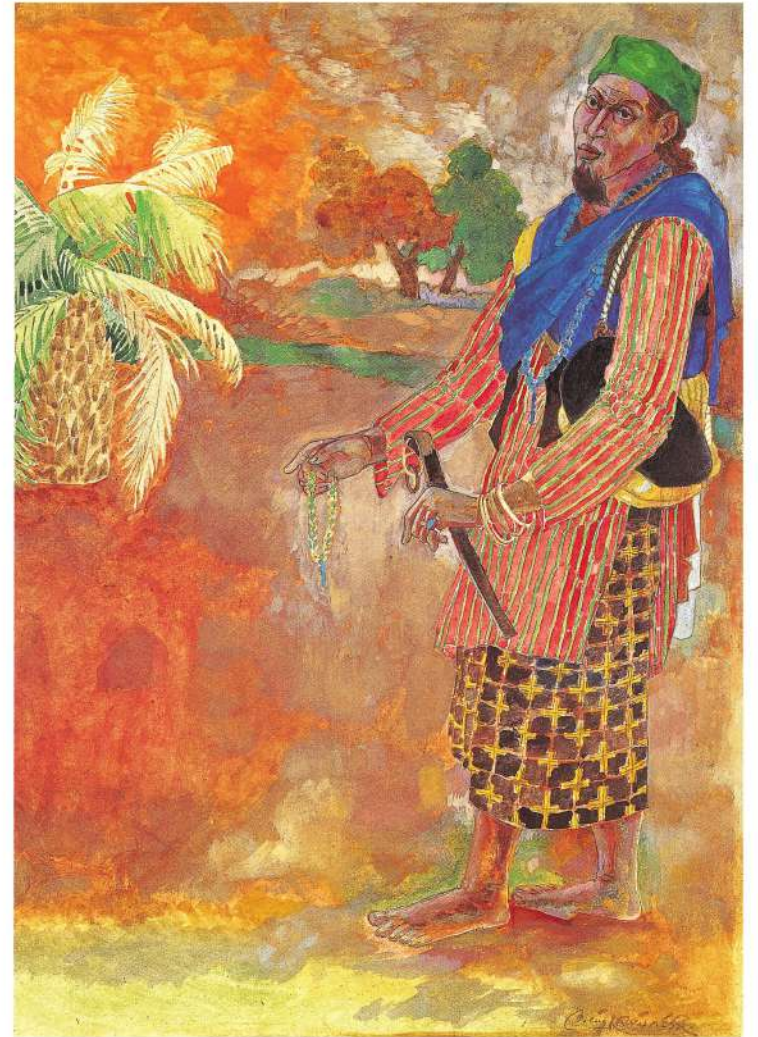
Ram Kumar - "Untitled", chinese ink and wax on paper, 56 cm x 72 cm



Kartick Chander Pyne - "Dog", ink & water colour on paper, 34 x 50 cm, 1958



Arpita Singh - "Untitled", oil on canvas, 177.2 x 118.1 cm, 1995



Laxma Goud - "Untitled", water colour and body colour on paper, 34.9 x 25.4 cm



Jogen Choudhry - "Reminiscence of a Dream", pen & ink and water colour on paper, 45 x 60 cm, 1969



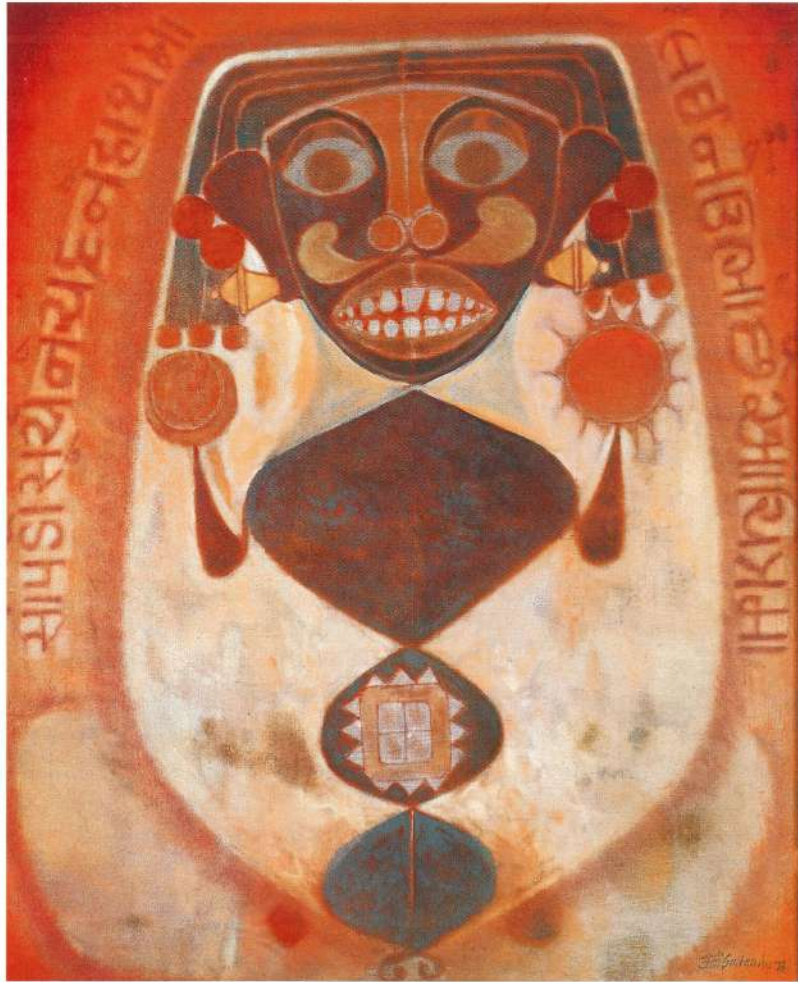
Rajendra Dhawan - "Untitled", oil on canvas, 69.9 x 99.1 cm



F.N. Souza - "Table Still Life", oil on canvas, 81 x 96.5 cm, 1963



Gulam Mohammed Sheikh - "Still life", charcoal on paper, 55 x 75 cm, 1993



J. Sultan Ali - "Nag with sun and moon", oil on canvas, 84 x 68 cm, 1975



Tyeb Mehta - "Maheshasura", oil on canvas, 150 x 120 cm, 1995



Bikas Bhattacharjee - "Ceremony", mixed media on paper, 89.5 x 119.4 cm, 1992



Krishen Khanna - "Game I", crayon on paper, 44.5 x 62.5 cm, 1971



Ganesh Haloi - "Untitled", tempera on paper, 37 x 46 cm, 1992



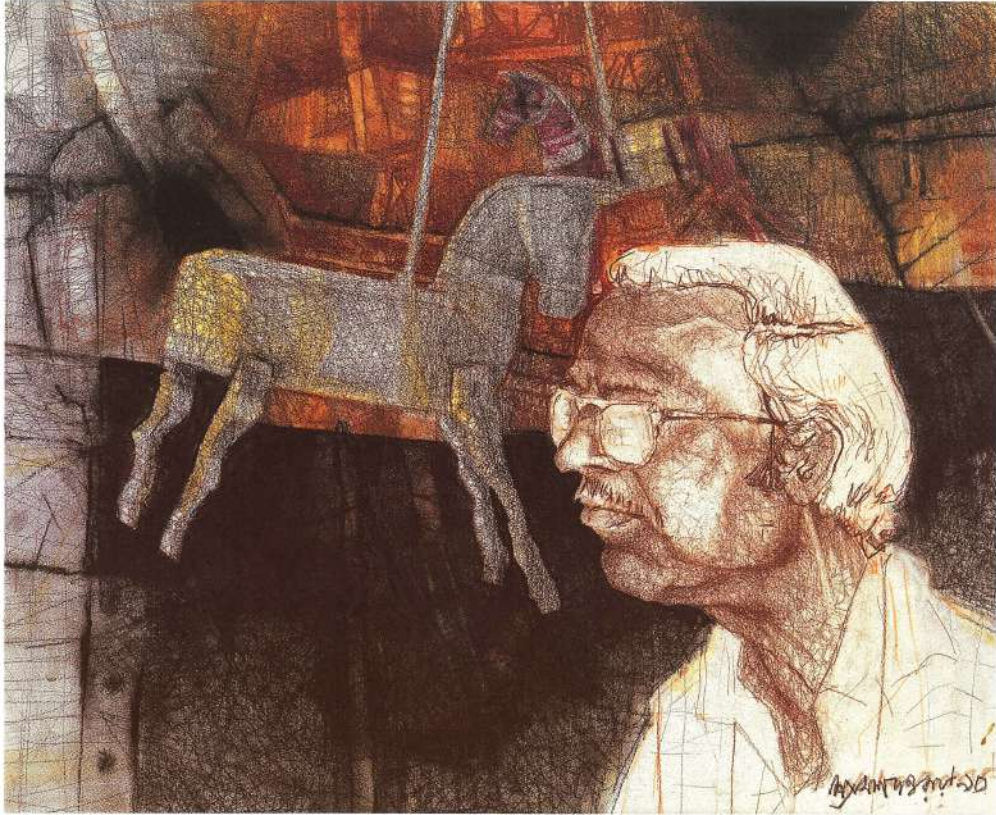
H.A. Gade - "Landscape", oil on canvas, 61 x 80 cm, 1973



Rasik Durga Shankar Raval - "Lovers", acrylic on card, 121.3 cm x 44.5 cm



M.F. Husain - "Untitled", gouache on card, 41.9 x 20.3 cm



Shyamal Dutta Roy - "Untitled", mixed media, 52.1 x 63.5 cm, 1990



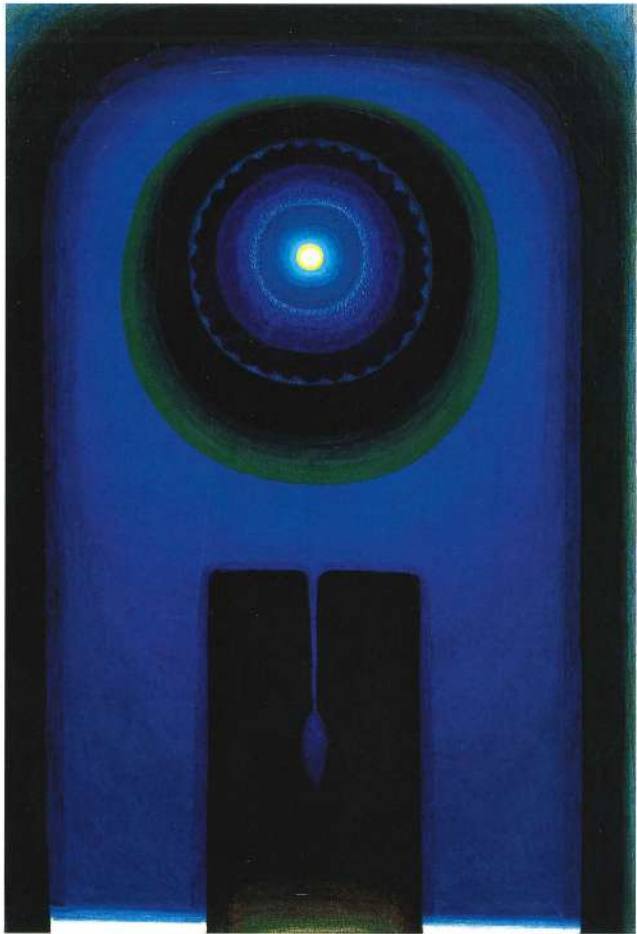
Ganesh Pyne - "Teeth", tempera on canvas, 34.5 x 45 cm, 1978



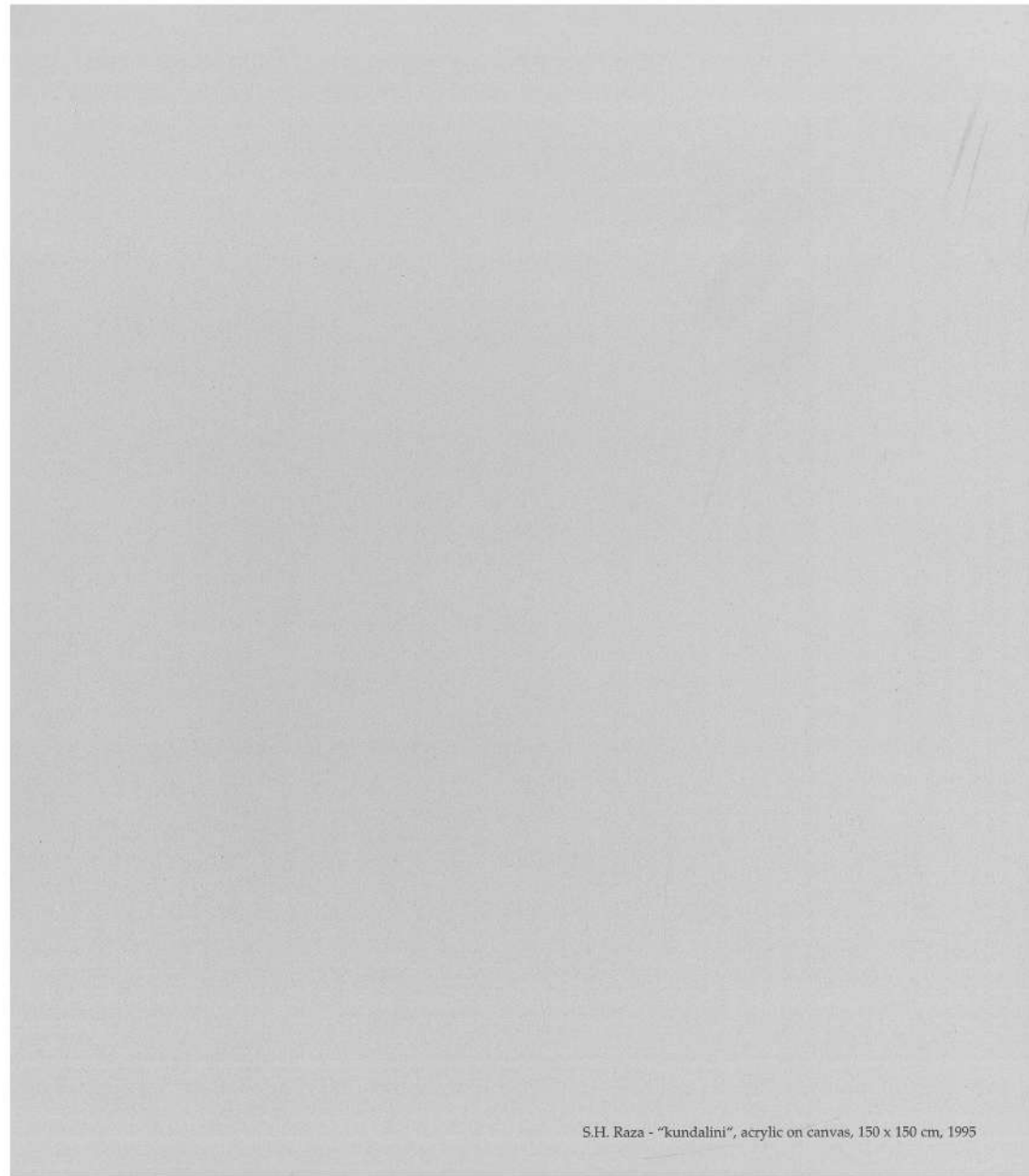
Jagdish Swaminathan - "Untitled", oil on canvas, 116 x 171.5 cm, 1993



Manjit Bawa - "Untitled", oil on canvas, 147 x 64 cm, 1992



Biren De - "July '93", oil on canvas 117 x 81.3 cm, 1993



S.H. Raza - "kundalini", acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm, 1995

