

Modern Indian Art

With the advent of the British, a genre of painting known as the 'Company style' – an offspring of Indo-European paintings appeared. However this was short-lived, and with the upsurge of patriotism, Indian art developed in new direction.

Art during the rule of the British was influenced by the new emerging social consciousness. Along with the revival of interest In ancient Indian history & the ancient Sanskrit texts, there came a new awakening of interest in a new style of art in the 19th century. Indian artists wanted a fusion of traditional Indian subjects using European techniques.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

The Nobel laureate transformed his lack of formal training in art into an advantage, producing more than 2500 works of art within a decade. Over 1500 of them are preserved in Viswa-Bharati, Shantiniketan. Evidently, in his quest for newer forms of expression in terms of line, form and colour, **Tagore** attempted to do something different from what he did in his literary works. If he sought peace and enlightenment in his songs, he was wont to explore darkness and mystery in his drawings. Dark creatures and haunting landscapes belonging to a primordial and marvellous world, which comprised **Tagore's** works at once puzzled and thrilled the Indian art lovers and connoisseurs. With the passage of time, critics and art lovers discovered in these outpourings of his fanciful mind, a more modern and disquieting Tagore than they saw elsewhere.



One of Raja Ravi Varma's beautiful women

Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906) - He was an Indian painter who achieved recognition for his depiction of scenes from the epics of the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Raja Ravi Varma became famous after he won an award for an exhibition of his paintings at Vienna in 1873. He often modelled female deities of the Hindu pantheon, on the beautiful and attractive women he saw around him. Ravi Varma is particularly noted for his paintings depicting episodes from the story of *Dushyanta and Shakuntala*, *Nala and Damayanti*, from the Mahabharata. His paintings are considered to be among the best examples of the fusion of Indian traditions with the techniques of European academic art.

The Bengal School was a highly influential style of art that flourished in India during the British rule in the early 20th century. It was associated with Indian nationalism, but was also promoted and supported by many British arts administrators.

The Bengal school arose as an *avant garde* and nationalist movement reacting against the academic art styles previously promoted in India, both by Indian artists such as Ravi Varma and in British art schools. Inspired by the influence of Indian spiritualism in the West, a British art teacher **Ernest Binfield Havel** attempted to reform the teaching methods at the Calcutta School of Art by encouraging students to imitate Mughal miniatures. **Havel** was supported in his mission by the artist **Abanindranath Tagore** (1871- 1951), a nephew of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. Abanindranath painted a number of works influenced by Mughal art, a style that he and Havel believed to be expressive of India's distinct spiritual qualities, as opposed to the "materialism" of the West. Tagore believed that Western art was "materialistic" in character, and that India needed to return to its own traditions in order to recover spiritual values.



Bharat Mata – Abanindranath Tagore's work

Abanindranath began to incorporate elements of Chinese and Japanese calligraphic traditions into his art, seeking to construct a model for a modern pan-Asian artistic tradition which would merge the common aspects of Eastern spiritual and artistic culture. **Abanindranth's** best-known painting, *Bharat Mata* (mother India), depicted a young woman, portrayed with four arms in the manner of Hindu deities, holding objects symbolic of India's national aspirations.

Mention must be made of two other legendary artists who were inextricably linked with the **Bengal school of Art**. The works of **Jamini Roy** (1887-1972) are among the most recognizable of Indian paintings. Roy was a very important Indian artist of the 20th century. His works have since been declared as national treasures of India and are gaining international acclaim as well. One can see the considerable influence of Bengali tradition in his works, even when the portrayal is of European saints. His painting represented as much a revival of folk art as a rebellion against the delicate drawing and hazy colors of the Bengal school.

Nandalal Bose (1882-1966) was a luminary on the horizon of Indian art. A prolific artist, he worked dexterously in diverse media - water colour, wash, tempera, wood-cut, lithograph, dry-point, pencil-sketch, pastel work, batik

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Cultural Calendar for July 2007

July 10

Film: Akele Hum Akele Tum
Language: Hindi
Directed by: Mansoor Khan
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs

July 13

Film: Aashiq
Language: Hindi
Directed by: Indra Kumar
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs

July 18

Lecture – The Indian connection in Kandyan dancing By Mr. Srilal Perera, past pupil of Chitrasena Kalayathanaya
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00 p.m.

July 20

Tabla Recital by Mr. Peshala Manoj,
Bhatkhande Music University, Lucknow, India
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00 p.m.

July 23

Violin Recital by Mr. Ruwin Rangeeth Dias
Assistant Lecturer, University of Kelaniya
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00 p.m.

July 25-28

“Kolkata – A city of vintage tune”
An exhibition of paintings By Mr. Nuwan Nalaka, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata
Venue & Time: ICC
Inauguration on 25th at 6.00p.m.
Exhibition dates: 26th to 28th from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00p.m.

(Admission to all programmes is free on first come first served basis)

on cloth, Italian fresco, Jaipuri fresco and Ajanta style fresco. His best works are in wash, pen and ink drawings and fresco. **Bose's** works hover around Hindu religious and mythological themes. In rendering such works as *Umaar Tapasya*, *Sati*, *Natir Puja*, he gave them an ideal classical touch by employing the *Shilpa-Shastra* or canons of Indian art through rhythmic lines, fine stippling, sensitive colours, and multi-perspective. In 1928 Bose rendered a famous *fresco-buono* painting on the wall of Sri Niketan (in Shantiniketan, district Bolpur, West Bengal), which immortalised him.

Gaganendranath Tagore, (1867-1938) painter and art connoisseur was the older sibling of Abanindranath. Initially he received training under a famous contemporary artist Harinarayan Bandyopadhyay to use occidental water colour in painting.



Amrita Shergil's painting

Still later he was influenced by the Japanese painter Yokohama (Okakuru) and Tykan (Taikowan). He brought forth some paintings for Rabindranath's autobiography *Jibansmriti* (1912) wherein strong Japanese influence is visible. By the dint of his hard work, he breathed a fresh lease of life into The Indian Society of Oriental Art established in 1907 in Kolkata. Gaganendranath may be considered the harbinger of modern art in its various dimensions.

Amrita Shergil (1913-41) – It was India and its people that shaped the artistic talent and genius of this incredibly talented painter who was half-Sikh, half-Hungarian . Most of her paintings vividly reflect her love for the country and her response to the life of its people. **Amrita's** paintings were not mere reproductions of what she saw around her but visions born out of the synergy of colour, design and emotion. Perpetually, it was her response to her environment that guided her to create meaningful visions.

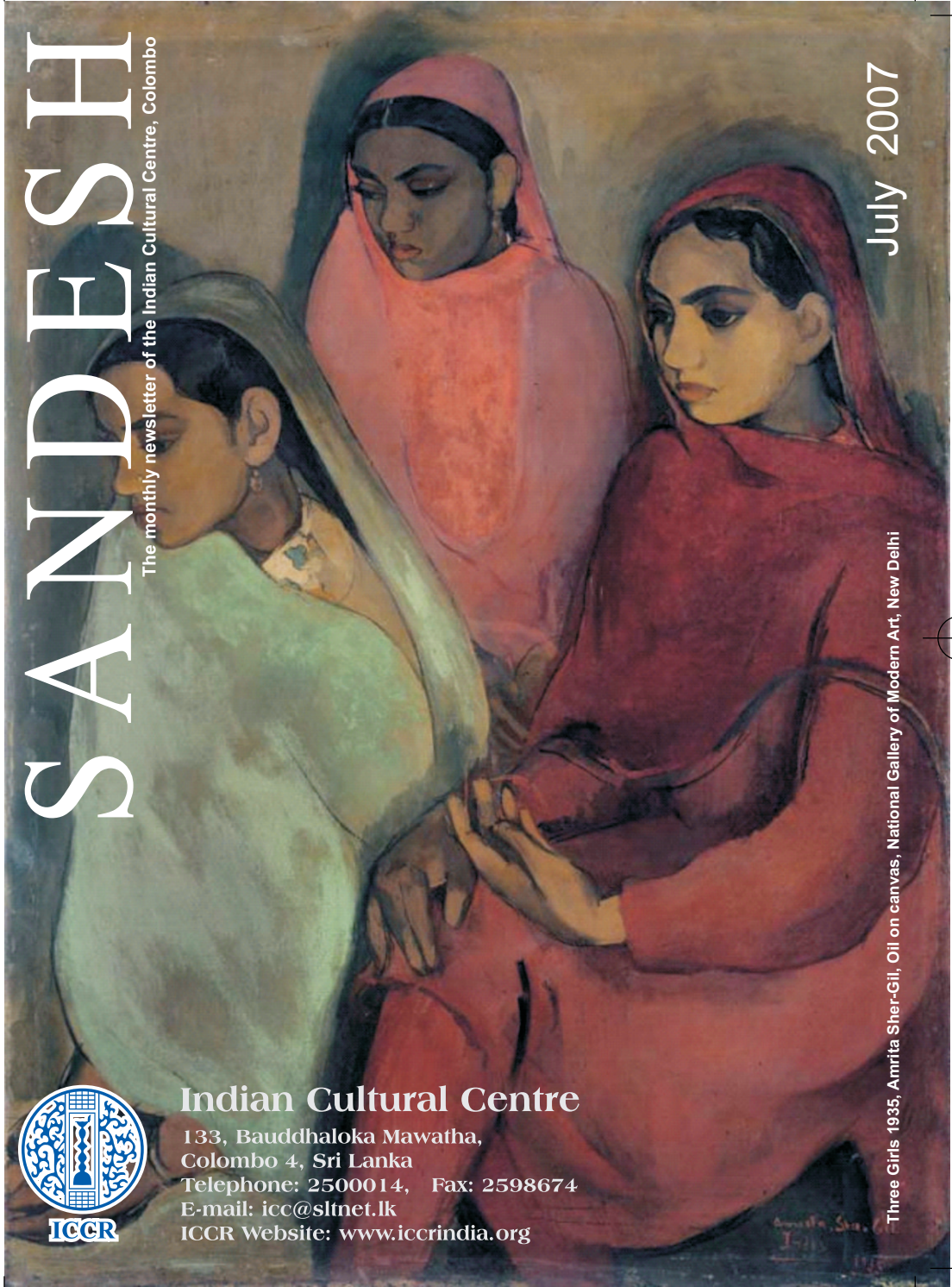
The Bombay Progressives During the 1930s and '40s, a number of communist groups were active in the cultural arena in India. Along with theater professionals and writers, visual artists joined together under the banner of "progressive" and identified with Marxism. In Bombay in 1947, Francis Newton Souza (1924–2002), Maqbool Fida Husain (born 1915), and others formed the Progressive Artists' Group. They had leftist leanings, rejected the nationalist art of the Bengal School, and

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The monthly newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo

Three Girls 1935, Amrita Sher-Gil, Oil on canvas, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

July 2007

Past Events

May 7

Programme to mark the 146th Birth Anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore

The Indian Cultural Centre in association with Tagore Society, Sri Lanka commemorated the birth anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore on 7th May with a programme that brought together several Tagore lovers and Shanthiniketan graduates.

Ms. Nagma Mallick Director of the Centre made the introductory remarks during which she spoke about Gurudev and his relationship with Sri Lanka.

The programme for the evening included a poetry reading session by Mr. Kamal Premadasa, extracts from the Sinhala translation of Gurudev's famous play "The Post Office" read by the translator Mr. Premaranjith Thilakaratne with an introduction in English and a flute recital by the students of Sharadha Kala Niketanaya.

May 30

Bharatha Natyam Recital by the students of Natya Kala Mandir



Students of Natya Kala Mandhir trained by their Guru Kalasuri Vasugy Jegatheeswaran presented a brilliant Bharatha Natyam Recital at the Centre on 30th May. They performed several dance items including a captivating Varnam on Lord Vishnu.

May 23

Ghazal Recital by Mr. Sudath Samarasinghe



Visharad Sudath Samarasinghe enraptured the audience with his beautiful rendition of ragas. He sang around six ghazals and the programme lasted around 1 hour.

May 25

Esraj & Rabindra Sangeet Recital by Mr. Sujeewa Ranasinghe & Mr. Sougatha Dhar Chowdry



Mr. Sujeewa Ranasinghe & Mr. Sougatha Dhar Chowdry captivated the audience with their instrumental & vocal music recital. The performance commenced with the esraj recital by Mr. Sujeewa Ranasinghe, this was followed by Rabindra Sangeeth Recital by Mr. Sougatha Dhar Chowdry, lecturer from Vishva Bharathi University, Shanthi Niketan, India

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New Delhi : HarperCollins,2006,246p.
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New Delhi : Penguin Books,2005,208p.
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World Trade and Development Report 2007 :
Building a Development-Friendly World
Trading System.
Reserch and Information System for
Developing Countries.
New Delhi : Oxford University
Press,2007,132p.
Annual Report.

India : The Next Decade
Ed. Manmohan Malhoutra
New Delhi : Academic Foundation,2006,570p.
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303.4954 IND

Economic Diplomacy
Ed. I.P. Khosla
New Delhi : Konark,2006,268p.
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330.954 ECO

Challenges for Nation Building in a World in
Turmoil
Ed. Subrata Banerjee
Chandigarh : CRRID,2006,464p.
[Haksar Memorial Volume 3]
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Films in July



Akele Hum Akele Tum

A tale of love, music, and fame in classic Bollywood style, Akele Hum Akele Tum stars Aamir Khan and the gorgeous and vibrant Manisha Koirala. Koirala plays Kiran, a student of classical music with big dreams of fame. When she meets Rohit, an aspiring pop singer, she falls deeply in love, despite her competitive nature. But after they marry, Kiran finds that her role as wife and mother has overtaken her own creative dreams, and she becomes depressed by her husband's raw ambition coupled with his neglect of her and her needs. Determined to return to singing, she throws off the chains of being her successful husband's wife and manages to forge a successful career and life of her own
Language: Hindi **Starring:** Aamir Khan, Manisha Koirala, Master Adil Khan **Director:** Mansoor Khan



Aashiq

The "Aashiq" is Chander (Deol), a very helpful, happy-go-lucky, worry-free guy who makes both friends and enemies alike due to his kind and just ways. Enter Pooja (Karisma), the rich heroine who falls for his endearing mannerisms.
Language: Hindi **Director:** Indra Kumar **Starring:** Bobby Deol, Karisma Kapoor, Johny Lever, Rahul Dev

Modern Indian Art .. Contd..

embraced international modern art practices. Over the years, Souza gained international notoriety for his erotic and religious paintings that were informed by a variety of styles, including Expressionism, Surrealism, Cubism, and Primitivism. Husain has also worked in a number of international painting modes; he was exposed to the art of Europeans including Emil Nolde and Oskar Kokoschka through the Progressive Artists' Group. His work, however, retains traces of indigenous traditions; in particular, he has had an ongoing interest in Indian cinema. Husain first supported himself as an artist by painting cinema billboards; more recently, he has directed films and depicted contemporary film stars in his paintings.

Bhabesh Sanyal (1902-2003) - He was the senior most contemporary artist of India who had been involved in the evolution of the Indian art scene from the early twentieth century to the present twenty first century. His contribution in the field of visual art and its promotion, nurturing and encouragement was phenomenal.

Maqbul Fida Hussein (1915) - Though he was born at Pandharpur, Maharashtra, India on September 17 1915, Hussein's early education was in Indore. At age the of 20, Hussain moved to Mumbai and got admitted to the J. J. School of Arts. In 1947 his first exhibition was conducted at the Bombay Art Society where his painting *Sunhara Sansaar* was shown. From 1948 to 1950 there was a series of exhibitions of Hussein's paintings all over India In 1956, his paintings were exhibited in the art galleries of Prague and Zurich In 1966 Hussein was awarded the *Padmashree* by the Government of India. In 1967 he made his first film, *Through the Eyes of A Painter*, which was shown at the Berlin Festival and won a Golden Bear. Husain's most interesting paintings of recent times is the series named after the Bollywood actress Madhuri Dixit, on whom he also made an abstract, slightly controversial film, *"Gajagamini"*.



A painting by
Maqbul Fida Hussein

Paritosh Sen (1918) - One of the pioneers of the Indian Modern Art Movement, Paritosh Sen, along with some of the younger artists in Calcutta, first formed the Calcutta Group in 1943. Widely travelled, he was one of few young Indian artists to have had the opportunity to meet and interact with celebrated international masters like Pablo Picasso and Brancusi. These memorable experiences left an abiding influence on Sen's paintings. A figurative painter, he uses bold lines against a two-dimensional picture plane to express his views on contemporary life.

Manu Parekh (1939) -A versatile personality with activities ranging from stage acting to stage designing to handicrafts & handlooms to his credit, this contemporary artist has sought to transmute his feelings about the pain and anguish in today's world in a series of expressionistic images through his canvases.

Anjolie Ela Menon (1940) - One of India's most celebrated painters, Anjali has created a body of work of great beauty and depth over the last four decades. Her paintings reveal a deep sensibility, profoundly individual in perception, yet diverse in its sympathies: often Indian in subject, yet dwelling in an undefined territory.

Jatin Das (1941) may be hailed as a master of expression. His single largest preoccupation is with the human figure. In fact it is his major obsession, which consumes him totally and directs his irrepressible creative energies, infusing his works with a pervasive dynamism.
Paresh Maity (1965) - Paresh started out as a painter in the academic style, but over the years veered away towards abstraction. First came the watercolour drawings of the Bengal village (his native place) that caught the momentary interplay of light and shade and brought simple everyday objects to the forefront. This was followed by the landscapes - from a tiny rain swept paddy field to a wall sized evocation of a boat bobbing in the high seas. Gradually Paresh started breaking lines and redefining structures. Paresh's talent as a painter lies in his ability to internalise the Indian experience and express it in a style which is delightfully refreshing. One could very well describe him as a 'romantic' painter who paints not only from his head but also from his heart.

Indian art has continued to grow and conquer new spaces in the international art scene. Art in India was always held in high esteem. Therefore, its radiant joy and beauty cannot be missed out in everyday life.

Source: Website