Religare Art Gallery: The Decorated Cow / Seema Bawa

Seema Bawa curates a Solo Show of Paintings and Sculptures by Sidharth



It was an event to which the whole city was making a bee line. Art lovers, critics, artists, curators – they were all there. And why not. An artist and a Curator were resurfacing after a long time.

Sidharth, the mystic artist returns to the public gaze after a gap of some years with his much anticipated show, The Decorated Cow, curated by StageBuzz's art columnist Seema Bawa and presented by Religare arts.i from March 13th to April 13th at the Religare arts.i gallery.

For this show Sidharth has executed paintings, drawings and sculptures based on the continuum of the traditional and contemporary relationship of human beings with, India's sacred animal, the cow. On one hand the works view the cow in mythological, historical and socio-religious contexts where

the Bull and the Cow are revered, adored and granted an intimate space within the household. On the other side, the post modern man has removed the cow from this space and created a disjuncture not only with the cow but the ecology and the world of nature she represents.

Kamadhenu, Surabhi, Nandi-symbols of prosperity and joy; the pastoral pleasures of Krishna's cow; the cow in nature; the cow lost in the urban jungle, wandering on heaps of rubbish; the cow as the source of dairy and meat products, pumped full of chemical enhancers and pumped out of milk- all wander in the Sidharth's canvases and consciousness.

The show thus, is a powerful commentary on the consumerist society and its greedy, all devouring need for material comforts. In the process the human is encroaching on the space of fellow inhabitants on earth, leading not only to an ecological disaster but to a dislocation of the human from traditional, philosophical and ethical moorings. The show interrogates this dislocation that has left the cow desacralised, abandoned and exploited.

This process has been highlighted by the comments of writers, such as Aman Nath, Vandana Shiva, Anirudh Chari, Kishore Singh, K Bikram Singh among others, on the cow in Sidharth's art in the catalogue and the show. Thus, there are multiple voices dialoguing with the image created by one artist from varied vantage points, be these anthropological, ecological or cultural.

The colours in the paintings are fresh and luminescent. Sidharth has an intense and personal relationship with these colours, which is not surprising given that he makes his own colours using mineral and plant sources. The sculptures in the show provide a vital focal point given their three dimensionality and versatility in terms of size and materials used, ranging from marble, cowries to transparent fiber glass. The contemporary and mystical concerns centered on the cow

have been amplified in a short film and music composed by the artist that will accompany the exhibition.

Sidharth’s art while deeply rooted in philosophic tradition contends with modernity in terms of tradition speaking to contemporary concerns.The artist, as an ecologue and cultural conservationist, dialogues with the contemporary world using the cow as a metaphor; cow is the projection of human thought, cow is a symbol of human psyche, cow is earth- the nature out there which man seeks to bend to his will.



Malika Ahluwalia ‘ARTiculate2’

Malika Ahluwalia is showcasing her works for the third time. She is a young artist based in Delhi, who has studied art under her mother Illoosh Judge Ahluwalia, a renowned artist. The two artists are exhibiting their works together in an exhibition titled ‘ARTiculate2’ at Arpana Art Gallery near

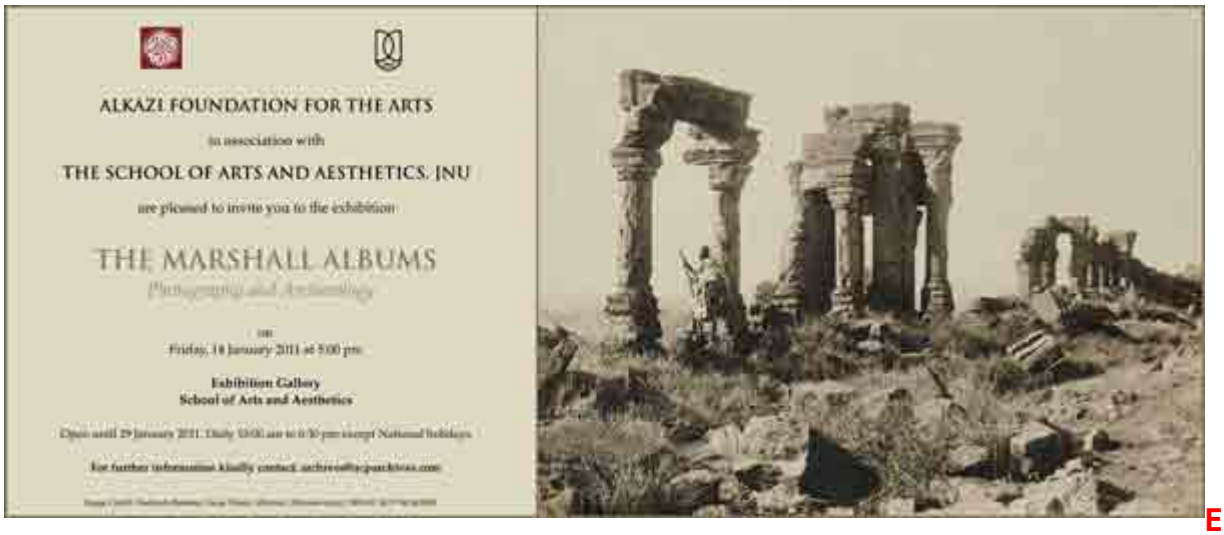
Siri Fort Auditorium. Both the artists use only a palette knife for their work, no brush is used, and the medium is oil on canvas.

Malika studied at Sanskriti School in New Delhi and completed her graduate degree in Statistics from Lady Shri Ram College. Her other interests are Horse riding and reading. She is an animal lover and part of the proceeds of this exhibition will go to an animal rescue centre namely The Asswin Project (for donkeys, horses and cattle).

In the six years since her first show Malika has progressed and evolved as a painter and critics and art aficionados have commented favourably on her works and realistic style. Among the personalities who have appreciated her works are the late Khushwant Singh, the late Vasant Sathe, Dr Farooq Abdullah, art critic Suneet Chopra, author Uma Vasudev and columnist Jug Suraiya to name a few.



Exhibition at JNU – The Marshall Albums



E-Invite

The Marshall Albums: Photography and Archaeology on **14th January**, Friday, **5:00 pm** at the **Exhibition Gallery, School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU**.(E-invite attached).

There will be an introductory talk on the exhibition by Akshaya Tankha and Joyoti Roy at 5:15 pm.

About the exhibition:

One of the most important collections in the Alkazi Collection of Photography, ***The Marshall Albums*** *displays images taken by Sir John Marshall and the ASI during his service as its first Director General between 1902 and 1928. The images reflect his keen interest in photography as a tool for successful conservation campaigns* ***a****nd highlight a unique process, which helped set important trends and standards in photography for archaeological scholarship in the formative years of the ASI.*

The exhibition is drawn from a publication by the same name, edited by Dr. Sudeshna Guha, which explores the many discoveries and interpretations of Indian history that emerged through archaeological fieldwork. While maintaining focus on Marshall's contributions to South Asian archaeology, the themes presented include the rise of archaeology as an authoritative element for historical scholarship during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the politics and contestations involved in the archaeological preservation of

monuments and historical landscapes, and the relationship between photography and archaeology.

The exhibition aims to present reflexive histories of an investigative technique that developed into a disciplinary science within British India.

Renowned French Photographer To Exhibit True, Untainted-By-Technology Works A BANG PR REPORT



Art never ages, if it is expressed with truth and conviction. And even the entry of newer forms of art or technology cannot dilute the magic of purity that emerges from true art.

The world-renowned French photographer Bernard Faucon, who gave up photography in 1995 because he was 'convinced that it was over and that this period in the history of photography to which I had subscribed, "photographic staging" or "photographic settings" had come to an end.' He also felt that 'it was the swansong of photography, the last stage before the reign of pure, digital advertising images. It was a time when one still believed sufficiently in the power of truth of photography, when one could permit oneself the luxury of creating "true fiction". However I do not disown anything, either the images, or the period in which they were created, or even the poetry which is my own and that I will continue to express in other ways.'

The works of this cameraman are being presented in a special exhibition in the capital by Alliance Française de Delhi and the French Embassy to showcase his retrospective selection photographs in Galerie Romain Rolland. The exhibition will open on 3 February and continue till 12 February.

About his exhibition in India, he says: "What can I say about my first individual exhibition in India and my first journey there? I feel apprehensive! I, who have been traveling ceaselessly, especially all around this huge country without having ever dared to enter, fearful of facing a country that is far too big, far too complex and far too beautiful!"

The best of Bernard Faucon is being displayed in a retrospective collection of photographs over the 20 years and is divided into eight sections: "Summer Holidays" (1976-1981); "Probable development of time" (1981-1984); "The Chambers of Love" (1984-1987); "The Chambers of Gold" (1987-1989); "Idols and sacrifices" (1989-1991); "The Writings" (1991-1992); "The End of the image" (1993-1995); and "The Happiest Day of my

Youth” (1997-2000).

Despite his pessimism, in the last phase he invited young girls and boys from more than 20 countries to stage this happiest day.

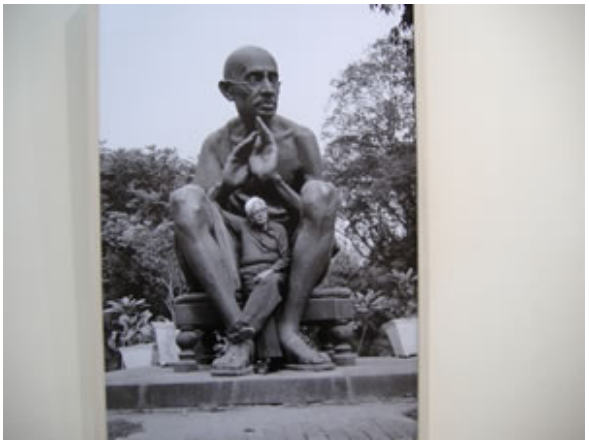
Bernard was born in 1950 in Provence. After philosophic and theological studies, he began producing his photographic work in 1976 and stopped voluntarily in 1995.

Over the period of 25 years, Bernard has shown in nearly 250 solo exhibitions and as many group shows, from Leo Castelli in New York City to Yvon Lambert in Paris, in large museums as well as small institutions. In 1989, he received the French National Prize for Photography.

Bernard is a singular artist; his work is poetic, metaphysical and highly personal. Diverse people are inspired from it, from the most classic and orthodox in the photographic world to avant-garde artists, as well as novelist, directors, psychoanalysts, Japanese fashion designers.



Bioscope – Ram Rahman's photo exhibition – A REVIEW by Divya Raina



In Mahatma Gandhi's lap – Bhupek Khakkar as seen by Ram Rehman

When does one become a tourist of reality? Can photography explain man to man? It was a famous photographer who once said; "A photograph is a secret about a secret…the more it tells you the less you know". These thoughts came to mind while visiting Ram Rahman's recent photo exhibition called Bioscope, held at the Rabindra Bhawan Gallery in New Delhi recently. From the wonderfully intimate collage mounted at the beginning of the exhibition; featuring Ram's famous parents, dancer Indrani Rahman and architect father Habib Rahman, it felt like an instantaneous view of the entire trajectory of Ram's life from infancy onwards.

The exhibition consists mostly of black and white photographs, with compelling images and portraits of both the well-known and not- so –well- known, taken at various periods in this extraordinarily gifted and socially committed designer and photographer. Ram's forte is in the capturing of the moment and freezing it in time. The overhead view of Safdar Hashmis funeral, for instance expresses the horror and sense of solidarity at this most ghastly slaughter of an amazing life.

Also, Ram revels in the relationship between foreground and subject and there is generally an extraordinarily fraught tension between the two as can be seen in the accompanying picture of painter Bhupen Khaker in the lap of Gandhi.

Whether Ram has taken pictures of left- liberal friends and SAHMAT colleagues, or pictures of Rajeev Sethi and other "culture-czars " and "czarinas" or of wrestlers or of inanimate figures, dummies, posters and graffiti, everything is touched with a faintly self-mocking irony. Finally, these pictures at the exhibition, tell us more about the photographer himself, his concerns and ultimately his "ethics of seeing".

Kanchan Chander: A Woman Artist of Vision by Seema Bawa





Kanchan Chandar Oil on Canvas

While most art is influenced by the personal history of its creator, Kanchan Chander's paintings *are* her personal history; from student to artist to hopefully married and then joyful mother to estranged wife and then a single mother. The three decades of her paintings reflect and reinforce these states, and are emotively and expressively explored through her art which is not only visual but experiential.

In her early sketches, the impact of a brother's death on her and her family are delved into. In *Drifting Apart* two female figures, her mother and she, cling to one another in shared grief while the male figure, the father, stands alone masking his sorrow.

The angst emerges again in her etching *Expression II*, a feminine interpretation of Edward Munch's *Scream*. The contorted female face with a wide gaping mouth from which a silent eternal scream seems to be emerging is a very powerful image that is a testimony to Kanchan's early potential.

In the first decade of her artistic journey she concentrated on print making especially etchings, lithographs and woodcuts. It is in the latter she uses bold, almost rough strokes to match the thematic of primitive primordial relationships and identities. Using archetypes from African and Polynesian tribes, she has posed a couple where the female figure stands with her legs crossed while the man stands in a hieratic pose, neither looking at each other, emphasizing an estrangement despite the intimacy of nudity.

During the period of her estrangement from her husband she painted on window, frames doors and furniture, which came out from her parental house (which was being rebuild) where she had to move in. As if painting on the dismembered utensils of her life and through this process reassembling her "self" under a dramatic new aegis.

Her signature work that emerge out of her re-assertive new female "self" are voluptuous female torsos. Sensual, confident and centered these are projected in bright feminine colors such as pink orange royal blue. Over a period of time she has experimented with ornamenting the torsos with so called feminine accessories such as sequins, beads, gold and silver foil; unapologetically emphasizing and celebrating the ornamental, alamkara and also the physicality associated with womanhood. In contrast the relatively later male torso, Male/Nail are superimposed with symbols of masculine power and violence such as hammers, saws, scissors and knives.

Simultaneously she used the iconic symbolism of Indian Goddesses in her paintings such as *Durga and Me* in which she has juxtaposed the three eyed dark Goddess, with a red tongue hanging out seated on a stylized lion, with various profane motifs of masculinity.

During the next period came her series, *Pallav's world*, which she painted with mixed media on takhtis representing the child's world of school, play and homework. The use of motifs

such as alphabets, kitschy popular heroes and boyhood ideals such as the cartoon character of He Man, emphasize the environment in which the mother and child dwell.

In her recent works two thematic trends are obvious. The first continues from her earlier *Vatsalya* series through which she had expressed the bonding between the single mother and child; now the roles seem reversed in *What's your POA, MAA* where the child standing behind her seated self portrayal seems a young adult, protecting her. The second trend is a more settled, peaceful portrayal of flowers and Buddha's head, with of course some hint of disturbance, with an overall coming to terms with life, desire and expectations.

The show significantly highlights the works of a woman-artist who is comfortable and indeed assertive of this dual identity. Though she and indeed her work are not radically feminist with a rejection of all that is male or seeking to glorify only the female, there is a refreshing and unapologetic delving into feminine, domestic and maternal concerns and sensibilities in her art.