

An abstract painting by Lancelot Ribeiro, featuring a central figure rendered in vibrant, organic shapes. The figure is composed of various colors including yellow, green, blue, and purple, set against a dark, textured background. The overall style is expressive and gestural, with thick brushstrokes and a sense of movement.

# LANCELOT RIBEIRO

An Indian Painter  
in Hampstead

Grosvenor  
Gallery

**Burgh House and  
Hampstead Museum**  
New End Square  
London NW3 1LT  
+44 (0)20 7431 0144  
info@burghhouse.org.uk  
burghhouse.org.uk

**Grosvenor Gallery**  
35 Bury Street  
London SW1Y 6AU  
+44 (0)20 7484 7979  
art@grosvenorgallery.com  
grosvenorgallery.com

# **LANCELOT RIBEIRO**

**An Indian Painter  
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**Burgh House and  
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**14–16 June 2023  
17 June 2023 Closed  
18 June 2023**

**Grosvenor  
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# LANCELOT RIBEIRO

## An Indian Painter in Hampstead

The Indian Expressionist painter, Lanceloté José Belarmino Ribeiro, was born in Bombay (Mumbai) in 1933 where he lived with his parents, artist-brother, FN Souza and sister, Marina. His childhood was split between the then Portuguese colony of Goa and pre-Independent Bombay.

The Bombay of Ribeiro's childhood was vibrant, cosmopolitan, and thriving in the arts, culture and sciences which would inevitably nurture his lifelong interests. His artistic temperament inevitably flourished in a place where he had witnessed his brother's career emerge. The family home would also welcome in artists, writers, and poets, including many of Souza's circle of artists and friends.

In 1950, aged sixteen, he left for Britain and came to live with his brother in London's Chalk Farm. He had been sent to study accountancy but finding he 'could not bear it', soon started pursuing creative interests.

He studied life drawing at Saint Martin's School of Art, jewellery manufacture and design and wrote his first poems. Travelling to the Continent, he was also painting. However, compulsory National Service – in force in Britain at the time – soon caught up with him and in 1954 placed him into the Royal Air Force. Securing compassionate leave in 1955, he returned to India. He was in his early twenties and had begun working in the life insurance business. He was, however, still writing and had aspirations of becoming a published poet.

His early catalogues indicate that he started painting professionally in 1958 but it was his first solo exhibition at the Bombay Artist Aid Centre in 1961 which launched his career as a painter. It won him a mural commission from Tata for their offices and attracted other prominent corporate patrons and collector interest. This included the trio of Jewish émigrés who had helped develop India's nascent modern art scene – Rudi von Leyden, Walter Langhammer and Emanuel Schlesinger, who had escaped Europe's Holocaust.



Arts and Events review by Nissim Ezekiel  
of Ribeiro's debut exhibition, 1961

His 1962 showing at the Kunika Art Centre in Delhi was extensively reviewed with several drawing on Ribeiro's visual references to Goa. Its Director, Richard Bartholomew, observed:

*'The Church form is cardinal in Ribeiro's sense of structure. This may be because Ribeiro is Goan and Christian ... All these buildings - I have the feeling - are sanctuaries of silence. There is neither ghost nor God nor the breaker of bread... The warm world of colour reflected into each other, the peopleless streets, the lone lamp, the stairways that never really search or stretch into the interior - all this is a vivid prelude to something powerful to come hereafter.'*

— **Richard Bartholomew - Director, Kunika Art Centre, 1962.**

Another noted it was:

*'... one of the showpieces recently visited by Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy ... with a blazing display of 23 oils which he produced within a three-month stay in the capital ... Basilica which has been admired by many artists and art critics, including Hussain, as a crystallization of his experience in Old Goa, whose enclave of churches left a deep impression on him. The great liturgical activity there held him spellbound.'*

— **'Artist of Promise', Dr J.P. Correa's review of Ribeiro's Kunika exhibition**

The landscape and Roman Catholic heritage of Old Portuguese Goa would leave a unique imprint on Ribeiro's visual language and artistic consciousness. His icon-like heads – frequently of Christ, bishops, enthroned kings or saints – drew from the Christian tradition.



Studio shot of Untitled (Enthroned King) c.1966

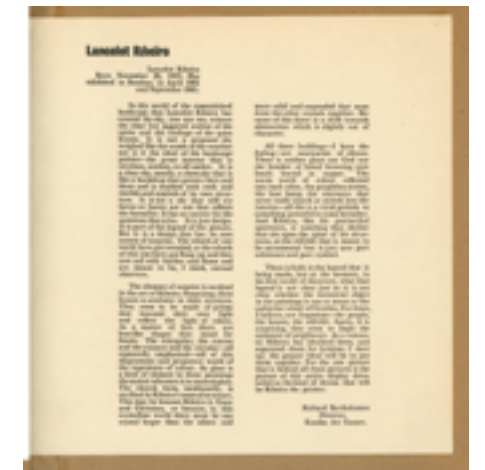
Invitation for Ribeiro's 1962 Kunika exhibition



Ribeiro's studio photograph of *Head in Meditation* exhibited at Kunika in 1962



Kunika catalogue for Ribeiro's 1962 exhibition with Richard Bartholomew's foreword





By the close of 1962, before his permanent move to Britain, he had held ten solo and group shows – including *Ten Indian Painters*, an exhibition sponsored by the Indian Writers Association and UNESCO which toured cities across India, North America and Europe.

In 1972, describing his early aesthetic influences, Ribeiro explained:

*'My first influences were the Churches and Statuary of the Catholic Church in Goa along with the symbolic ritual that went with it ... The other and perhaps the strongest influence were the paintings of my brother 10 years senior ... In early 65 there was a positive move to break from these first influences and work toward a more unified and organic style as opposed to the structural and linear aspect...'*

Within a few years of moving to London, he had established his studio at 41 Belsize Park Gardens and exhibited in several Hampstead and West End galleries of the day.

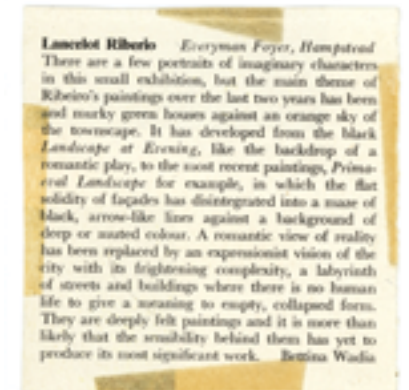
His patron, Patrick Boylan (Professor Emeritus and former Director of Museums and Art Galleries, Leicestershire), revealed that as a 'restless young painter', Ribeiro sought a new material that would allow him to produce at speed. Soon he saw potential in the medium of polyvinyl acetate (PVA) – a product which was widely used in the adhesives and paper starch industries and was just beginning to be introduced for commercial household paints.

With guidance from companies such as ICI, Courtaulds, Magros and Ciba-Geigy, he began exploring colouring and pigmentation. Combining experimental mixes of conventional oil paints, high dispersal synthetic dyes and PVA, he conducted 'several hundred' experiments on hardboard, wood, plywood, canvas and paper.

This new medium triggered a new phase of abstraction. The familiar basilicas and architectural forms were still present, paying homage to his Goan roots, but were reconstructed to evoke a sense of movement, dissolving into playful and lyrical scenes. From a conservation perspective, these steps ensured the work would be aesthetically and structurally sound well over half a century on.



Left and right: *Untitled (Townscapes)*, 1964.  
Photographs by Justin Piperger



Ribeiro's studio, 41 Belsize Park Gardens,  
c.1964

Successive and deliberate transformations in Ribeiro's depiction of 'Heads' emerged too. In the initial phase – he explained talking through the progression of his work - the dominant medium was PVA rather than oils, a reference to the PVA and synthetic dye colorations he had sought to create. This paved the way for a proliferation of heads he collectively grouped under the 'Psychedelic Man Series':

*'From here on i.e., 66 to 68 the paintings appear to have fully absorbed this root or tuber like form which was to be the nucleus on which all the work since 1965 was based'.*

It was at this point that he said 'with reluctance that I stopped painting at this point ... and spent 6 months in India'. He would however exhibit several heads from this period alongside other works back in Goa at the Institute Menezes Braganza in 1969. Although the exhibition was a fleeting three-days, it was widely reviewed.

*'The biomorphic head-studies ... with their undertones of surrealism are perhaps a commentary on the predicament of man today and suggest a progression and regression as best seen perhaps in Computer (sic.) Man ...'*



Studio shot of the unfinished *Drugged Man* (*Psychedelic Man Series*), c.1967





A prolific and inquisitive individual, Ribeiro's prodigious output was wide-ranging and innately experimental in medium, style and form. Throughout his career, he never restricted himself to a particular style, medium or content. In 1972 at his Commonwealth Institute talk, he reflected on the impulses which drove his work, a sentiment that could equally be used to convey a lifelong philosophy:

*'I could go on endlessly to produce painting after painting – interesting perhaps – but somewhat meaningless and self-plagiarising.'*

— Marsha Ribeiro, June 2023



Detail of *Computed Man*, 1968, exhibited at the Institute Menezes Braganza, Goa in 1969 (Photograph by Justin Piperger)





1.

*Untitled (Townscape),*  
1964

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro 64'  
upper right

Oil and polyvinyl acetate  
on paper laid on board

18.5 x 25.2 cm  
7 1/4 x 9 7/8 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist





2.

*Untitled (Townscape),*  
1964

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro 64'  
upper right

Oil, polyvinyl acetate and  
collage on paper

20 x 29 cm  
7 7/8 x 11 3/8 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist





3.

*Untitled (Townscape),*  
1964

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro 64'  
upper centre

Oil and polyvinyl  
acetate on paper

23.5 x 31 cm  
9 1/4 x 12 1/4 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist





4.

*Head in Meditation*,  
1962

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro 62'  
lower left

Oil and polyvinyl acetate on board

121 x 43 cm  
47 5/8 x 16 7/8 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist

**Exhibitions**

Kunika Art Centre, New Delhi, 1962,  
No. 19

**Literature**

Buckman, David, Lancelot Ribeiro,  
An Artist in India and Europe,  
Francis Boutle, London, 2014, p. 41

*Head in Meditation* listed in the  
Kunika exhibition catalogue (no. 4)

**Kunika** Centre for the Contemporary Arts  
CENTRAL GOVT. INDUSTRIES CORPORATION  
Sector-15, Connaught Place  
New Delhi, 110 048, India

**CATALOGUE**

NO.	TITLE	ARTIST	PRICE
HEAD 01	The Church	Lancelot Ribeiro	75 x 30 cm. 1962
HEAD 02	Basilica	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 03	The Chapel	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 04	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 05	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 06	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 07	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 08	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 09	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 10	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 11	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 12	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 13	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 14	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 15	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 16	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 17	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 18	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 19	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 20	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 21	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 22	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 23	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 24	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 25	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 26	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 27	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 28	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 29	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 30	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 31	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 32	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 33	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 34	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
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HEAD 49	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "
HEAD 50	St. Raphael	Lancelot Ribeiro	121 x 43 cm. "

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**Artist Of Promise**

From Dr. J. P. Correa

Lancelot Ribeiro, 28-year-old Goan artist from Bombay, held his first one-man show at the Kunika Art Centre in the Cottage Industries Emporium, New Delhi. The art centre was one of the showpieces recently visited by Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy.

This highly sensitive and perceptive artist, who belongs to the modern school of romantic cubism, has, with his blazing display of 23 oils which he produced during a three-month stay in the capital, been the talk of the cognoscenti of the art world. Ribeiro had earlier exhibited successfully at Bombay in April and September of last year.

Brightly coloured landscapes without figures, compositionally resolved into prismatic triangles and cubes and rich in point-counterpoint, acquire in his hands an urgent energy which compels our attention and engages the emotions.

The symmetrical groups in "Basilica" and "Chapel in the Evening" reveal a profession of faith by the Christian and the Goan in Ribeiro. What appear like silent spires and roofs and a wheeling sun in a petrified age in "Basilica" evince tremendous power.

Ribeiro explained "Basilica", which has been admired by many artists and art critics, including Hussein, as a crystallization of his experience in Old Goa, whose enclave of churches left a deep impression on him. The great liturgical activity there held him spell-bound.

The romantic quality of his moods is fascinatingly evoked in "Dark Rooms and Skies", "Street Corner and Lamp-post", and "Landscape at Evening".



5.

*Untitled (Green Man),*  
1962

Stamped by the Artist's Estate  
on the reverse

Oil and polyvinyl  
acetate on canvas

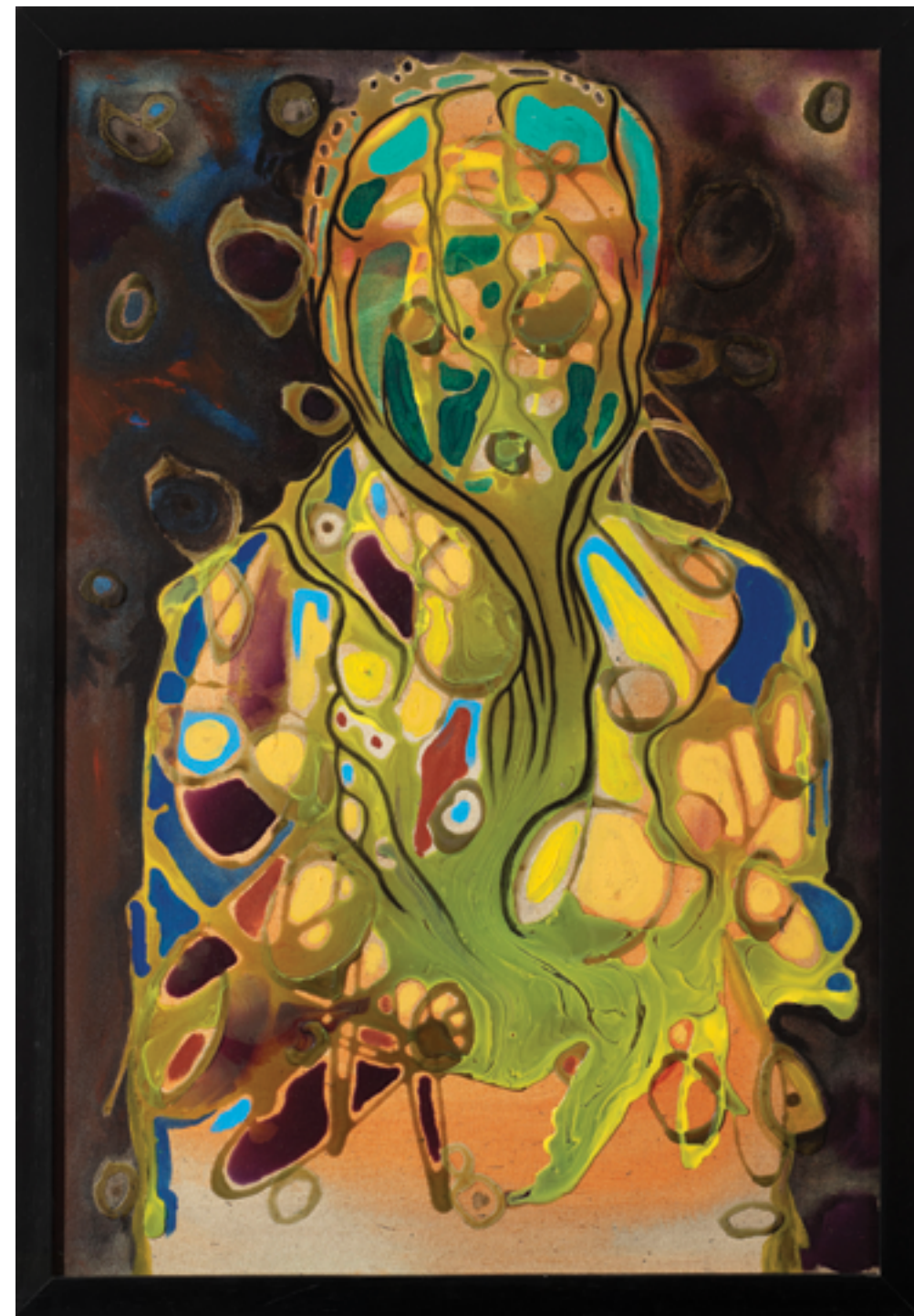
88 x 59.5 cm  
34 5/8 x 23 3/8 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist

**Exhibitions**

Lancelot Ribeiro, *An Artist in India  
and Europe*, Grosvenor Gallery,  
Saffronart and Sunaparanta Centre  
for the Arts, November 2014, No.19,  
(this work exhibited at Saffronart,  
New Delhi)





6.

*Untitled (Townscape),*  
1964

Stamped by the Artist's Estate  
on the reverse

Oil and polyvinyl acetate  
on paper laid on board

25.7 x 18.7 cm  
10 1/8 x 7 3/8 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist





7.

*Landscape,*  
1965

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro '65'  
upper right

Oil and polyvinyl  
acetate on canvas

46 x 64 cm  
18 1/8 x 25 1/4 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist





8.

*Townscape,*  
1966

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro '66'  
upper right

Oil and polyvinyl  
acetate on canvas

26.7 x 47.1 cm  
10 1/2 x 18 1/2 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist





9.

*Untitled (Enthroned King)*,  
circa 1966

Stamped with the Artist's signature  
on the reverse

Oil and polyvinyl  
acetate on canvas

145 x 69 cm  
57 1/8 x 27 1/8 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist





10.

*Blue Landscape,*  
1967

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro 67'  
upper right

Oil, polyvinyl acetate  
and acrylic on canvas

33 x 46.5 cm  
13 x 18 1/4 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist





11.

*Drugged Man*  
(*Psychedelic Man Series*),  
1967

Signed 'Ribeiro' lower left

Oil and polyvinyl  
acetate on canvas

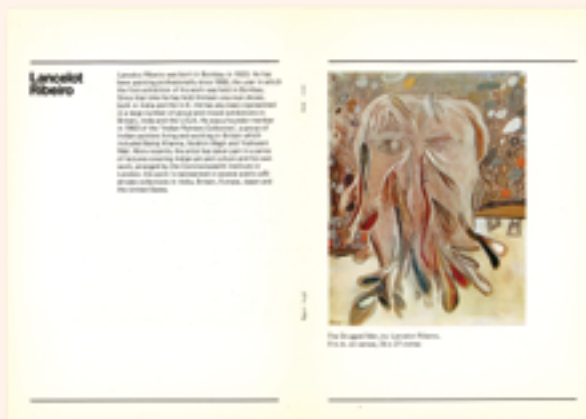
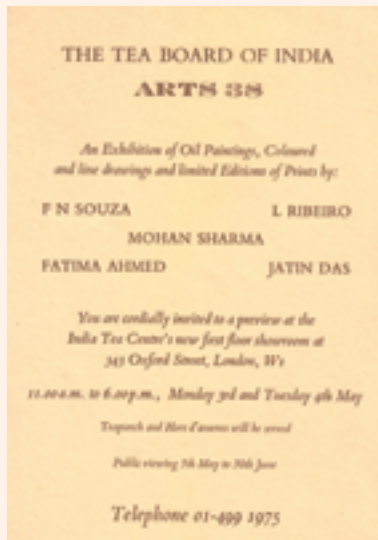
91 x 70.5 cm  
35 7/8 x 27 3/4 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist

**Exhibited**

*Five Indian Artists*,  
India Tea Centre,  
London, 1976



*Drugged Man* in the  
1976 Arts 38 group  
exhibition in London



12.

*Red Landscape*,  
1967

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro '67'  
centre right

Oil, polyvinyl acetate and  
metallic paints on canvas

82 x 104.5 cm  
32 1/4 x 41 1/8 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist

**Exhibited**

*Lancelot Ribeiro Paintings:  
A Retrospective 1960–1986*,  
Swiss Cottage Library,  
London, 1986



Opening night of Ribeiro's 1986  
retrospective at the Swiss Cottage Library  
with the late Tony Banks MP and Dr P.C.  
Alexander, the Indian High Commissioner.  
*Red Landscape*, 1967 is in the background.







13.

*Computed Man*,  
1968

Signed 'Ribeiro 68' lower left,  
further signed on the stretcher

Oil and polyvinyl  
acetate on canvas

81.5 x 61.5 cm  
32 1/8 x 24 1/4 in

**Provenance**

The Estate of the Artist

**Exhibitions**

Instituto Menezes Braganza,  
Panjim, Goa, Lancelot Ribeiro,  
1969





14.

*Tree with Square Houses,*  
1968

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro 68'  
upper right

Oil and polyvinyl  
acetate on canvas

28 x 37 cm  
11 x 14 5/8 in

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**Design**  
CHK Design  
**Print**  
Mixam  
**Photography**  
Justin Piperger

**Grosvenor  
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