

KRISHEN KHANNA

When the band began to play, he packed up his troubles and marched away...

PRESS RELEASE:

Grosvenor Gallery is pleased to announce its upcoming Exhibition of Drawings and Paintings by one of India's leading modernist painters, **Krishen Khanna**. The exhibition opens with a private reception on **Wednesday, 10 June** and runs until **10 July 2015**.

This is the first time that The Grosvenor Gallery will be exhibiting the works of Krishen Khanna. He is one of India's greatest and most celebrated artists and we are delighted to have been given this opportunity to work with such a senior and respected figure of 20th Century Indian Modernism.

Born in Lyallpur (now Faislabad, Pakistan), in pre partition India in 1925, Krishen Khanna moved to Shimla during the partition. In Lahore Khanna had attended evening classes at the Mayo School of Art. After arriving in India he took up a post with the Grindlays Bank and was placed in Mumbai. Once there Khanna was invited to join the **Progressive Artists' Group** with whom he remained in active association for the rest of his time. In Mumbai he held his first major exhibition and sold his first painting to Dr. Homi Bhabha for the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. Khanna had his first Solo show in the UK at The **Leicester Galleries, London in October 1960**.

The works in this show will focus on Khanna's famous Bandwalla series from the past 15 years. There will also be a selected group of paintings and drawings which have been done specially for the show.

It was in the 1970s that Khanna first explored the subject of Bandwallas, or members of local brass bands engaged to play at weddings and other public ceremonies. While driving out of his Delhi studio, the path was blocked by the marching band of a wedding procession- this is how he came to paint the first Bandwalla portraits. The image of these musicians dressed all in red with their big brass instruments wrapped around them still remains as powerful for the artist today as it was that day in Delhi.

The Bandwalla have become a recurrent theme in Krishen Khanna's oeuvre. Khanna's choice of subject has mostly been inspired by the experiences of the daily life and pathos of the common man. The Bandwallas are an everyday sight all across the country, they are comic and bold and his portrayal of them is superb in terms of their bright colourful uniforms and brass buttons right down to their often tired expressions as they belt out the same tunes repeatedly for one wedding procession after another. His vibrant canvases always make the viewer feel as though they are a part of the show.

In 1990 was awarded the prestigious Padma Shri and in 2011 the Padma Bhushan, one of the Indian government's highest civilian awards for his immense contribution in the field of art. In 1997 he received the Kala Ratna from the All India Fine Arts & Crafts Society. He has participated in the Venice, São Paulo, Havana and Tokyo biennales and in the International Triennale in New Delhi. Khanna has had over 40 one-man shows held at galleries in India and abroad. His works are in important public and private collections all over the world including India, USA UK, Japan, Israel, Australia and Europe.

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Some of his special projects include a Mural (Chola Migration) at Hotel Chola, Madras; Mural Paintings in oil in the domed ceiling of I.T.C. Hotel Maurya-Sheraton, New Delhi; Tryptich in oil in British Council building in New Delhi; Circular floor mural in mosaic At Mahim National Park, Mumbai; Photographic Murals for Shipping Corporation of India & MMTC at Expo Osaka, Japan.

The exhibition continues at Grosvenor Gallery from **11 June to 10th July 2015**

*There will also be a **Panel Discussion with Krishen Khanna on 8 June at the Courtauld Institute of Art Time TBC***



Image:

Krishen Khanna (b. 1925) | *Untitled (Bandwallas in Red)*, | 2015 | Oil on canvas | 76.2 x 91.4cm. (30 x 36 in.)

Krishen Khanna (b. 1925) | *Tuba Players* | 2008 | Oil on canvas | 121.9 x 91.4 cm. (48 x 36in.)

FOR ALL PRESS INQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

Grosvenor Gallery, 21 Ryder Street, London, SW1Y 6PX,
T: +44 (0)20 7484 7979, E: grosvenorgallery@gmail.com, W: www.grosvenorgallery.com
www.facebook.com/GrosvenorGallery, twitter.com/grosvenorart

Gallery Timings:

Mon – Fri: 9:30am – 6:00pm

Saturday (during exhibitions) 12 – 4pm, Sundays closed

Director C Macklin
Registered in England No. 2914566
VAT registration No. 645 2528 36
Registered Office Kingfisher House,
Hoffmans Way, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1GU

Grosvenor Gallery
(Fine Arts) Ltd

21 Ryder Street
London SW1Y 6PX

T +44 (0)20 7484 7979
F +44 (0)20 7484 7980

E art@grosvenorgallery.com
www.grosvenorgallery.com