



## PRESS RELEASE

### In/Of Goa: Souza at 100

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Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts proudly announces *In/Of Goa: Souza at 100*, celebrating the centenary of India's most important and influential Modern painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Francisco Victor Newton de Souza (F.N. Souza, 1924-2002).

In remembrance of one of the fiercest artists of a post-independent nation, we honor Souza's life and his work. Goa is special, as it was his birthplace, and reverberated in his work.

Souza presented to us a language and a world that was raw, distorted, repulsive, that reflected his own intimate, transgressive and unruly nature. He has been quoted as saying, "*Painting for me is not beautiful. It is as ugly as a reptile. I attack it.*"

As one of the founders of the Progressive Artists' Group, it was Souza who shaped the soul of modern Indian art. Having moved to London and joining a post-war British art scene alongside the likes of Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon, Souza remained an influence to many of his contemporaries in India. He dismissed all labels, refusing any form of compartmentalization of his subjects and technique that contributed to the uniqueness and complexity of his body of work. Art critic John Berger has written, "*How much Souza's pictures derive from western art and how much from the hieratic temple traditions of his country, I cannot say... because he straddles several traditions but serves none.*"

In Souza's world, the spiritual and the erotic dance gracefully as he confronts us with the intricacies of human consciousness and behaviour. Slashing lines across drawings and paintings obsessively recur in his prismatic landscapes, nudes and paintings of Christ.

Much has been written about how Souza's visceral world takes us on a dichotomous whirlwind between catharsis, desire, aggression and tenderness. However, little has been said on how Goa has been a recurring muse in Souza's oeuvre.

This exhibition presents a series of drawings and paintings from a private collection.

The show is in partnership with Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Saffronart, Grosvenor Gallery and Harper Collins. It opens with *In/Of Goa: Souza at 100* in Goa, followed by exhibitions in London and New Delhi, coupled with the launch of an illustrated book, published by Harper Collins India. The book will include essays on Souza by Elena Crippa, Murtaza Vali, Roobina Karode, Jesal Thacker and Dr Zehra Jumabhoy.

Exhibition Opening: at Sunaparanta on **Friday, 12 April 2024, 6.00 pm**  
The exhibition will remain on public view until **11 May 2024**

## HIGHLIGHTS OF *IN/OF GOA: SOUZA AT 100*

### After FN Souza: a workshop series

Students, teachers and artists of Bhatikar Model High School, Margao; Lokvishwas Pratishtan Special School, Ponda; Navy Children School, Dabolim; Sanjay Centre for Special Education, Porvorim; Sharada Mandir School, Goalim Moula; Sharada Mandir School, Miramar; A.J. De Almeida High School, Ponda; G.S. Amonkar Vidya Mandir, Mapusa; Goa College of Architecture, Altinho; Goa College of Art, Altinho are immersed in the processes, techniques and subjects in Souza's oeuvre. Their renditions will be showcased as part of the exhibition. The series is coordinated by contemporary artist Viraj Naik.

**Souza: A brief intro into a Revolutionary!**, a lecture by Conor Macklin, Director, Grosvenor Gallery | 25 April 2024 at 6.30 pm



Portrait of FN Souza by Ida Kar, 1957

**Francis Newton Souza** was one of the first painters to achieve international recognition from a newly independent India, as well as a leading figure of its avant-garde movement. Born in 1924 in Saligao, Goa, he was known for his powerful and unrestrained imagery.

Souza enrolled at the Sir J.J. School of Art in Mumbai, but was expelled in 1945 for supporting the Quit India Movement. Along with his contemporaries, S.H. Raza, M.F. Husain, K.H. Ara, H.A. Gade and S.K. Bakre, Souza started the Progressive Artists' Group in Bombay in 1947, aimed at cultivating a modernist identity for Indian art.

In 1948, his paintings were shown in London that became his home from 1949 until 1954 during which time movements such as Cubism, Expressionism and Art Brut impacted his work.

In 1967, Souza received several prestigious awards such as the Guggenheim International Award, then the highest monetary award given in the arts. His works are part of important art collections across the world. He passed away on 28 March 2002 in Mumbai.



Souza's illustrious career was marked by his Goan roots and rebellious nature. Often referred to as the 'Indian Picasso', he was one of the first Indian artists to receive fame in the salons of Europe. With his slashing lines, aggression of colour and distortion of form, Souza presented life in its brutality. With a profound humaneness, Souza's subjects danced between the sacred and the profane, inventing a radically new aesthetic language.

This exhibition, celebrating the legacy of Souza, showcases his repertoire ranging from nudes, still life, landscapes and portraits.

Visitors to the exhibition will encounter multiple facets of Souza's life, his defiance, and his genius.

**DATTARAJ V. SALGAOCAR**

**Chairman, Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts**

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