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PARAMJIT SINGH

LAND, SKY, WATER

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12 July – 10 August 2018

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Land, sky, water

Paramjit Singh's landscapes

Paramjit Singh continues his dialogue with land, sky and water in the dozen or more medium-sized canvases that are being shown in London. Once again, one sees the dark, mysterious groves of trees, hints of beckoning pathways, soft, grassy slopes, flowering shrubs resplendent in luminous pinks, the stealthy, creeping waters of creeks and inlets. But the tone of the exchanges is deeper, more nuanced. The joyous abandon of the blazing reds and yellows of his earlier landscapes has been transmuted into meditative images.

Perhaps, the most noticeable of the subtle changes that have taken Singh's landscapes to another level of experience is the treatment of skies. In earlier works by Singh the sky more often would be underplayed in relation to trees, shrubs, bushes, grass, stubbles of crops. The vegetation would dominate the visual field. The sky could be glimpsed through breaks in the arboreal spread in order to lighten the density.

In these paintings, the sky is both a source of light, as well as an expressionist device communicating an emotional intensity. One painting gives a glimpse of a flaming sky seen through a gap between two clumps of trees while the foreground is strewn with brown leaves. In another painting showing a flowering woodland abloom with shades of pink, the sky appears as a textured patch. In many of these paintings the sky is a dappled blue emanating a sense of calm pleasure.

But the most striking treatment of the sky is in those paintings where the artist paints blue-grey dark clouds swollen with impending rain. There is the painting with a grassy slope dotted with low, dark bushes, misty with a hint of rain in the air and the lowering, cloudy sky torn apart with a flash of blinding, white light.

Another painting is a haunting nocturne, where tall trees in the foreground assert their mysterious presence against a dark, moonlit, night sky casting their reflections in the water. Many of these paintings are reminiscent of the dramatic treatment of skies that Singh painted several decades ago.

More significant than the emotional charge conveyed by Singh in his landscapes of memory and imagination is his rich language. Singh is a magician with his brush and paint. He uses different brushes, some of which he tweaks to suit his own requirement, and a palette knife to achieve a surface quality that is quite incomparable. Singh's canvases have a unique, tactile appeal.

Singh says that he is inspired by nature while working on the surface of his paintings. "Memories of nature urge me to play with the surface. Nature is not flat, it is highly textured," says Singh.

The secret of the outstanding surface quality of Singh's paintings lies in his understanding of the body and character of oil paint. It helps him to achieve the texture and form that he visualises. There is a gestural bravura in the way he applies the thick layers of paint, somewhat reminiscent of the abstract expressionists. Singh discards naturalism in his representation of vegetal forms – trees, grass, flowers. Instead, he uses a brilliant and unimaginable array of brushstrokes to suggest various forms, textures, luminosity and shadows. In the process, he creates abstract fields of colour.

Colour is a very significant element in Singh's visual language. He has an intimate knowledge of the character of pigments he handles. Each pigment has its own personality. And since he superimposes pigments of different chromatic registers to achieve a particular colour tone, this knowledge is essential so as to allow the colours to be precise and not become muddy, jarring or muddled.

Over and above Singh's mastery over his visual language which imparts a recognisable character to his landscapes, there is also his personal response to nature. Although not a believer in ritualistic religion, Singh nurtures within himself some of the mystical yearnings for nature that is central to the hymns of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. It is not surprising therefore that Singh's landscapes are always an invitation to lose one's self.

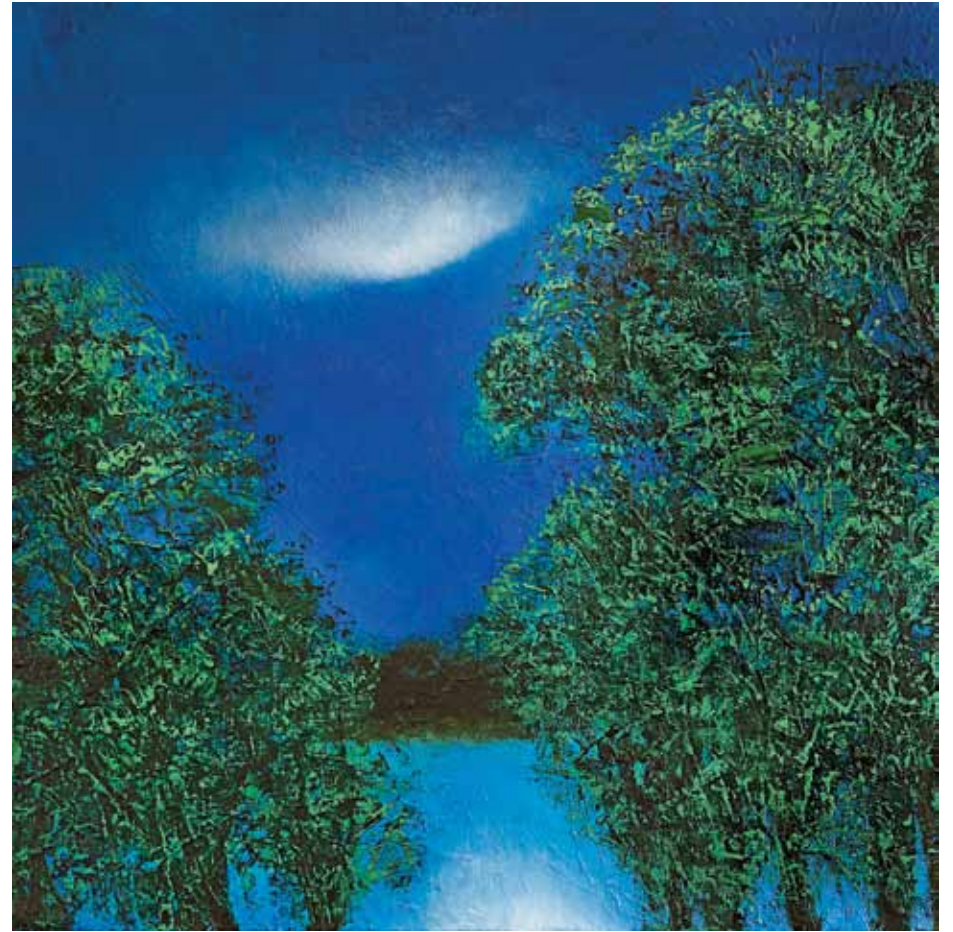
Ella Datta, June 2018



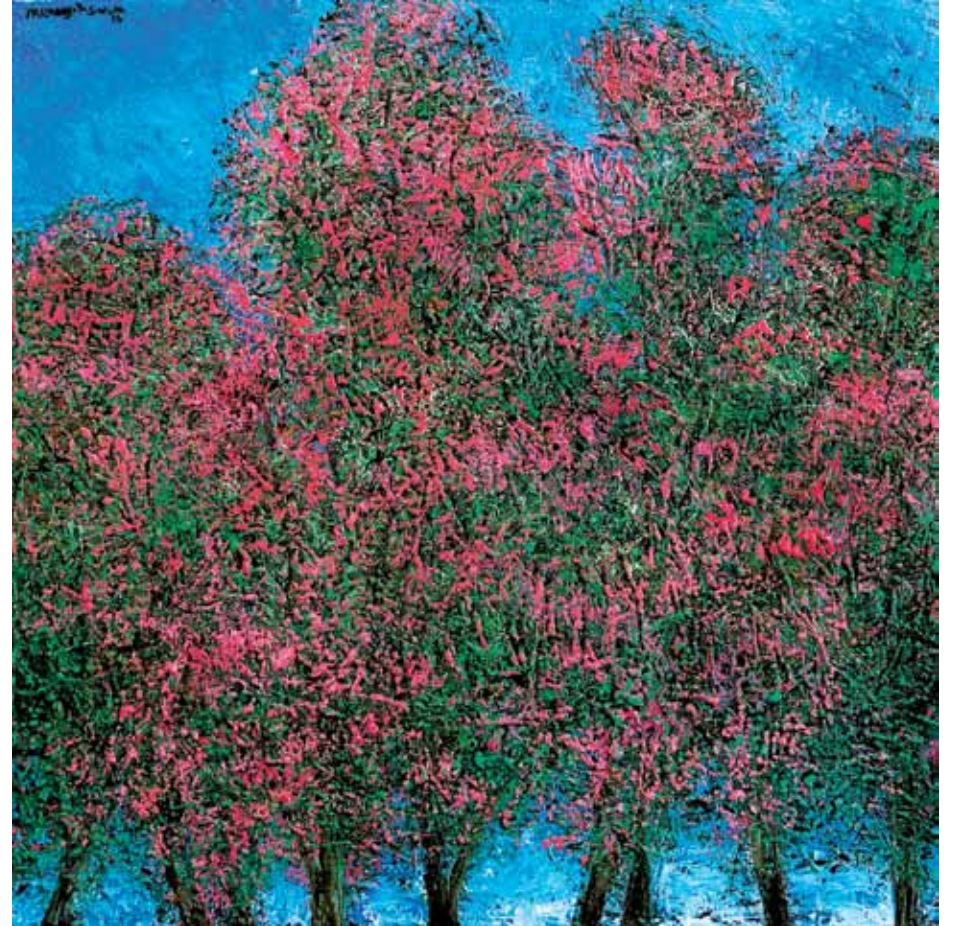
1. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
60.9 x 60.9 cm (24 x 24 in.)



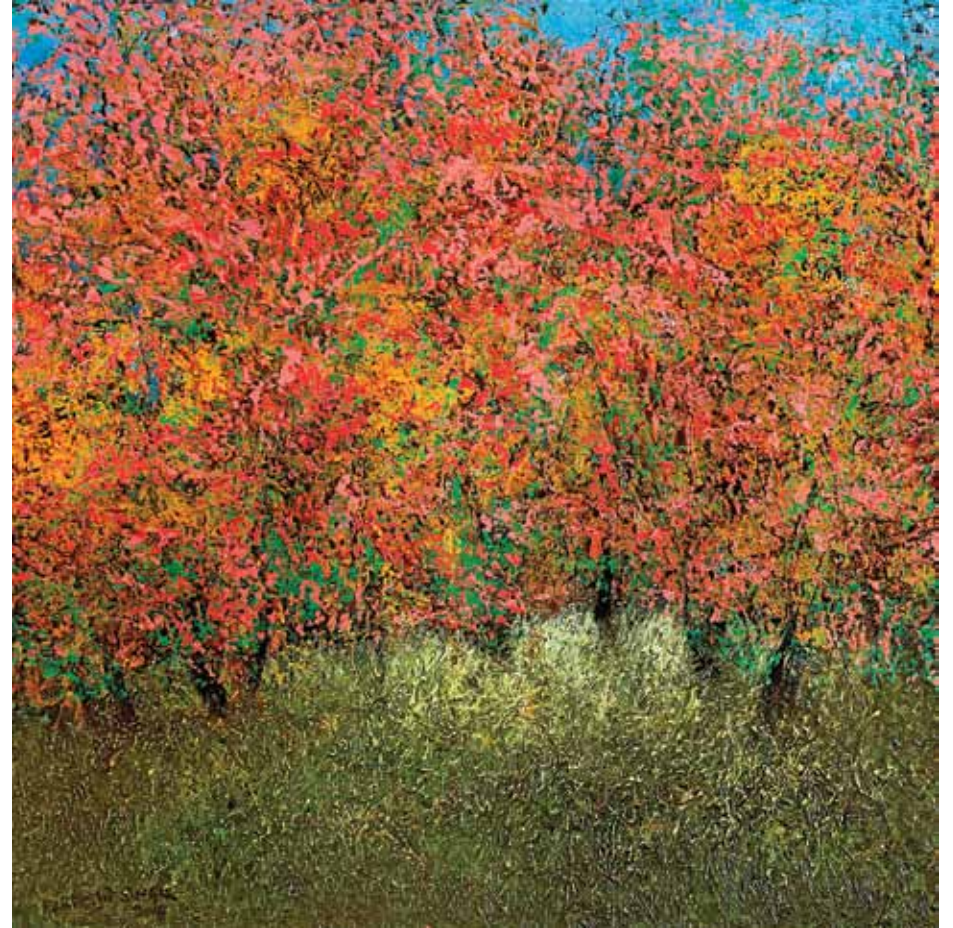
2. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
60.9 x 60.9 cm (24 x 24 in.)



3. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
60.9 x 60.9 cm (24 x 24 in.)



4. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
60.9 x 60.9 cm (24 x 24 in.)



5. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
60.9 x 60.9 cm (24 x 24 in.)



6. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
60.9 x 91.4 cm (24 x 36 in.)



7. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
60.9 x 91.4 cm (24 x 36 in.)





8. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
60.9 x 91.4 cm (24 x 36 in.)





9. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
60.9 x 91.4 cm (24 x 36 in.)

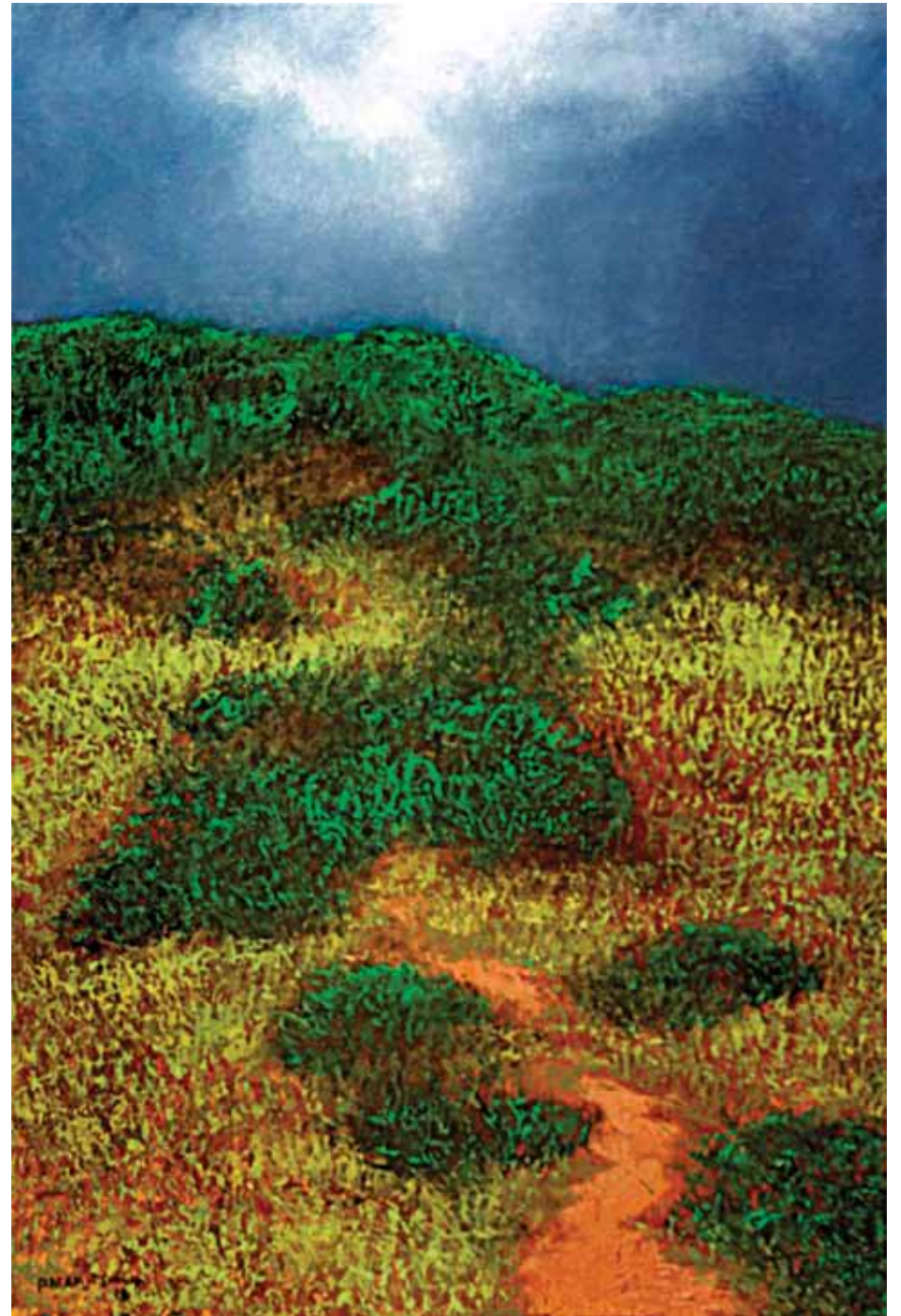




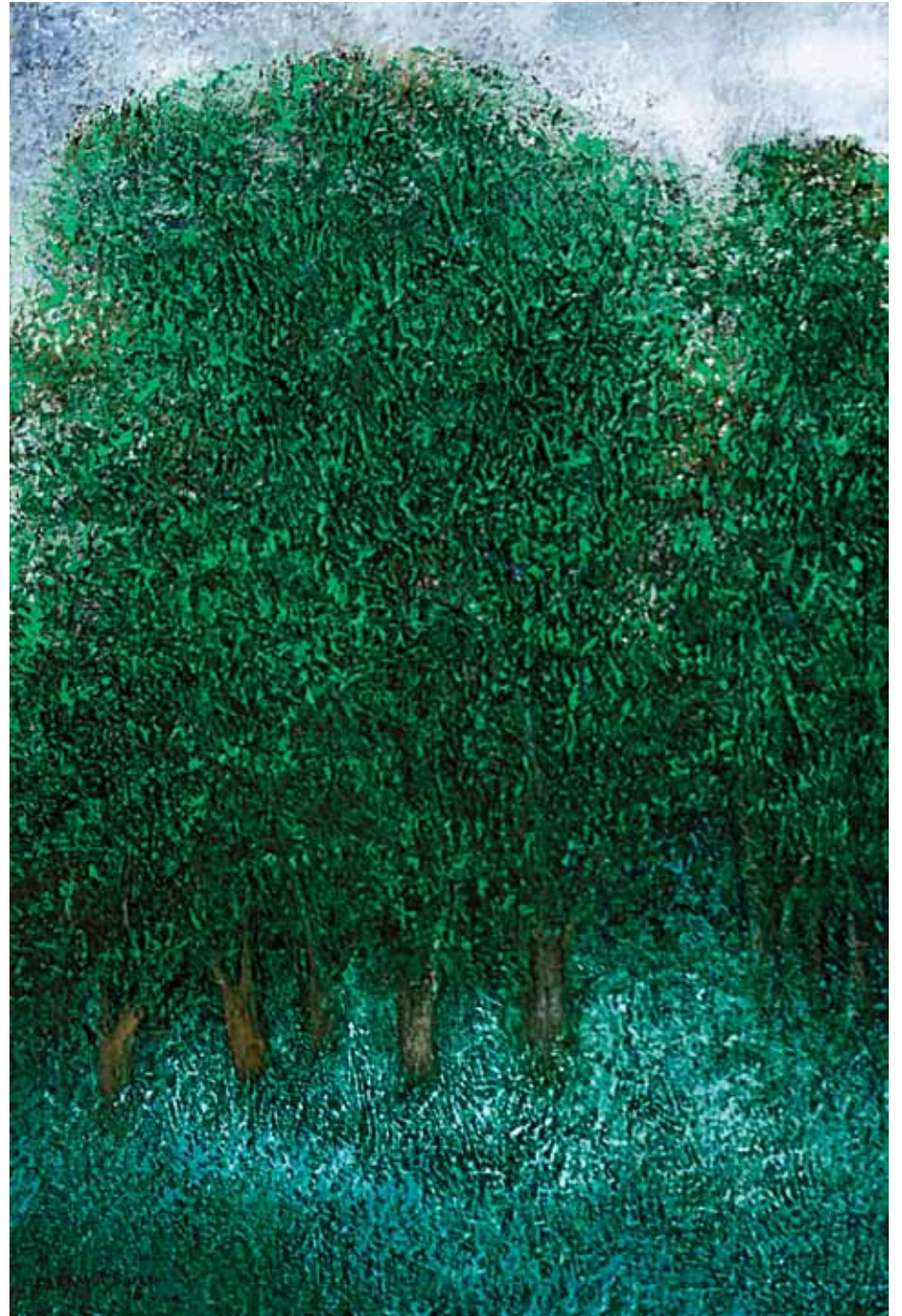
10. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
60.9 x 91.4 cm (24 x 36 in.)



11. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
91.4 x 60.9 cm (36 x 24 in.)



12. **Untitled**, 2018
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated
91.4 x 60.9 cm (36 x 24 in.)



BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1935, in Amritsar, Punjab, Paramjit Singh grew up in pastoral pleasantries, which is reflected in his work as an artist. Moving to New Delhi, the artist studied at the Delhi Polytechnic, completing a diploma in Fine Arts there in 1958. Almost a decade later, he studied Printmaking at the Atelier Nord in Norway.

Singh's brush charts a course on the canvas that gives the viewer panoramic visions of mystic landscapes. The brush, coated with thick pigment, does not rest before it has filled the entire surface; before the paint has ensured that all the natural forms in the frame have been given a colourful, tactile presence. The dappled areas of the sky and water too are rendered with a tactile feel. The lines etching out the grass, the leaves, the peduncle, seem to be possessed by a mysterious, lyrical musicality.

The artist's paintings create a continuum or series, evading the risk of self-duplication. Working both in the realist and the representational style, Singh's canvases are gentle explorations of the possibilities that lie beyond the urban world that surrounds us; beyond the noises and sounds and streets packed with vehicles. Singh's art is significant in its creation of a space for itself, and of an aesthetic haven for its viewers.

Paramjit Singh had his first solo show at the Triveni Gallery, New Delhi, in 1967, and has had numerous solo exhibitions since. Singh's most recent shows include 'Shall Return Again...' at the Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata, in 2009; 'Green Thought' at Bodhi Art, Singapore, in 2008; and shows at Grosvenor Vadehra, London, and Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2007. Singh's work has also been a part of many group shows, some of which include 'Progressive to Altermodern' at Grosvenor Gallery, London, in 2009; 'Modern and Contemporary Indian Art' at Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2008; and 'Inventing/ Inverting Traditions: Indian Art II/III' at Grosvenor Vadehra, London, in 2006-07.

The artist lives and works in New Delhi.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2014 'Shifting Terrains', Talwar Gallery, New York
2010 'Beauty & Loss: A Landscape Diary', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2009 'Shall Return Again....', Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
2008 'Green Thought', Bodhi Art, Singapore
2007 Grosvenor Vadehra, London
2007 Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2005 Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai
2004 Talwar Gallery, New York
2002 Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2001 Organized by Gallery Maya at Air Gallery, London
1999 Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1998 Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
1997 Sakshi Gallery, Bangalore
1996 City Art Centre, Hong Kong organized by Gallery Maya
1996 Gallery Chemould, Mumbai
1995 Vadehra Gallery, New Delhi
1994 Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1994 The Gallerie, Chennai
1990 Centre for Contemporary Art, New Delhi
1989 Gallery Kilian, Celle, West Germany
1987 Cultural Centre, Bomlitz, West Germany
1983,85 Gallery Caprano, Braunchewig, West Germany
1981 Gallery Alana, Oslo, Norway
1981 Mainz, West Germany
1975,79,84,87 Dhoomimal Gallery, New Delhi
1974, 78,81, 85,90 Gallery Chemould, Mumbai
1973 Art Gallery Achenbach-Lohrl, Dusseldorf, Germany
1973 Gallery Babylon, Burssels
1973 Kunstner Forbundet, Oslo, Norway
1972 Kunika Chemould Gallery, New Delhi
1969, 70 Gallery Chanakaya, New Delhi
1967 Triveni Gallery, New Delhi

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013 'Ideas of the Sublime', presented by Vadehra Art Gallery at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
2012 'Gallery Collection', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2012 'Rewind , Review ... ', Gallery Threshold, New Delhi

2011 'The Lost Sparrow', presented by Gallery Threshold at Visual Art Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi
2010 'Paper Trails', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2010 'A. SYCO', The Viewing Room, Mumbai
2009-10 'Unclaimed Spaces', Gallery Threshold, New Delhi
2009 'Progressive to Altermodern: 62 Years of Indian Modern Art', Grosvenor Gallery, London
2009 'The Root of Everything', Gallery Mementos, Bangalore
2008 'Modern and Contemporary Indian Art', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2008 'Baisakh 08', Polka Art Gallery, New Delhi
2006-07 'Inventing/ Inverting Traditions', Indian Art II / III', Grosvenor Vadehra, London
2005 'Contemporary Forms', Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
2002 'Brahma to Babu: Icons and Symbols in Indian Art', Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata and Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi
2001 'Works on Paper', Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1999 'An Indian Contemporary Art', organized by Gallery Maya at The Air Gallery, London
1998 'Multimedia', Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1997 'Colors of Independence', organized by Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata in association with National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi at National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi
1997 'Tryst with Destiny: Art from India', organized by Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata and Singapore Art Museum, Singapore in association with National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi at Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
1996 'Chamatkara: Myth and Magic in Indian Art', organized by Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata at Whitley's Art Gallery, London
1996 Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal
1996 'Highlights', organized by Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1995 Inaugural Exhibition, Art Today, New Delhi
1994 'Drawing '94', Gallery Espace, New Delhi
1994 'Trends and Images', Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1994 'Art for Children's Sake', Habiart Gallery, Habitat Centre,

New Delhi

- 1994 'Trends and Images', Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1993 'Master of India', Arts Trust, Mumbai
1993 'Indian Encounters', London, New York and Dubai
1992 Husain Ki Sarai, Baroda
1992 Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
1991 'Nine Indian Contemporaries', Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), New Delhi
1991 'Helpage India', Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1989 'Nature and Environment', Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1989 'Artists Alert', SAHMAT, New Delhi
1984 'Inaugural Exhibition', Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal
1982 'Indian Art Today', Dramstadt, Germany
1977 'Pictorial Space', Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1973 'Exhibition of Prints', organized by Atelier Nord and Gallery 71 at Tromso, Norway
1971 'Art Today', Kunika Chemould, New Delhi
1969 Gallery Chanakya, New Delhi
1968 'Trends in Romanticism', Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1967 Triveni Gallery New Delhi
1963 'Memory of Sailoz Mukherjee', Kunika Chemould, New Delhi
1960,61,62 Organized by the Group 'The Unknown', at Kunika Chemould, New Delhi
1959 'Nine Painters' New Delhi
1958 'Seven Painters' New Delhi
1957 Young Asian Artists, Tokyo

JOINT EXHIBITIONS

- 2002 'Inner / Outer', with Rajendra Dhawan at Talwar Gallery, New York
1993 'Two Artists, Private Show', Mahinder Tak, Washington DC

PARTICIPATIONS

- 2013-14 'Transition', 20th Anniversary Show, Centre of International Modern Art(CIMA), Kolkata
2012 'Art for Humanity', Coomaraswamy Hall, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai
2011 'Ethos V: Indian Art Through the Lens of History (1900 to

1980), Indigo Blue Art, Singapore

- 2010 'Art Celebrates 2010', represented by Gallery Threshold at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi to coincide with the hosting of the Commonwealth Games
2010 'Contemporary Printmaking In India', presented by Priyasri Art Gallery, Mumbai at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai; Priyasri Art Gallery, Mumbai
2010 'Summer Show 2010', Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
2010 'Roots', 25th Anniversary Exhibition of Sakshi Art Gallery, Mumbai at The Park, Chennai
2008 'Freedom: Sixty Years After Indian Independence', Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
2006 'Summer Show 2006', Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1996 'Harmony Show', Nehru Centre, Mumbai
1996 Art Biennale, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal
1994 Art Biennale, Cairo, Egypt
1994 Art Festival, Israel
1993 Emirates Bank International Sharjah
1992 'Silver Jubilee Show', Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata
1988 International Festival of Art Baghdad, Iraq
1988 '25 Years Anniversary Show', Gallery Chemould, Mumbai
1987 Cultural Centre, West Germany
1987 Festival of India, Russia
1986 Bharat Bhavan Biennale, Bhopal
1986 Art Biennale, Ankara, Turkey
1984 XV Tokyo Biennale Japan
1982 Vth International Triennale, New Delhi
1980 Silver Jubilee Exhibition in Miniature Format, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1978 IVth International Triennale, New Delhi
1975 IIIrd International Triennale, New Delhi
1971 IIrd International Triennale, New Delhi
1970 'Art Expo 70', Indian Pavillion, Osaka, Japan

HONOURS AND AWARDS

- 1970 National Award, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1970 Recipient of Sahitya Parishad Sanman from Sahitya Kala Parishad, New Delhi

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