



# SHIBU NATESAN

PLEIN AIR VIEWS OF INDIA AND LONDON

12 MAY-4 JUNE 2023

SAFFRONART

Grosvenor  
Gallery





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**Grosvenor  
Gallery**

# SHIBU NATESAN

Plein Air Views of  
India and London

—  
**AN EXHIBITION**

Mumbai & London

12 May - 4 June 2023





## INDIA

### VIEWINGS

12 May – 4 June 2023  
11 am – 7 pm, Monday to Friday  
Saturday by appointment

### VENUE

Saffronart Gallery,  
Industry Manor, Ground Floor  
Appasaheb Marathe Marg,  
Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400025

+91 22 6855 4100  
exhibition@saffronart.com

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## LONDON

### PREVIEW

Thursday, 11 May 2023  
6 – 8 pm

### VIEWINGS

12 May – 4 June 2023  
10 am – 5 pm, Monday to Friday  
12 – 4pm Saturday by appointment

### VENUE

Grosvenor Gallery, 35 Bury Street,  
St. James's, London, SW1Y 6AY

+44 (0) 2074847979  
art@grosvenorgallery.com  
grosvenorgallery.com







## SHIBU NATESAN, *PLEIN AIR VIEWS OF INDIA AND LONDON*

“No matter where I was in the world, I would step outside with my paints and materials and paint as if I were touched by a force that gave me an inner realization of the reason for living. There was no one else around. Just the cold wind or warm breeze, the empty landscape and me.

Suddenly it was an awakening of all that lies within me and the confluence of the outside and inside being one. Inspired by the French painters of Barbizon, I am a *plein air* painter and the visions of landscape painting help me talk to my present, and also shows me how to really listen to the land I'm looking at and absorbing in all its beauty and wholesome details, anywhere in the world.”

SHIBU NATESAN TO UMA NAIR

March 2023

Shibu Natesan's words are his testimony. The landscape is his idyll. Natesan, the landscape lover, is an itinerant traveller. Whether he sits on the beach at Varkala in Kerala, in a small township in Udaipur, in the mountains in Ladakh, or in the vicinity of a temple in Tamil Nadu, his love for geographical features and relief details is something that beats like an eternal pulse within him.

### VIGNETTES AND VISTAS

In both canvasses as well as watercolours, each work has multiple vignettes and vistas that speak of the wind rustling through the trees that fill the landscape, which are as important as the temples or the architectural nuances, but creating a synergy that captures both mood and mooring and rhythms of being become his leitmotif.

### PLEIN AIR OBSERVATIONS

Natesan's landscapes have the feel of impressionists of early years, but the setting is both Indian as well as European. His handling of subject and compositional clarity conjures up surreal and dream-like images from fragments of *plein air* observation that are at once multi-layered, as well as personally symbolic and mysterious. He has a keen understanding of changing light conditions, especially dawn and dusk. In Kerala, dusk is termed as *sandhya samayam* (time of sunset) and in some of his works we can sense the oblique rays and the burnished notes of the setting sun as well as nimbus clouds of the monsoon which is termed *mazhyakaalam*. Irrespective of the scene being riverine or the currents on the beach the grey skies are a litany of sombre moods.

Indeed, there are no humans in any of his works. His choice of colour and his ability to play with alternatives in soft and dark shades as well as create silent corollaries, heightens the sense of alienation. These landscapes celebrate the tradition of *plein air* painting.

## LIGHT AND WEATHER

Natesan's ability to make portraits of nature under the changing conditions of light and weather and season become a study in themselves. The oil on board as well as canvases extol these virtues.

Art history tells us that going out into the landscape became an important element of Barbizon, French Impressionism, as it had in the United States with the Hudson River School and the Luminists, who practically deified Mother Nature in all her bounties—mountains, forests, wildlife.

Natesan is deft with his strokes, both fluid and staccato, he alternates delicate daubs of black, brown, or powder blue or grey, which read as the ripples of waves or irregular patterning on variegated leaves. His mood is compellingly precise and one that invites a deeper scrutiny.

### THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

In some Kerala studies, we are in both a forest as well as a township; in the tangible space of lived experience and in the fleeting, shifting space of the artist's imagination. Natesan carries nature's bounty in his inner recesses.

These works have their own spatial distinctions such as inside/outside, private/public, or terrestrial/aquatic, thus exceeding as well as defining their geographical points of origin. Landscape emerges as a symbolic space through which Natesan claims the gendered tradition of painting *en plein air* not as a repertory of forms, but as a pictorial code open to reinvention. Natesan has his own code of pictorial goals. Painting from direct observation is intuitive and deeply immersive for Natesan.

### PERCEPTION AND PERSPECTIVES

“When everything around you is silent, the paintings take on a new meaning and purpose,” says Natesan. “Wherever I am, I sit in the silence watching the landscape with its hues, I marvel at the changing outdoor light, it teaches you to treasure as well as allows me to hone in on the optical qualities of representation in the process of painting.”

These landscapes are more a reflection of how the light falls on the hills/plains or how the atmosphere changes the colour, or how an area feels when you observe it for long spans of time. After studying these landscapes, you realise that *plein air* seems to take on an added meaning because it becomes more about being in nature, about internalising the landscape, before translating it onto the canvas. Natesan explains: “*Plein air* painting helps us ‘see’ things through other perspectives. When we add the human condition and personal experience, the same place I saw yesterday could be painted completely differently from one day to the next. We also realise the power and beauty of nature.”

UMA NAIR

Curator and Critic

March 2023



LONDON







93

**Alexandra Palace**

2018, Watercolour on paper, 4 x 9.75 in



96

**London**

2018, Watercolour on paper, 4 x 9.75 in



94

**Fake Bridge, Hampstead Heath**

2018, Watercolour on paper, 4 x 9.75 in



97

**Clissold Park, North London**

2018, Watercolour on paper, 4 x 9.75 in



95

**Men's Bathing Pond, Hampstead Heath, London**

2018, Watercolour on paper, 4 x 9.75 in



98

**Hampstead Heath, London**

2018, Watercolour on paper, 4 x 9.75 in





99

**London**

2019, Oil on board, 6 x 8 in



101

**Untitled**

2019, Oil on board, 6 x 8 in



100

**Untitled**

2019, Oil on board, 6 x 8 in



102

**London**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 8.25 x 10.25 in





103

**Finsbury Park**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10 x 10 in



104

**Clissold Park, London**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10 x 10 in



107

**Newington Green, Park Cafe**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10 x 10 in



108

**Clissold Park**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10 x 10 in



105

**Cafe Nero, Near Angel, London**

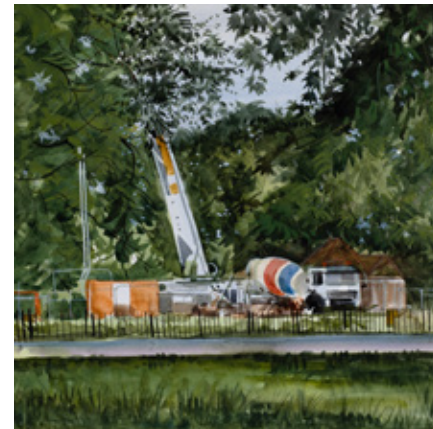
2022, Watercolour on paper, 10 x 10 in



106

**Near Highbury and Islington Tube Station**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10 x 10 in



109

**Clissold Park, Construction Site**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10 x 10 in



110

**Willow Trees**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10 x 10 in





111

**Highbury Crescent**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10.25 x 7 in



112

**Abney Park Cemetery**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10.25 x 7 in



113

**War Memorial, London**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10.25 x 7 in



114

**London**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10.25 x 7 in



115

**Backside of Church, Clissold Park, London**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 7 x 5.75 in





116

**Clissold Park**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 7 x 5.75 in



117

**Clissold Park**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 7 x 5.75 in



120

**Clissold Park**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10.25 x 7 in



121

**Clissold Park, London**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 10.25 x 7 in



118

**Untitled**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 7.75 x 5.75 in



119

**Springfield Cricket Match**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 7.75 x 5.75 in

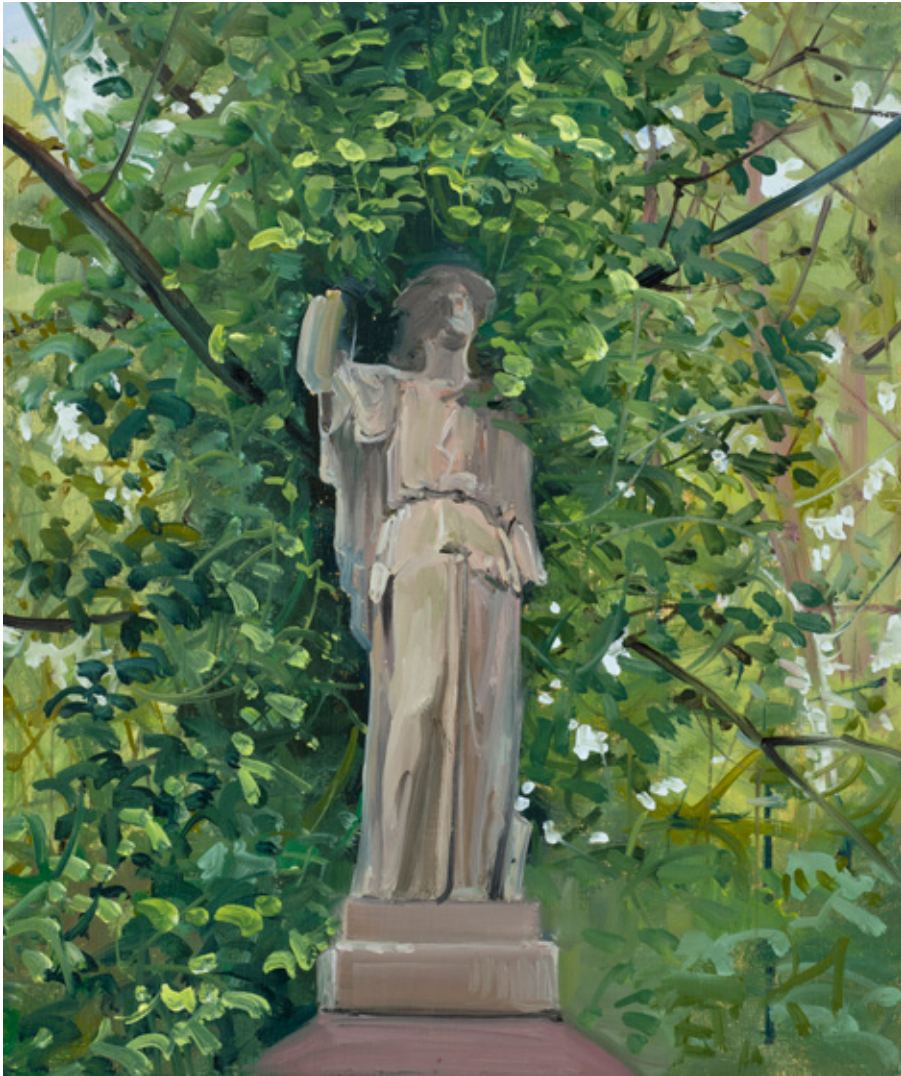


122

**Church on a Sunny Day, Stoke Newington Church**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 8 x 5.75 in





123  
**Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



124  
**Regents Park, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



125  
**Weeping Willow Clissold Park, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



126  
**Queens Walk Regent Park, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



127  
**Clissold Park, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in





128

**Highbury Crescent, London**

2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



129

**Clissold Park, London**

2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



132

**Highbury and Islington Tube Station**

2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



133

**Rose Garden, Regents Park, London**

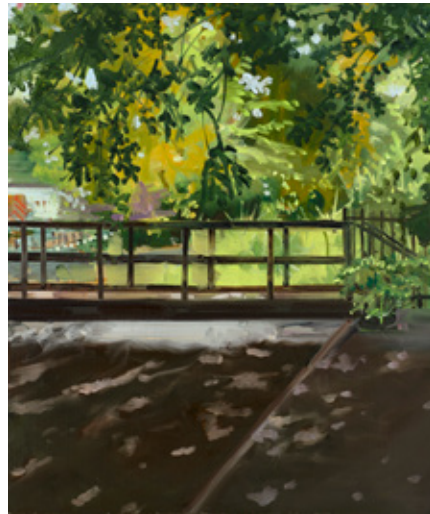
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



130

**Untitled**

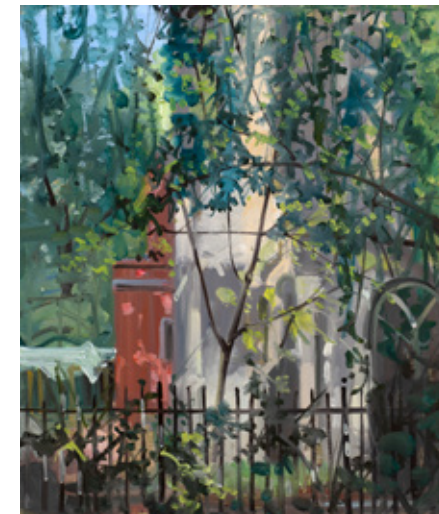
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



131

**Wooden Bridge, London**

2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



134

**Backside of a Church, Stoke Newington, London**

2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in





135

**Hampstead Heath, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



136

**Tennis Court, Clissold Park, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



139

**Regent Canal, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



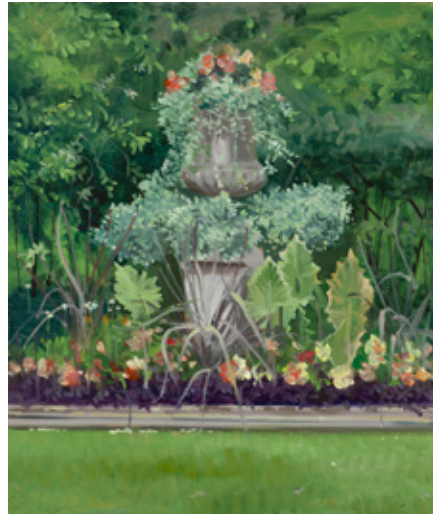
140

**Hampstead Heath, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



137

**Gate of Finsbury Park, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



138

**Regent Park, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



141

**Regent Park, London**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in



142

**Untitled**  
2022, Oil on panel, 12 x 10 in





143

**Finsbury Park Funfair on Easter Sunday**

2023, Watercolour on paper, 7 x 10.25 in



145

**Stoke Newington Church**

2023, Watercolour on paper, 10.25 x 7 in



144

**Clissold Park**

2022, Watercolour on paper, 5.75 x 8 in



146

**Untitled**

2023, Watercolour on paper, 10.25 x 7 in







# SHIBU NATESAN



## BORN

1966, Vakkom, Kerala

## EDUCATION

### 1996-97

Artist in Residence, Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam

### 1989-91

M.A.(Printmaking), Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

### 1982-87

Bachelor of Fine Arts( Painting), College of Fine Arts, Trivandrum, Kerala

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

### 2013

'Uninterrupted Speech', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi

### 2009

'External Affairs', Grosvenor Vadehra, London

### 2007

'Each One Teach One', Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

### 2005

'Vision Unlimited', Grosvenor Gallery, London  
'Existence of Instinct', organised by Sakshi Art Gallery at Shridharani Gallery, New Delhi

### 2001-02

'Paintings', Galerie Nanky De Vreeze, Amsterdam and Sakshi Art Gallery, Bangalore

### 1998-99

'Missing', Fine Arts Gallery, Baroda, Nature Morte, New Delhi and Sakshi Art Gallery, Mumbai

### 1997

'Linkage', Gallerie Nanaky De Vreeze, Amsterdam

### 1995

'Futility of Device', Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai  
'Futility of Device', Faculty of Fine Arts Gallery, Baroda

### 1987

Exhibition of Drawings, Fine Arts Gallery, Trivandrum.

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

### 2020

Shibu Natesan, Tobit Roche & Mark Shields: Landscape, Grosvenor Gallery, St. James's, London, UK

SIGHTINGS: out of the wild, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Noida, India

### 2018

Summer Show 2018, 1X1 Art Gallery, Al Quoz, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

### 2017

Group Show, Sakshi Gallery, Colaba, Mumbai, India

### 2016

The Gallery Collection: A Group Exhibition, Art Musings, Mumbai, India

Bhupen Khakhar's Contemporaries: India 1960 – 2016, Grosvenor Gallery, St. James's, London, UK

### 2015

Art Exchange, Sakshi Gallery, Colaba, Mumbai, India

### 2013

MapmakersII: The Evolution of Contemporary Indian Art, Aicon Gallery, Greenwich Village, New York, USA

### 2012

'2012: A Further Global Encounter', Grosvenor Vadehra, London

'Aqua', Gallery Beyond, Mumbai

'Terrestrial Bodies', 1 x 1 Art Gallery, Dubai



## 2011

'Anecdotes', Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai  
'Pause: A Collection', Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai  
Art Musings, Mumbai

## 2010-11

'A Collection', Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

## 2010

'Looking Glass: The Existence of Difference',  
Twenty Indian Contemporary Artists  
presented by Religare Arts Initiative, New  
Delhi in collaboration with American Centre;  
British Council; Goethe-Institut/ Max Mueller  
Bhavan, New Delhi

'Indian (Sub)Way', Vadehra Art Gallery, New  
Delhi; Grosvenor Vadehra, London

Art Musings, Mumbai

## 2009

'Anglo-Indian Express', Grosvenor Gallery,  
London

'Long Gone & Living Now', Gallerie  
Mirchandani + Steinreucke, Mumbai

'Progressive to Altermodern: 62 Years of Indian  
Modern Art', Grosvenor Gallery, London

## 2008-09

'Signs Taken for Wonders: Recent Art from  
India and Pakistan', Aicon Gallery, London

## 2008

'November', 1x1 Contemporary, Al Quoz,  
Dubai

'Anxious', Gallerie Mirchandani + Steinreucke,  
Mumbai

'Modern and Contemporary Indian Art',  
Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi

'Indi Genius', presented by Sakshi Gallery and  
Soka Contemporary Space, Taipei at Sakshi  
Gallery, Mumbai

'Link', Sakshi Art Gallery, Mumbai

## 2006

'Parallel Realities', Asian Art Now, Blackburn  
Museum, Lancashire, England

'Making the Divinity', Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

'Altered Realities', Gallery Art India, New York

## 2005

'Alchemy', Art Musings, Mumbai

'Paths of Progression', Bodhi Art and  
Saffronart, Mumbai, New Delhi, New York  
and Singapore

'Visions of Landscape', Guild Gallery, Mumbai

## 2004

'Anticipation', organised by Fine Art Resource  
at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

'Tiranga, Right and Responsibilities',  
A Traveling Show, organised by Jindal  
Foundation, New Delhi, Jaipur, Mumbai

Annual Exhibition, Art Musings, Mumbai

'Generation - 1', The Guild Gallery and  
Saffronart, Mumbai

## 2003

'Creative Space', Sakshi Gallery, India Habitat  
Centre, New Delhi

'Master Strokes', Art Musings, Mumbai

'Tiranga', a travelling show, organised by Jindal  
Foundation, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

'Recent Works', Gallery Threshold, New Delhi

'Under The Skin of Simulation : Three  
Contemporary Painters', Fine Art Resource,  
Berlin

'Highlights', Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA),  
Kolkata

'Crossing Generations : diVERGE', For 40 Years  
of Gallery Chemould, organised by Gallery  
Chemould, National Gallery of Modern Art  
(NGMA), Mumbai

## 2002

'Cinema Still', organised by Apparao Galleries  
at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

'Heroes and Mentors', RPG, Jehangir Art  
Gallery, Mumbai

'Finding The Centre at The Margin', organised  
by Apparao Galleries, Indira Gandhi National

Centre for the Arts Trust (IGNCA), New  
Delhi, Chennai

'Real In Realism', Vadehra Art Gallery, New  
Delhi

'Transfiguration', India Habitat Centre, New  
Delhi

'CAN', India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

'VIART', India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

'Words and Images', organised by Guild  
Gallery, National Gallery of Modern Art  
(NGMA), Mumbai

'Clicking Into Place', Japan Foundation with  
Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

'Cutting Edge Contemporary', Organised  
by Fine Art Company, National Gallery of  
Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai

'Under Construction', Japan Foundation,  
Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Japan

## 2001

'Engendering-Images of Women', Guild  
Gallery, Mumbai

'The Human Factor', organised by Guild Art  
Gallery at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

'Figures In My Mind', Gallery Espace, New  
Delhi

'In an Exuberant and Profuse Manner', Bose  
Pacia Modern, New York

'Human Factor', Guild Gallery, Mumbai

'ARS 01, Unfolding Perspectives', Kiasma,  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki,  
Finland

'Indian Contemporary Fine Art', organised by  
Apparao Galleries and Saffronart, Los Angeles

## 2000

'A Global View : Indian Artists at Home In  
The World', organised by Fine Arts Resource,  
Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

'Baroda School of Art', Fine Art Company,  
Mumbai

'Exile and Longing', Lakeeren, Mumbai

Kunst Rai, Galerie Nanky de Vreeze,  
Amsterdam

## 1999

'The Creative Process', The Guild Gallery,  
Mumbai

Bedrijven voor Lilian Fons, Museum Boymans,  
Rotterdam, Netherlands

'Pictures of Pictures', Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol,  
England

Norwich Gallery, Norwich, England

Grezellos Mooi, De Vreeze and the Lining  
Stone Galleries, Nieuwegien, Netherlands

'Icons of the Millennium', Lakeeren, Mumbai

'Embarkations', Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

## 1998

Vadehra Art Gallery New Delhi

'Spin', Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

'Kunst Rai', Galerie Nanky DE Vreeze and  
Living Stone Galleries Amsterdam

'Edge of the Century', Nature Morte, New  
Delhi

## 1997

'Gift for India', Sahmat, New Delhi

'Spring, Spring', Gallerie Serieuse Zaken,  
Amsterdam

Netherlands Art History Institute, Leiden,  
Amsterdam

Open Studio Show, Rijksakademie  
Amsterdam

## 1996

Open Studio Show, Rijksakademie  
Amsterdam

## 1995

'Contemporary Art', Deutsche Bank, Mumbai

'Burning Terrains', works on paper, Gallery  
Chemould, Mumbai

## 1993

Exhibition in Aid of Earthquake Victims, Fine  
Arts Gallery Baroda

## 1991

Artists against Communalism 'Images and



Words', Sahmat, New Delhi

#### **1990**

Artists from Baroda, Graphic Prints, Cymroza Art Gallery Mumbai.

### **JOINT EXHIBITIONS**

#### **2004**

'In Transit I', with Atul Dodiya, Temporary Gallery, organised by Sakshi Gallery and Alexander Ochs Galleries, Berlin

#### **2003**

'Small Format Works, Two Painters' with Baiju Parthan, Art Musings, Mumbai

### **PARTICIPATIONS**

#### **2012**

'Art for Humanity', Coomaswamy Hall, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai

#### **2011**

'Of Gods and Goddesses, Cinema, Cricket: The New Cultural Icons of India', Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

'The Intuitive: Logic Revisited', from the Osians Collection at The World Economic Forum, Davos, Switzerland

#### **2010**

'Roots', 25th Anniversary Exhibition of Sakshi Art Gallery, Mumbai at The Park, Chennai

#### **2009**

'ARCOMadrid', Spain represented by Kashi Art Gallery, Kochi

#### **2008**

Presented by 1x1 Art Gallery at Art Paris, Abu Dhabi

#### **2005**

'Parallel Realities', The Third Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan.

Xlth Triennial India, Lalit Kala Akademi, Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi

#### **2003**

'Palette-2003', organised by Palette Art Gallery at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

#### **2002**

'Palette-2002', organised by Palette Art Gallery at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

#### **2001-02**

'ARS 01 Unfolding Perspectives', Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki

#### **2001**

'Palette-2001', organised by Palette Art Gallery at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

#### **1998**

'International Art Fair', Annacy De Vreeze, Stockholm, Sweden

#### **1996**

6th Bharat Bhavan Biennial of Contemporary Art, Bhopal

### **HONOURS AND AWARDS**

'Uriot Prize', Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam

#### **1991**

Gold Medal, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

His works have been displayed at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan; The World Economic Forum, Switzerland; Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland; Blackburn Museum, England etc.

The artist lives and works in London.





