



INDIAN MODERN ART

ART STAGE SINGAPORE
21 – 24 JANUARY, 2016

DAG
MODERN



INDIAN MODERN ART

ART STAGE SINGAPORE
21 – 24 JANUARY, 2016

DAG
MODERN

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIAN MODERN ART



**KALIGHAT PAT
(ANONYMOUS)**



**ABANINDRANATH
TAGORE**

India's vibrant art ateliers up till the 18th century had absorbed foreign influences but had developed indigenously, largely in the form of miniature paintings on paper, and as localised folk styles that were mostly illustrative and intended as souvenirs for pilgrims. The arrival of the European landscape artist changed all that, since the colonial elite and then the rich Indians started to patronise them for their realistic works that used elements such as depth and perspective and chiaroscuro on large canvases painted with oil.

Indian artists began to teach themselves to paint in this foreign medium from the 19th century onwards, led by Raja Ravi Varma, and it wasn't long before the British set up art schools to train Indian artists to paint in the academic or realistic style based on Western precepts. The mastering of this form led to fewer European artists coming to India, and Indian artists began to enjoy the patronage of art lovers.

But artists could hardly stay outside the ambit of a society that was questioning colonial imperialism in all its aspects, whether political or cultural, and by the end of the 19th and start of the early 20th centuries, the imperial capital, Calcutta, became the fountainhead for a nationalist struggle that saw artists reclaiming their Indian heritage. This led to the first art movement in the country, resulting in the birth of revivalism under the Bengal School. This is characterised by a wash technique of painting on paper with exaggerated features of often mythological retellings creating the first identifiable body of modern Indian art under such stalwarts as Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose and Kshitindranath Majumdar.

Critics have been divided whether revivalism is a stand-in for modernism, though its breakout under the Santiniketan School of expressionism and, particularly, the works of Ramkinkar Baij, or Benode Behari Mukherjee, the folk style of Jamini Roy, or indeed, the bold, mordant art of Nobel-laureate Rabindranath Tagore,



NANDALAL BOSE



K. K. HEBBAR



JAMINI ROY



M. V. DHURANDHAR



AMBADAS



K. H. ARA



PROKASH KARMAKAR

suggest a case for modernism that was organically born. Earlier, the Paris-educated, half-Hungarian Amrita Sher-Gil had made a case for Indian modernism when she renounced her salon style, replacing it with a striking palette and a stylistic rendering that had its roots in the miniature tradition.

Elsewhere, in Bombay, the Progressive Artists' Group with its strident Western approach and absence of ideology marked a significant departure from existing art styles in India, in 1947. This would become a marker for artists in, especially the 1950s and '60s, with F. N. Souza, S. H. Raza and M. F. Husain the most vociferous, while others such as Tyeb Mehta, Akbar Padamsee, Ram Kumar, Krishen Khanna and V. S. Gaitonde played a significant role in the creation of a bolder vocabulary for Indian art.

If the 20th century was marked by the establishment of the artists' commune of Cholamandal outside Madras led by Sultan Ali on the one hand, on the other, New Delhi emerged as a hub for a more eclectic group of artists such as J. Swaminathan, or G. R. Santosh, while Baroda, in Gujarat, came to be known for an eponymous style that engaged more closely with society and social issues around it. Indian artists living and working overseas made their mark, while those in India exhibited frequently, creating a vibrant environment in which art flourished, even though it lacked a market.

By the end of the century, however, the scene was changing, and infrastructure – following the economic reforms in 1991 – began to improve, creating an interest in collecting art. 20th century Indian modern art has since been at the forefront of collecting and investing in Indian art, and DAG Modern, which has the largest private collection of art, and artists, from this period, is at the forefront of organising scholarship and exhibitions that are seminal for their historical significance and documentation.



ABOUT DAG Modern

Established in 1993, DAG Modern is India's largest repository of modern masters representing the gamut of Indian art practice in the 20th century. It has established its presence by building the largest, most distinctive collection of Indian modern art which parallels or closely follows contemporary movements in the West, placing it in the same context as Pablo Picasso, Matisse, the German Expressionists, the Paris or New York School. Showcasing such significant names of Indian modern art as F. N. Souza, M. F. Husain, S. H. Raza, Ram Kumar, K. K. Hebbar, V. S. Gaitonde, Ganesh Pyne, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Rabin Mondal and Avinash Chandra, the extensive collection provides a critical link for everyone from art-lovers, academicians and researchers, to collectors and investors.

The gallery has traced, compiled, restored and archived entire collections, resulting in some landmark exhibitions lauded for their curation. These consist of several artist retrospectives, those tracing art movements, such as *Mumbai Modern* and *Continuum* on the Bombay Progressives, and *The Art of Bengal*, numerous thematic exhibitions like *Indian Landscapes*, *Indian Abstracts*, *Indian Divine* or *The Naked and the Nude*, and historical overviews such as *A Visual History of Indian Modern Art*, besides

its signature *Manifestations* series. The exhibitions and their accompanying high quality catalogues and art publications, noted for the depth of their research, form part of the gallery's ongoing efforts to shed new light on the extraordinary and unique Indian modernism journey. In addition, it has presented curated exhibitions noted for its pavilion designs at national and international art fairs of repute, such as Art14 and Art15 London, Art Basel Hong Kong, Art Stage Singapore and India Art Fair, New Delhi.

DAG Modern has a flagship gallery in the heart of picturesque Hauz Khas Village in New Delhi, and a second gallery in the exclusive DLF Emporio mall in the city. It marked its Mumbai debut in 2013 in a standalone, sensitively restored historic building in the city's art precinct of Kala Ghoda. In 2015, DAG Modern expanded its presence with its first international gallery space in New York, in the historic Fuller Building at the heart of Manhattan's art and business district, and intends to increase its reach to significant and exciting new art centres worldwide.

FEATURED ARTISTS

J. Sultan Ali

A. A. Almelkar

Ambadas

K. H. Ara

Bikash Bhattacharjee

Sakti Burman

Avinash Chandra

Jogen Chowdhury

Sunil Das

Shanti Dave

Biren De

Shyamal Dutta Ray

H. A. Gade

Gopal Ghose

K. Laxma Goud

Ganesh Haloi

K. K. Hebbar

Somnath Hore

Maqbool Fida Husain

George Keyt

P. Khemraj

Ram Kumar

Anjolie Ela Menon

Rabin Mondal

Laxman Pai

Gogi Saroj Pal

Madhvi Parekh

Jeram Patel

Sohan Qadri

Syed Hyder Raza

P. T. Reddy

G. R. Santosh

F. N. Souza



DAG
MODERN

11, Hauz Khas Village, New Delhi 110016, India • Tel: 91 11 46005300
DLF Emporio, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070, India • Tel: 91 11 41004150
58, Dr. V. B. Gandhi Marg, Kala Ghoda, Fort, Mumbai 400001, India • Tel: 91 22 49222700
The Fuller Building, 41 East 57 Street, Suite 708, New York, NY 10022 • Tel: +1 212-457-9037
delhi@dagmodern.com • mumbai@dagmodern.com • newyork@dagmodern.com
www.dagmodern.com