



AN INDIAN SUMMER



CELEBRATING INDIA IN LONDON

Art Alive Gallery

&

S. A. Fine Arts

present

AN INDIAN SUMMER

A GROUP SHOW OF 10 EMINENT ARTISTS FROM INDIA

7 – 12 May, 2007

The Gallery in Cork St

28 Cork Street, Mayfair, London W1S 3NG



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AN INDIAN SUMMER

by Ina Puri

Historically and traditionally, Indian music has been associated since time immemorial with different seasons, even hours of the day leading to the night. Romance of dark clouded skies of monsoon has been evoked for instance with the *Raga Megha*; described thus in *Sangeet Darpana*:

नीलोत्पला भवपूरिंदु समान वक्ष्यः
पीताम्बर स्तृषित चातक याच्यमानः

‘With sinuous body, shinning like the blue lotus and face (as beautiful) as the moon, In golden drapes, to whom the thirsty *chatak*-birds pray.....’

A season in India changes dramatically and with it lives of the people. The whole pattern of the day adapts itself to the season and the advent of each is celebrated with ritualistic song, dance and festivals, often propitiating the Divine to ward off calamities of draught, floods, or plague (in rural India, especially). The suite of paintings that represent an Indian summer in the present exposition share, despite their very individualistic and therefore distinctive styles, an inherent *joie de vivre*, in the choice of colour-palette or mood. In India, as the scorching sun sets alight the skies, the vast desert tracts, forests and glades reverberate with joy. It is *Baisakh*, the beginning of a new year and to bring in an auspicious year, there is singing and dancing at festivals like *Bihu* in the East or *Baisakhi* in the North. The trees are abloom with bright *gulmohur*, *jacaranda* and *tesu*.

Inspired by the presence of colour in the skies, in the paddy fields, in the life of people around them, the artists appear to have dipped their brushes in the purples, crimsons, greens, yellows and blues and given expression to their own feelings, associations, memories. In the painted images and sculpture, we share some of those thoughts.

‘*This is the aim of my explorations: examining the traces of happiness still to be glimpsed. I gauge its short supply*’.

[Marco Polo says in Italo Calvino's 'Invisible Cities]

Tin soldiers march stiffly erect, and in the saffron-diffused world of impossible make-believe, a girl strikes a pose, arms skittishly stretched back. A prancing horse nuzzles a child. Elsewhere, other puppet-like figures meld and pirouette, some in tinsel crowns and others in cone-shaped hats seemingly oblivious to the others. Amidst the frolic and caper, Ganesha, elephant-god, finds himself centre-stage, and instead of feeling bewildered, looks happy to be a part of the plot. This then is **Sakti Burman's** world of fantasy, the aim of his artistic explorations continuing to examine and seek traces of happiness that can be glimpsed still.



'My childhood memories are always present alongside the realities of the present', Sakti writes. The artist's canvas continues to reverberate in the meanwhile, with echoes of festivities witnessed in the past like *gajon* or *charak* when merry processions led by a motley band beating tin drums wound their way down Bidyakut lanes, gathering in their wake a gaggle of laughing children. Interspersed with mythic configurations are images of his present life in Paris, his daughter Maya or grandson Ganapathy. The backdrop is a screen of foliage, fronds and flower motifs lending a fragile dreamy quality to his magical world.

The haunted face of a woman in **Anjolie Ela Menon's** painting brings to mind the artist's deep concern for the unprivileged she occupies her working space with. Says she, "I inhabit a place which I can share with no one for any length of time. This place is subterranean, remote and inaccessible. It is a lonely moonscape of my own making, trespassed upon by the occasional bird or animal and the protagonist is often the person I yearn to touch, the person I long to be just me screaming to be let out." The face of the woman in Anjolie's work, sepulchral and pensive, is reminiscent of her predilection to paint faces that contain in their hidden contours, a life's experiences and burdens.



Vaikuntam's works focus on the Telengana people; a subject that he has been devoting the last many decades of his life to. The images of the swarthy men, *pandits* as well as village tradesmen reappear in their satirine temperament, a people given to simple pleasures and a self-contained quietude.

The women, Vaikuntam's very own *Gaja Gaminis*, in their traditional bright Sircilla saris are adorned with jewellery and have turmeric smeared on their forehead are familiar from his earlier woks. The palette of rich crimson emerald green, yellow or electric blue captures the spirit of the people who fight perhaps a losing battle with the new power mafias of Telengana. After all, it was only after the advent of expensive modern powerlooms that there such a tragic and collective loss of livelihood in the region started, targetting the poor traditional weavers of the region. Ruination and despair as a consequence, caused thousands to take their own lives.



The Telengana of Vaikuntam's youth, once alive and pulsating with song, festivities and colour, where *jatara* players enthralled the village-folk with their thundering vaudeville is silent. Yet on his canvas, it is as if the Telengana people are celebrating *Bathukamma* again and for a brief make-believe moment, the ghosts of Sircilla have been laid to rest.

A deep and abiding passion in textile design lends an interesting dimension to the paintings of **Rini Dhumal**. Minutest details are paid heed to, in the sartorial piccadillos of the artist's *nayikas*. If Vaikuntam's art concerns in specific the weft and weave of the Sircilla handloom, Rini Dhumal's passion for textiles reflects her journey down the Silk Route and beyond the Iron Curtain criss-crossing the globe.

The motifs patterning the gauzy *Odhnis* and skirts can be traced to the Mughal era as much as to contemporary times. The narrative structure of Rini's art composes itself around characters the artist has encountered and qualities she has perceived. The women are, in their postures, unfettered, fearless and strong. They refuse to be bound to any geographical locale seeking instead to belong to the fictional world of Isabel Allende's women. In contrast, the figure of the male monk in his saffron robe, is meditative and introspective in demeanour.

Rini's art revisits the places she has been to, people she has met and memories of another day. Monuments, *souks*, *mazhars*, the faces of the wizened old, their faces mapped with



wrinkles, the young and of course the intrepid woman who ‘lives on poetry, percussion and singing...’ who lives in a far away place which breaks through to our world’ [Clarissa Pinkola Estes 'Wild Women'], constitute the artist's inner-world. She seeks not to change the universe but lives content in her own space, trying to better the lives of those her own life touches.



Lalu Prasad Shaw’s chiselled and skillful portraiture of a woman’s head, belongs stylistically to an oeuvre the artist has perfected over the decades. Shaw’s quintessentially Bengali *babus* (Nabakumars in their earnest round-rimmed spectacles) and *bibis* are seen to reflect a *Bangalianna*, be it in their *khopa* (coiffures) or the *doorey* saree the striped *Dhaniakhali* (the ladies of Calcutta are so partial to).

Shaw draws inspiration from the romantic fiction of the masters and in their depiction, instills the characters with a quality that is imaginatively aligned to the character of Satyajit Ray's *Charulata* or then, Suchitra Sen’s many celluloid portrayals.

Involuntarily, you remember Shankar's magnum opus 'Chowringhee', imaginatively woven around the lives and times of Calcuttans in another era fraught with tragedy and romance. Looking at Shaw's portraits the *probashee* (non-resident) Bengali far away from home will have nostalgic yearnings for shady boulevards fragrant with the husky scent of *chaatim phool* the world of Sarat Chandra and Tagore, Ray and Tapan Sinha.

In the depths of the moonshine/sunray dappled waterscape, swans glide by and lotus blooms. Emerging out of the shimmering deep, the magnificently proportioned mythic *devi* is gorgeously bejewelled and bedecked in finery. A mysterious smile flits across her lips, and she seems to be smiling as if lost in a reverie. As if she, like her contemporary mortal sisters, is awaiting too her lover to keep a tryst, a divine Nicole Kidman!

Jayasri Burman’s captures in her painted world of fantasy, elements of poetry, music and romance, transcending in the process the emotional cultural and mythic histories of the

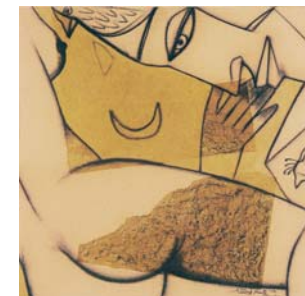
painted images. Traditionally her *matsyakanya* or indeed the other mythical beings seem to belong stylistically to Bengal’s ancient *patachitra* scrolls, in their features and postures, in the long tresses framing the voluptuous contours. Deified and in mystical rapture, she however is also a temptress, primeval and strong. Half-robed and sultry, she is at once alluring and distant. The dichotomy of her art is that it draws inspiration from *Puranic* traditions/texts as much as from the lives of the contemporary woman.



The frisson of disquietude beneath the tranquil surface is implied if only gently but assertively. The goddesses have souls that feel the tremor of love and loss. She is the mother, nurturing in her womb the unborn female foetus.

Primary colours set alight **Paresh Maity’s** canvas as the painter playfully explores the magnified forms of the human anatomy. The scale of the figurations and the use of bold reds, yellows, blues add a dramatic dimension that is a marked contrast from his early water colours. The early watercolours muted and quiet as they bled on the paper, became almost spectre-like shadows in their final rendition. In a dramatic shift, the present oils are bold and magnified in their abstraction. There is in the anatomical and facial detail, such magnificent proportion that the details take on the roles of individuated entities/forms in their own right.

Overt sexuality in the depiction of the men and women and erotic passion play is very often the subject of Maity’s paintings. The artist does not feel the need to shy away from boudoir intimacies but the intimacy teeters on its suggestiveness – the kohl-rimmed eyes of a woman or silhouettes, half-hidden by dark tresses, revealing maybe the outline of a breast or curve of the back. Paresh Maity’s art celebrates thus, the ecstasy of a man-woman relationship that is primeval and joyous. The beauty of a woman’s body is meant to be immortalised in art erotically.



*‘If you are the dreamer, I am what you dream
But when you want to wake, I am your wish & I grow strong with all magnificence and turn myself into a star’s vast silence above the strange & distant city. Time.’*

[The Book of House, Rainer Maria Rilke]



In **Arpana Caur’s** painted world the clock strikes time that is synchronized by another time zone, known to the artist alone and none else. It is an eternity where moments stretch and stand still, as if waiting for the protagonist to complete the task she is engaged in at that present moment. In the hushed hour tranquility reigns as the protagonist – may be Arpana/ her alter-ego or every woman weaves or stitches on, brows knit in deep concentration, as she bends to her chores, scissors going snip-snip or the loom rotating, cutting lazy circles in mid-air. The woman’s image appears alone or mirrored with others as if in reflections. The narrative structure of Arpana’s painterly realm is devoid of any acute physical urgency and her dramatis personae are, sans emotions, creatures who inhabit a timeless space.

“The enlightenment of Buddha, the thundering experience of Gautam, Siddharta in search of redemption.... energy, spiritual power and the world of growth and organics determine the active men in the picture of Arpana” writes Ernst W Koelnspurger, “Norms, fates, goddesses of destiny” are the determining qualities of the women she portrays.



Laxma Goud’s terracotta and bronze busts traces their artistic lineage to the senior artist’s illustrious stint as a serigraphist and painter. The erotically expressive features of the female forms incorporate both modernist and primitive consciousness arriving in the process at a genre that is iconographically Laxma Gaud’s very own. Skillfully embellished, complete with intricate patternings of motifs and layers of ornate jewellery, the Telengana women are not merely strikingly sensual but boldly at ease with their sexuality. Goud’s virile and playful forms make for an arresting portrait gallery as the heads/busts are clearly individuated, at times provocative, gentle, mischievous or in case of a *nayika*, petulant and lusty. In their drapery, adornment and expressions, the sculptures add an exciting dimension to Laxma’s oeuvre.

Shipra Bhattacharya in her works makes use of the human anatomy rather imaginatively as a canvas and as a result, we are given an unusual collage of artistic impressions tattooed on the figures of a man and women. Memories, as we know them, are associated usually with the mind. However, in the instance of Shipra, it is what the body remembers. She uses the gargantuan fleshy proportions of an amply built woman to create, rather irreverently, a scene

at a temple, complete with detailed images of Kali and Shiva! Within the same composition, elsewhere, fishes swim. Motifs of lotus share space with an incongruous grandfather clock and spread over the crevices and clefts of the back, the hips, torso, stomach and limb, gatherings/congregations of people occupied in various pursuits make their appearance.

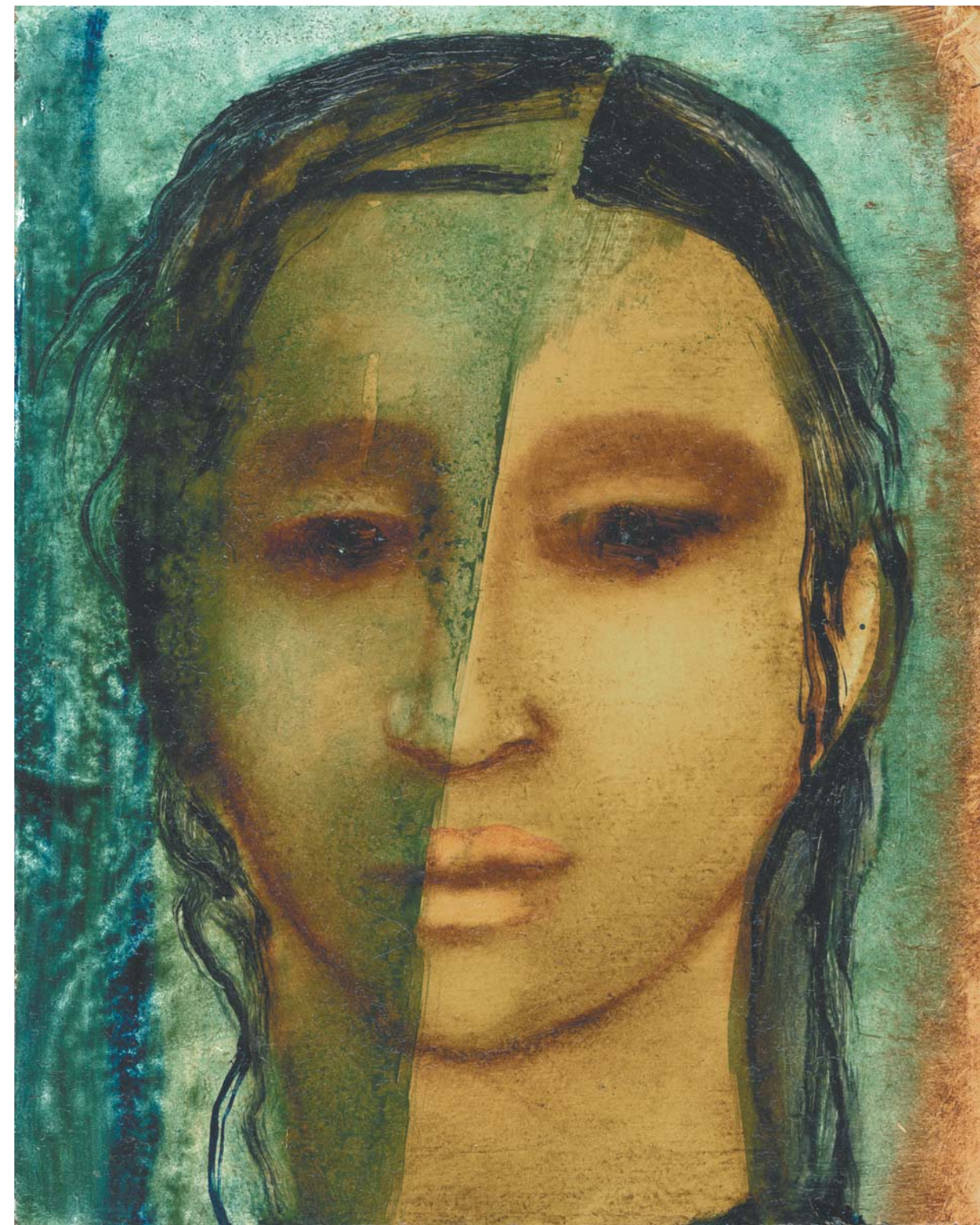
Bhattacharya fuses female and male voices in an exuberant juggling feat, merging the real and the historical with what is, quite simply, the fantastical...and the outcome is a dazzling fable that belongs chronologically to the here and now as much as to the artist’s memories and imagination.



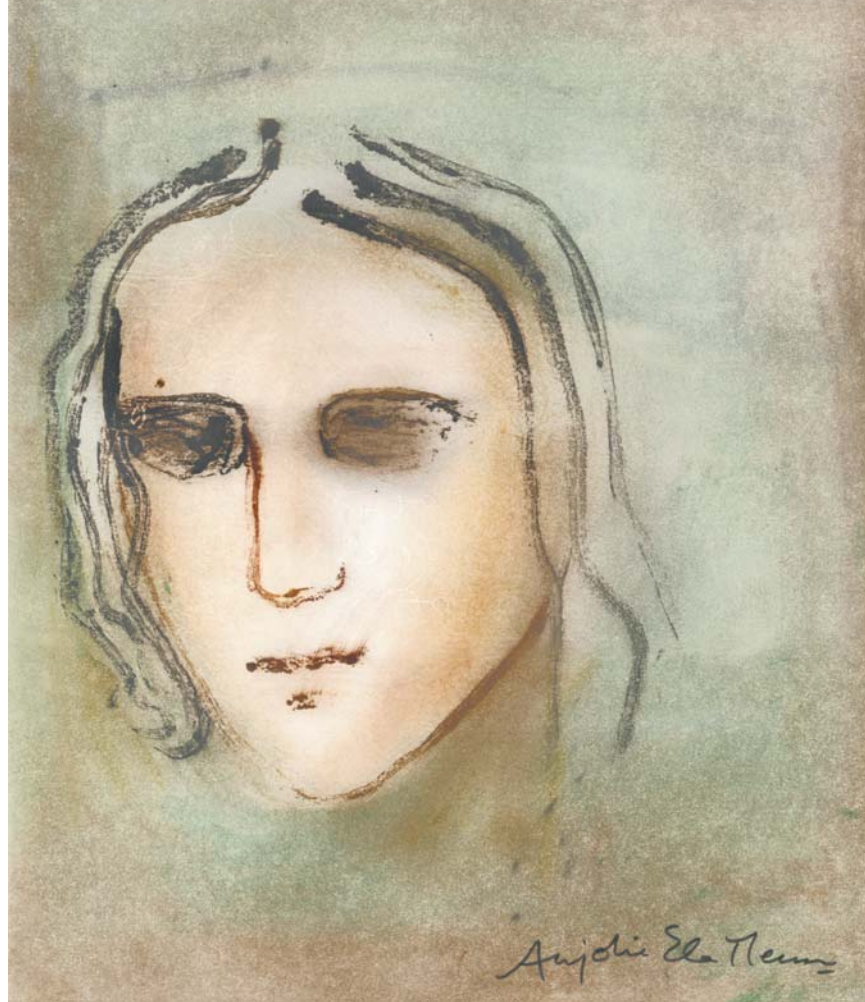
Ina Puri has been actively involved in the promotion of Indian art and artists for over two and a half decades. She has been imaginatively showcasing Indian art in major art centres across the globe. A columnist and author, Ina Puri has written a memoir of Padma Vibhushana Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma – ‘Journey with a Hundred Strings: My Life in Music’: a short biopic on Manjit Bawa – ‘In My Own Words’; and edited ‘Raj Bhavan of Kolkata: Two Hundred Years of Grandeur’. She has produced ‘Meeting Manjit’, a documentary on the life and work of Manjit Bawa, which won the Rajat Kamal in 2003. She is presently working on Art Alive’s forthcoming book ‘Faces of Indian Art’ and a documentary on Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma.

ANJOLIE ELA MENON

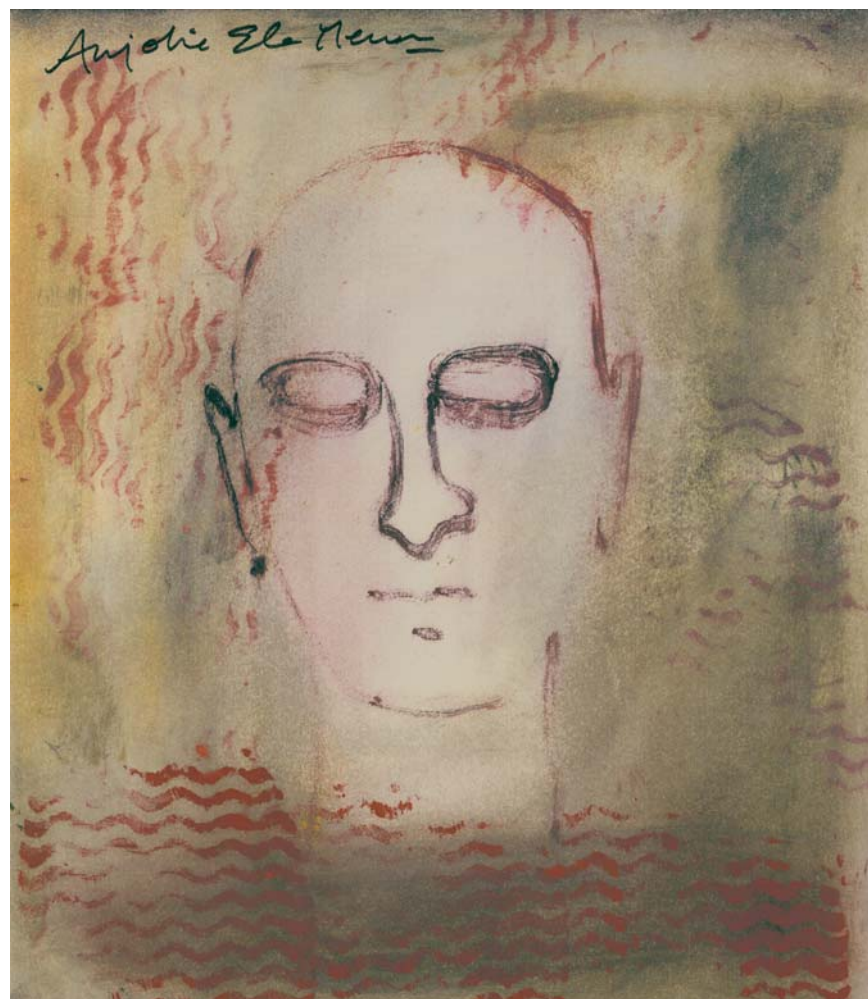
Born in 1940, Anjolie did her schooling at Lovedale and her degree in English Literature from the University of Delhi. She started painting at a young age as a self trained artist. Later following a brief spell at the J.J. School of Art, she received formal training in painting at the Ecole des Beaux in Paris on a French Government scholarship. Anjolie has had over thirty five solo shows in India and abroad including London, Paris and New York and her work is held in several important collections and museums in India and overseas. She has represented India at international events including Algiers Biennale, the Sao Paulo Biennale and three Indian Triennales. She has also served on the advisory committee and the art purchase committee of the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, where she curated a major exhibition of French Contemporary Art in 1996. Recipient of Padma Shree, she is on the board of trustees of Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts (IGNCA). Her life and work has been featured in important publications and films made for Doordarshan and CNN. Her work was shown in a major retrospective held at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai, which also toured other towns including Chennai, Delhi and Bangalore. She lives and works in Delhi.



Head of a Girl Oil on Masonite 9" x 7"



Girl Acrylic on Paper 12" x 10"



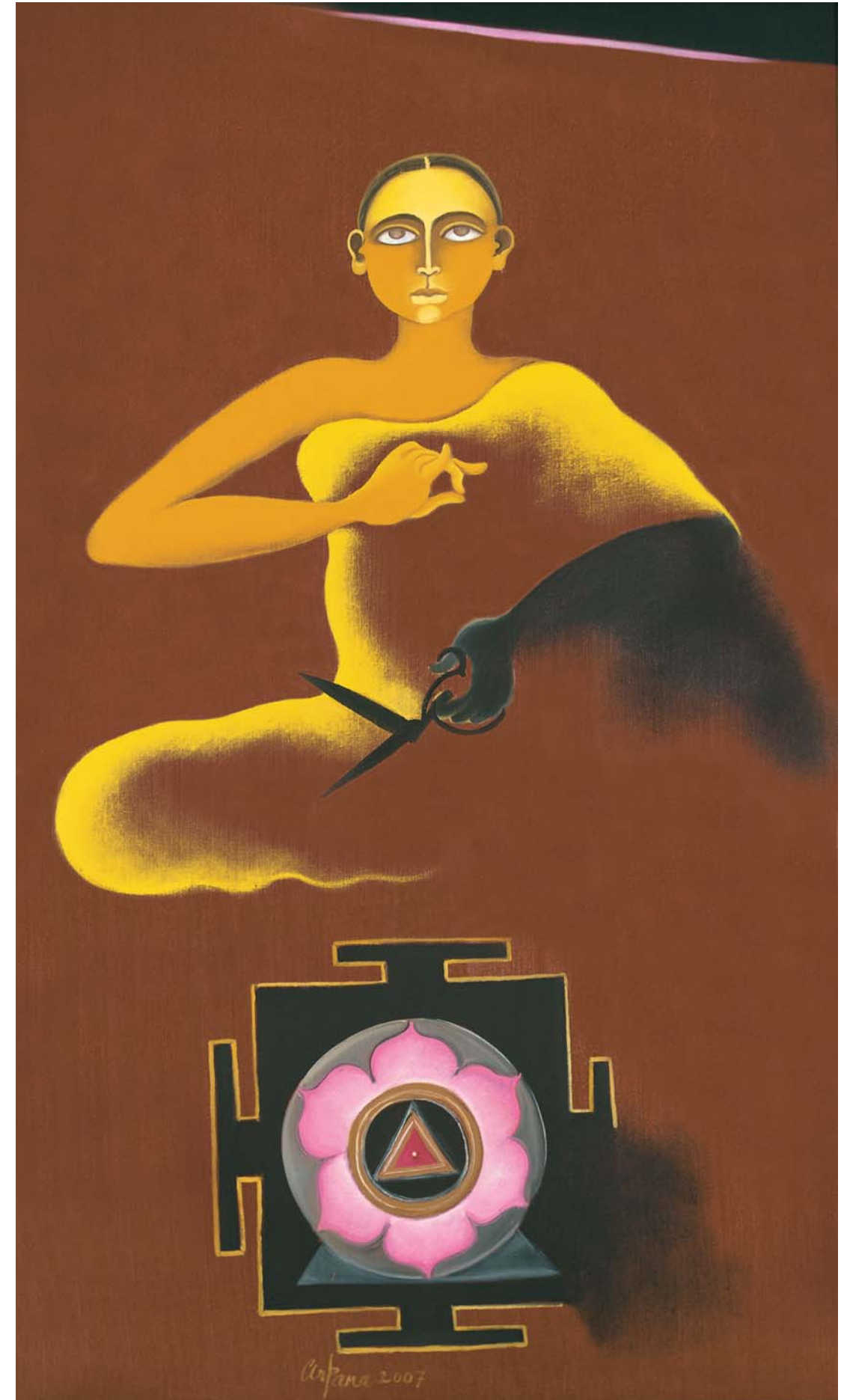
Buddha Acrylic on Paper 11.5" x 10"



Coimbatore Fisherman's Story III
Oil on Canvas
48" x 24"

ARPANA CAUR

Born 1954 in Delhi, Arpana has nearly 30 solo shows to date covering Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, London, Ottawa, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Berlin, New York, Amsterdam Munich, Bangalore and many others cities, her work is seen and appreciated globally. She has also participated in about 40 group shows held in various Indian cities as well as abroad including Greece, USSR, USA, Japan, Germany, Iraq and Cuba. She has also executed ten large murals and paintings including a commission for a large work for the permanent collection at Hiroshima Museum. She has also participated in interactive workshops with other artists and crafts people. Amongst the awards to her credit, VI Triennale India Gold Medal for Painting stands tall. She has been a member of various juries and advisory boards including the National Gallery of Modern Art, Lalit Kala Academy and Sahitya Kala Parishad and her work has been the subject of several dissertations by art students and scholars. Her work is in several Indian Museums and significant public collections including National Gallery of Modern Art Delhi, Chandigarh Museum, Ethnographic Museum Stockholm, Kunstmuseum Dusseldorf, Bradford Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, U.K., Glenberra Museum Japan, Hiroshima Museum of Modern Art Japan, Singapore Museum of Modern Art Japan, Deutsche Bank, Rockefeller Collection, New York. She lives and works in New Delhi.



Day and Night Oil on Canvas 56" x 33"



Day and Night Oil on Canvas 70" x 70"

JAYASRI BURMAN

Born in Kolkata in 1960, Jayasri studied at Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan between 1977-79. Later, she joined Visual College of Arts, Kolkata in 1979-80 and then went to France to learn print-making under the guidance of Monsieur Ceizerzi in 1984. She has held over ten solo shows in Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi and Bangalore between 1985 and 2004 and has also participated in various group shows across India and abroad including Bharat Bhavan Biennale, Bhopal in 1986, the International Triennale, 'Intergraphic', Germany in 1987 and Bollywood show, London Selfridges in 2001, Hong Kong & Los Angeles in 2001. She was awarded by the College of Visual Arts outstanding merit award in Tempera in the Annual exhibition held in 1979. She is also a National Award holder and has received other prestigious honours. The Indian postal department has recently issued a set of 4 stamps of her paintings celebrating Women's Day. She lives and works in Delhi.



Summer Dreams I | Mixed Media on Board 45" x 49"



Summer Dreams II Mixed Media on Board 10.5" x 12"



Summer Dreams III Mixed Media on Board 10.5" x 12"

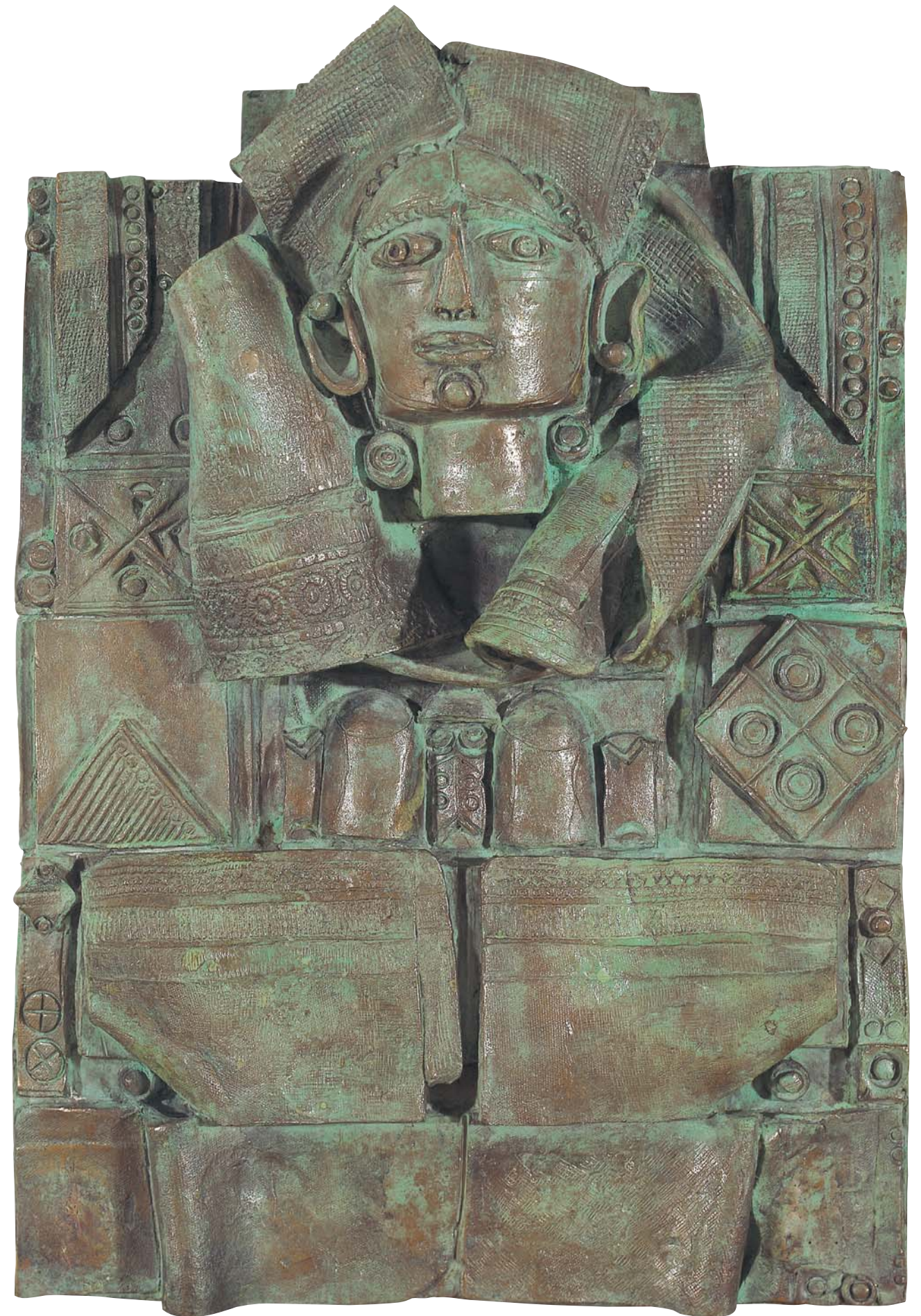
LALU PRASAD SHAW

Born in 1937, Bengal (Bangladesh). He completed his graduation and received his Degree from Government College of Arts and Crafts at Kolkata. He began his career as a print-maker and has exhibited in several solo shows across India and abroad. He has also exhibited his works in many group shows including Whiteley's London 1996, 11th Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh 1984, World Biennale of Graphic Art, London, Baghdad, 1980, Norwegian Print Biennale 1974,1978, X Ljubljana Biennale 1973, VII Paris Biennale 1971, 11 British Biennale, London 1970. He has been a recipient of the West Bengal State Lalit Kala Akademi Award in 1971 among others. He lives and works in Kolkata.



LAXMA GOUD

Born in 1940 in Nizampur, Andhra Pradesh, Laxma completed his Diploma in Drawing and Painting from Government College of Art and Architecture, Hyderabad in 1963 and further studied mural painting and printmaking at M.S.University, Baroda from 1963-1965, where he worked under Professor K.G. Subramanyan. He then taught for several years at the Sarojini Naidu School of Performing Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad. He had his first solo show in his home town in 1965. He has held many exhibitions since then. Some of his important exhibitions include the Ansdell Gallery, London; Hamburg, Germany; Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazil; the Royal Academy, London; Grey Art Gallery. Several of his works are in the collections of The National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, the Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad, Masanori Fukuoka and Glenberra Art Museum, Hameji, Japan, Chester & David Herwitz Collection among others. He lives and works in Hyderabad.



Untitled Bronze 26" x 18.5" x 5.5"



Untitled Bronze 9" x 18" x 3"



Untitled Bronze 28" x 21" x 3"

PARESH MAITY

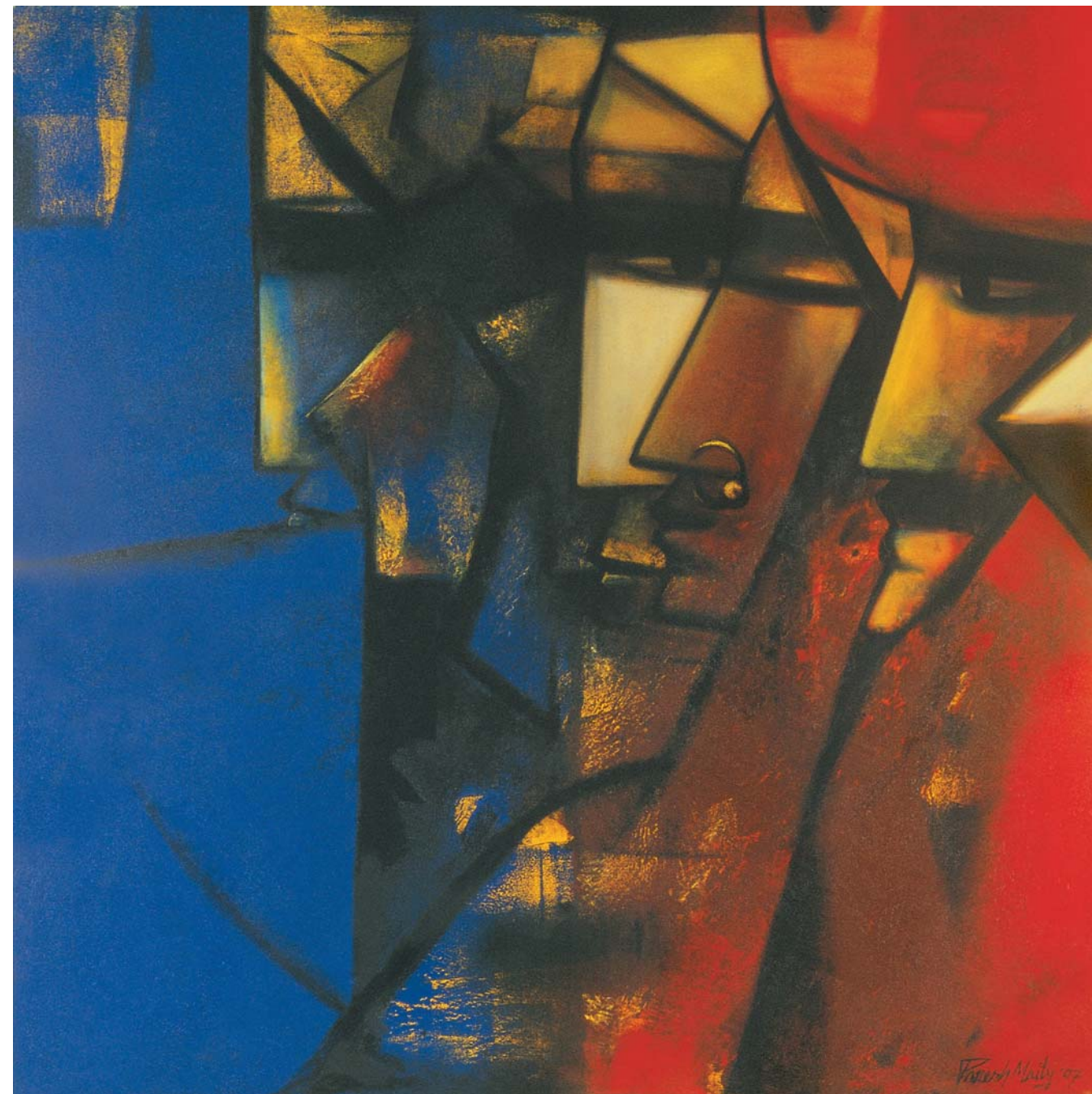
Born 1965 in West Bengal, Paresh did his BFA from the Govt. College of Arts and Crafts in Kolkata followed by a Masters from the Delhi College of Arts. Paresh is an avid traveler, fine photographer, talented designer and a great storyteller who has already held nearly 50 Solo shows and an equal number of Group exhibitions of his work in different parts of India and the world. He has participated in several international camps and events including the Cleveland International Drawing Biennale, an Art Camp in Hungary and exhibitions at important art galleries in London and New York. He is a recipient of several awards including a Gold Medal from USSR, Governor's Gold Medal from the Academy of Fine Arts Kolkata, Pandit Ravi Shankar Award from College of Art Delhi and the Royal Water Colour Society Award from London. His work is held in numerous public and private collections in India and abroad amongst which the British Museum in London, National Gallery of Modern Art Delhi and the TISCO Collections are more noteworthy. This prolific artist's work has been documented in a fully illustrated publication that has been brought out to mark 25 years of his illustrious career. Paresh lives and works mostly in Delhi.



Citi of Paradise Oil on Canvas 60" x 60"



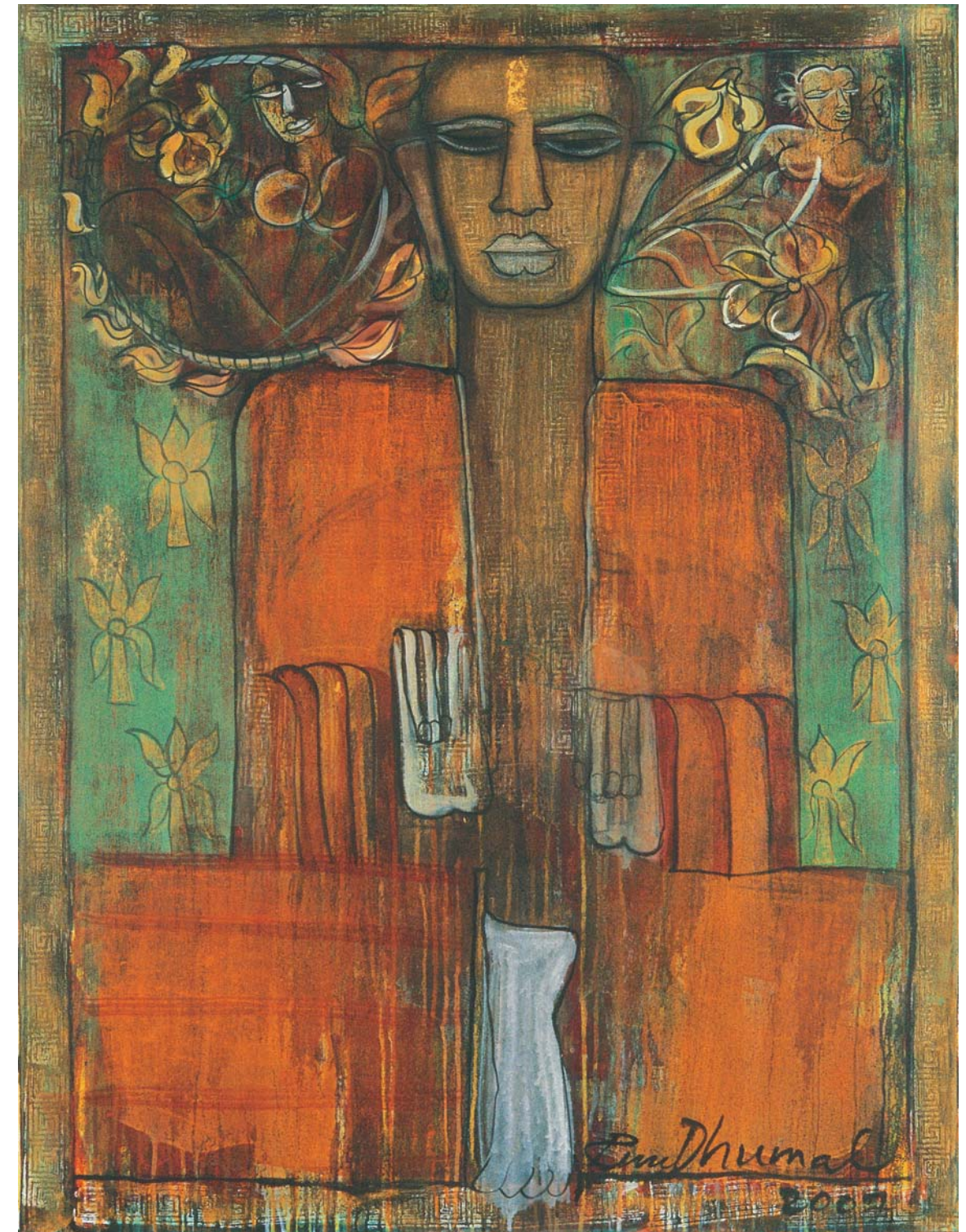
Love in Alaska Mixed Media on Board 32" x 32"



Communion Oil on Canvas 54" x 54"

RINI DHUMAL

Born 1948 in Bengal, Rini completed her Masters in Painting from M.S.University, Baroda. She has held over 25 solo shows including those at Delhi, Mumbai, Baroda, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad in India and Paris, Chile, Germany and Spain overseas. Her work has been exhibited in numerous group shows throughout India and abroad. She is a recipient of Research Scholarship and Senior Fellowship from Ministry of Human Resource, New Delhi as well as a French Govt. Scholarship to study in Paris. The awards to her credit include the Chancellors Gold Medal from Baroda; Governors Gold Medal from Calcutta; AIFACS Award; National Award of the Lalit Kala Academy and M. S. Randhawa Award - all three in New Delhi. Rini lives and works in Baroda.



Tempting the Buddha Oil on Canvas 47" x 36"



Durga Oil on Canvas 48" x 30"



Untitled Oil on Canvas 60" x 36"

SAKTI BURMAN

An artist who weaves together the private fantasy and ancient religion was born in Kolkata in 1935 and graduated in painting from Government College of Arts and Craft, Kolkata in 1956. He went to study further at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and awarded with the Prix des Étrangers by this institution. After holding his first solo exhibition in Kolkata in 1954, he held shows in Paris Biennale, India International Triennale, Salon d'Automne, Salon de la Jeune Peinture and Salon Comparisons among others. His works, along with those of Picasso, Chagall and Miro were exhibited in Japan in 1997. He was invited to participate in Sigmund Freud's 'Interpretation of Dreams', an exhibition organized by University Art Museum, Binghamton, New York, at the Historisches Museum, Vienna in 2000. He lives and works in Paris.



Untitled Water Colour on Paper 20" x 26"



Untitled Water Colour on Paper 20" x 26"



Untitled Water Colour on Paper 20" x 26"

SHIPRA BHATTACHARYA

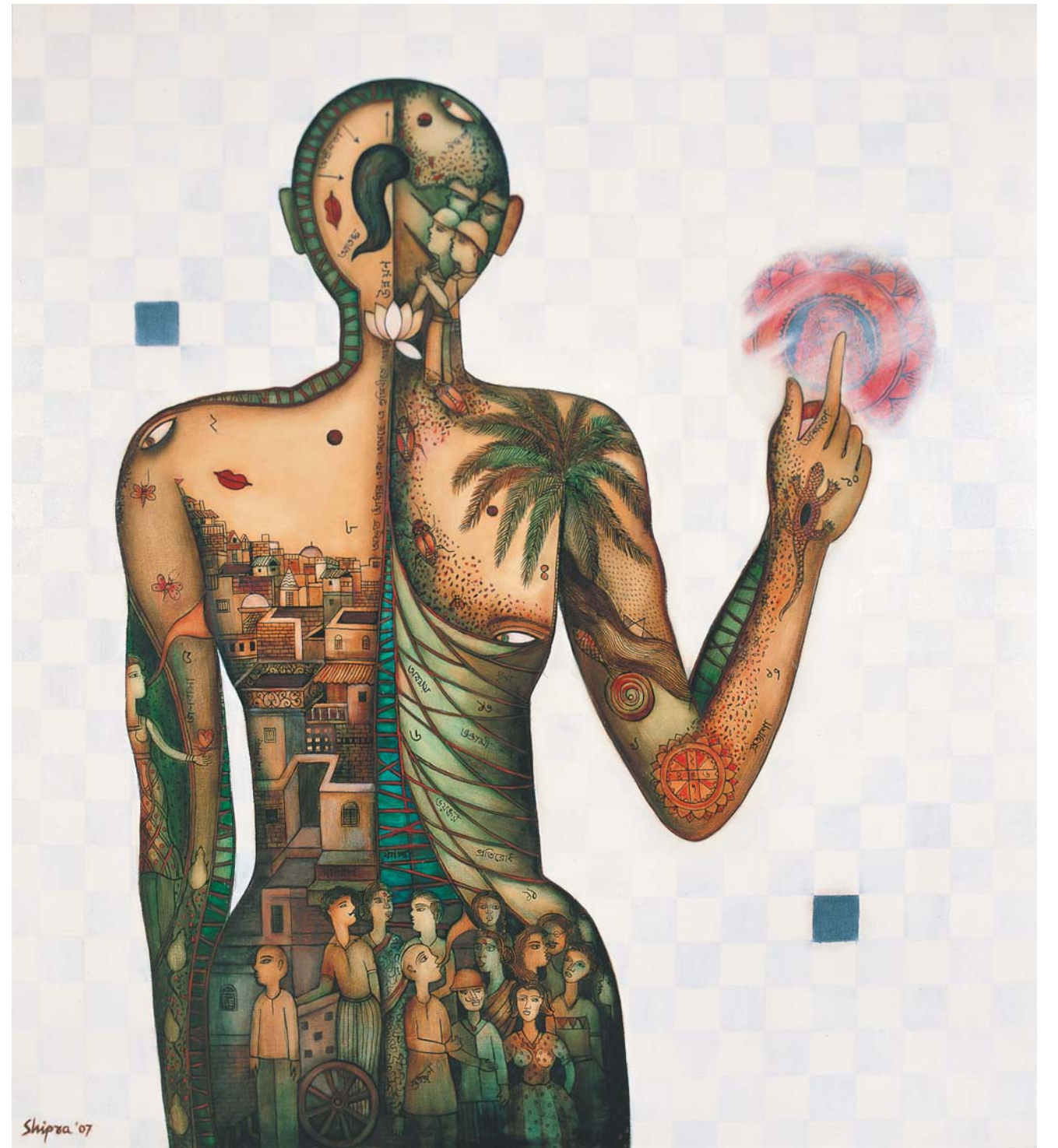
Born in 1954 in West Bengal, Shipra did her graduation from Calcutta University in 1975 and studied art at the Govt.College of Art & Craft and at the College of Visual Arts Calcutta in 1977 and 1980 respectively. Starting with her first solo show in her home town, she has held over 12 solo exhibitions across India and abroad. She has also participated in numerous group shows at Singapore, Hong Kong, London, New York, Germany and Dubai. Four portfolios of her drawings and graphics have already been brought out and her work is held in important public, corporate and private collections both in India and abroad. She lives and works in Kolkata.



My Memories I Acrylic & Oil on Canvas 50" x 45"



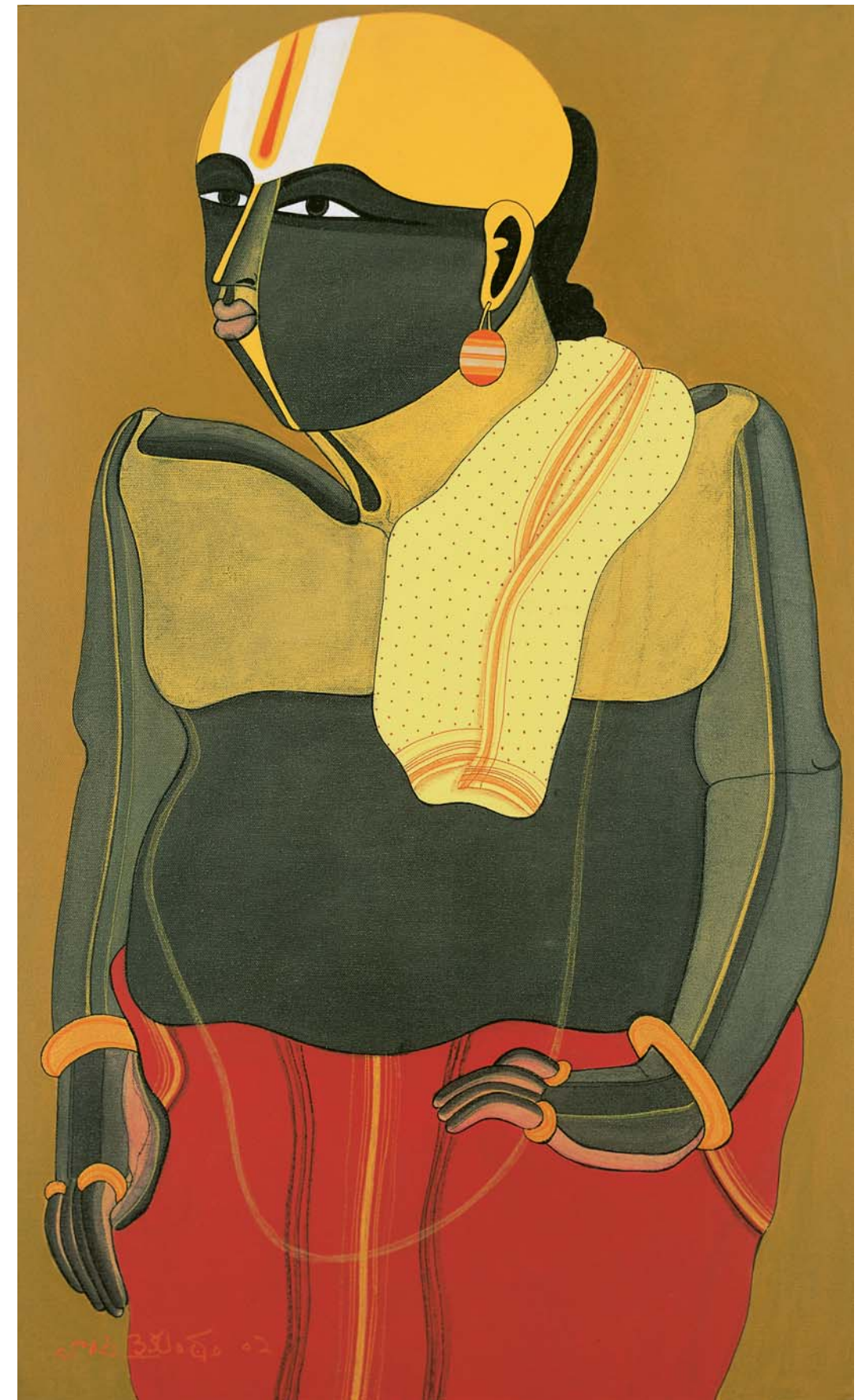
My Memories II Acrylic & Oil on Canvas 50" x 10"



My Memories III Acrylic & Oil on Canvas 50" x 45"

THOTA VAIKUNTAM

Born in 1942 in Andhra Pradesh, he studied at the College of Fine Arts and Architecture, Hyderabad for his graduation. In 1971, he won the Lalit Kala Akademi Fellowship to study at the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda. He has had over a dozen solo shows in Delhi, Mumbai and several cities in the South India. A retrospective show of his works was organised in New Delhi by Art Alive Gallery in February 2005 followed by the solo show in London. He has also participated in group shows in India and abroad. His works have been exhibited in New York, London and Birmingham, at the VII Triennale, New Delhi, and in Kassal, Germany. He won the Bharat Bhavan Biennale Award, Bhopal, in 1988 and the National Award for Painting from the Government of India, in 1993. His work is held in the collections of National Gallery of Modern Art and the Lalit Kala Academy in New Delhi, Salarjung Museum and A.P. Police Academy Hyderabad, Chester and Davida Herwitz Charitable Trust USA, Glenberra Museum, Japan. Many of his works are part of other prestigious public and private collections. He lives and works in Hyderabad.



Pandit Acrylic on Canvas Board 30" x 18"



Villager Acrylic on Canvas Board 24" x 18"



Lakshmi Acrylic on Canvas Board 24" x 18"

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