



DHOOMIMAL GALLERY
EST 1936

DHOOMIMAL GALLERY

Art Bulletin

New Delhi

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Maqbool Fida Husain, Untitled, 2005, Oil on canvas, 72 x 90 inches

Flip the page for.....

- Ravi Jain Memorial and AuTypical association curtain raiser note by Dr. Rashmi Das
- Dhoomimal Gallery at the Masterpiece, London, 2022
- Contemporary Artist in Focus... Ravi Kumar Chaurasiya's Infusing Poetry into Urban Dystopia - Curated by Georgina Maddox
- O. P. Sharma - A Hidden Gem in Indian Modern Art
- Dhoomimal Gallery in Retrospect
- Understanding Queer Art - Sayonee Goswami



From Dhoomimal Gallery Desk

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the wonderful world of contemporary art. We are pleased to revive our Dhoomimal Bulletin which was an 'Art Newspaper' earlier published in the 1980's. We did start the second edition in the mid 2000's, with VIII - X issues published on a quarterly basis. However now we are delighted to take this forward as a third run of the Dhoomimal Bulletin, as a monthly newspaper. In this we intend to cover some important industry news and activities, review exhibitions, review on artists - both present ones and a few forgotten. Emphasising particularly on the ones relevant to the history of Modern Indian Art along with sharing some content from our Dhoomimal Gallery Digital Archives.

I would also like to address an issue to my readers that has been of a deep concern to me, as well as for the art world as a whole. The problem of dealing with fake artworks which has now become a nightmare with each one of us galleries' or auction houses receiving umpteen number of images on a daily basis asking whether the artworks of an artist are 'legit' or 'fake'. This dilemma, I feel arises due to lack of appropriate documentation and absence of any scientific method involving technology to support the existing data in addition to merely judging by the human eye. The human eye for far too long has been used very conveniently to adjudge something as fake or genuine work of art. Works which are rejected at the first glance depending on which source they are coming from are often seen in auctions months later after the required due diligence. This of course is a controversial topic, however as someone who has grown up in the art world, where I have seen the practice followed in all older galleries to source artworks from 'collections' (Private or Institutional). Sometimes this would also be done via artist families, from old collectors, also from friends or students of the artists. However, in earlier times one would not really question the authenticity. A fellow artist could have artworks of another of his seniors or contemporaries and the gallery or the collector buying would most likely buy in good faith. Today we look at everything with suspicion. And why not? The priority should be that you could miss out on a hundred good works but one fake should not be missed. It's detrimental to the art market on the whole. However, again there has to be more to it than a 'mere eye'. There are enough instances to suggest that this is being done in a very informal manner and therefore there are never any open claims. It's always a hush hush opinion behind closed doors which could conveniently be changed



Jamini Roy | Untitled | Tempera on cloth pasted on board | 23 x 72 inches



Francis Newton Souza | Untitled | 11 x 8.5 inches (each) | 1994



with time. The lacunae present in this unorganised art market needs to find a home in a formal structure. One of the first modernists from Bengal has always had works coming from the family collection but at what stage do we decide that till this year what was coming from the family is fine and from this year the family started going wrong. In another incident, one of the most important artists and members of the PAG (Progressive Artists Group) some works were coming from the collection of a senior art critic; the first lot was seen as legit. However as these works kept emerging, they made room for suspicion as to how many works could there be. On observations made for both these cases, one emphasizes the importance of having some way other than the 'mere opinion of an eye'.

Here, I would like to mention about an artwork, recently showcased at an International art fair - by one of the eminent artists of Indian modern art, an artist known to be closely associated with our gallery for a long period. The image of this artwork had earlier come to me and I had refused because of the lack of interest at that point of time. After a few years the same artwork came to me again for a physical viewing, which I ran past two art critics who were the closest friends and acquaintances of this artist for over thirty years. After a close scrutiny, I decided to back this particular artwork, unfortunately at the fair one of the most significant buyers was advised against buying this work 'pronouncing' it to be an incorrect artwork. With all due respect and reserving my further conversation on this point, I chose to not convince anyone on this as I stood firm on my conviction and is more than delighted to retain my artwork that has passed through my hands. Venturing into the other fields of luxury such as jewellery where some kind of scientific analysis is conducted to ascertain a value yet the transaction takes place on the 'trust factor'. Human errors would always be a possibility but the confidence to back up any work with conviction that one is selling or transacting is the key. Any artwork with Dhoomimal label, bill or certificate, I am more than happy to buy back even at a premium and without any questions.

To take this a step further we are going to be introducing a new hologram. This hologram would have 8 unique features and would be placed behind every artwork that is sold by Dhoomimal Gallery. In addition one more hologram with the same serial number would be pasted on the authenticity certificate issued by the gallery. We would also be maintaining a record of to whom these holograms are being issued, so we can track the artworks

and a string of lineage could be drawn down.

We are also happy to offer this service free of charge to our old clients who can provide any proof of purchase or establish their purchase from Dhoomimal Gallery. We would be glad to send our team and put the holograms on any such artworks being available. In addition to this we would also be investing in some technology driven and chemical analysis methods which with time would be able to give some results on the accuracy of strokes, period surfaces of these artists and simultaneously accumulate data for research. The trained human eye and judgement with experience would certainly remain an important part in the field of art but I strongly feel that there has to be more elements to support this, than a convenient 'my eye' vs 'yours'.

It is a long path ahead but I'm confident with good intentions and support of the art world we should be able to build a creative ecosystem where it is beneficial for anyone trying to be a part of the wonderful world of Modern and Contemporary Indian Art and not only for a niche audience.

Wishing everyone a very Happy, Healthy and Prosperous 2023 from the entire Dhoomimal Team.

Assuring to stay connected !

Uday Jain
Director
Dhoomimal Gallery



Ravi Jain Memorial and AuTypical Association Curtain Raiser Note by Dr. Rashmi Das

In Delhi, we are seeing green shoots appear. The participation of Autistic Artists in top-rated professional art events is largely a no-go zone. Usually art exhibitions by autistic artists are held as charity shows. They have generally been low-budget and kept out of the ambit of art buying market. Now, one top gallery has taken a bold step to change this narrative and integrate artists on the autism spectrum. The Ravi Jain Memorial Foundation Awards for Upcoming Young Artists, the annual flagship event of Dhoomimal Gallery (DMG) is a big draw for art aficionados, connoisseurs and collectors. In its 31st edition, the gallery has added an autism layer to demonstrate the values of Inclusion and spread awareness; the Gallery in association with AuTypical.in, will create a section to showcase works of select young autistic artists in the professional grade.



Mrs. Sunaina Jain felicitating Dr. Rashmi Das, Chairperson, AuTypical

Apart from this, a high profile jury comprising of Pallavi Khandelwal, Rahul Kumar, Mithu Sen, Manisha Gera and Kanchan Chander, felt the works of few autistic artists were at par with mainstream submissions and these were exhibited in the main section. The event was held in New Delhi and spread over a month and a half. It commenced with an Exhibition Opening Preview on September 29, 2022 and ends with a Physical Auction on February 12, 2023.



From left to right: Honorable Minister of State, Mr. Rajeev Chandrashekar, Mr. Uday Jain, Dr. Rashmi Das, Mrs. Uma Jain, Ms. Kanchan Chander and Mr. Prayag Shukla.

Established in 1936, Dhoomimal Gallery is the oldest Contemporary Art gallery in India. In the previous years, Dhoomimal Gallery has felicitated several young artists who went on to become known names and established themselves in the art fraternity. Every year, they award four scholarships to young artists (working across mediums) decided by a panel of esteemed judges. In previous years, the jury has included renowned artists such as K.S Kulkarni, Krishen Khanna, Bimal Dasgupta, G.R Iranna, Pooja Iranna, Jagannath Panda etc. Awardees from the past include renowned names such as Sonia Khurana, G.R Iranna, Nidhi Aggarwal, Hem Raj and many more.



The lighting of the lamp by Mrs. Uma Jain along with Dr. Rashmi Das, Honorable Minister of State, Mr. Rajeev Chandrashekar, Ms. Kanchan Chander and Mr. Uday Jain.

Speaking about the event, Uday Jain, Proprietor, DMG said, "In its 31st year the Ravi Jain annual exhibition has provided a budding platform to over 100 artists and sculptors. Mr Ravi Jain always believed that if the art movement is to be perpetuated in the country, we cannot rely on the seniors alone and new talent should constantly be nurtured and promoted. The participation is from all over India across all mediums like painting, sculpture, installation, digital and judging is done by an eminent panel comprising of



senior artists, sculptors, critics and collectors. Hence the standard of the artists selected is quite high."

Started in 2020, AuTypical.in is a non-profit public purpose platform for showcasing the abilities of autistic children and young adults in the field of art. Autistic artists from all over India, from district towns to mega cities have exhibited their creations on this online platform.

Dr. Rashmi Das, Chairperson of AuTypical shares that, "Globally, Autistic Art does not belong to the conventional art world. It is part of a category called 'Outsider Art' which also includes self-taught artists. Outsider Art Fairs are held in New York, Paris and other European capitals. The category gained ground in the last decade and many top galleries and auction houses like Christie's feature and sell works of Outsider Artists. However, the term is controversial due to its history. Also called 'Art Brut', this was a genre of artworks created by those with no training usually on the social and cultural margins though as Roger Cardinal who popularized the concept defined Outsider Art as art of unexpected and often bewildering distinctiveness."

.... & Dhoomimal Gallery takes up the Inclusion cause

Art Curator, Writer and Adviser, Kiran Mohan whom I met, became an enthusiastic supporter for mainstreaming. She advised me to meet Uday; I explained the rationales, he did not need much convincing given the ethical moorings of his gallery and was happy to collaborate. It was Uday's idea that this be given a big platform. Autistic Artists were onboarded for the 31st Ravi Jain Memorial Foundation Awards for Upcoming Young Artists, the eligibility criteria was same as those of conventional artists from the mainstream except an age relaxation of two years.

Later, the jury cheered the Inclusion. In all, 438 entries were received out of which 73 were chosen, 10 among these were autistic artists. The medium was varied-painting, sculpture, performance, installation, drawing, photography, printmaking and digital art.

A big and bold step has been taken. Our teams have worked very hard to make this a unique experience. We are delighted that the Minister of State (MoS) for Electronics and Information Technology, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Rajeev Chandrasekhar inaugurated the Exhibition. On this occasion he addressed participants, parents, art collectors, media and other invitees. We enlisted everyone's support for embracing change, acceptance and diversity.



Mrs. Sunaina Jain felicitating The Honorable Minister of State, Mr. Rajeev Chandrashekar



From left to right: Mrs. Sunaina Jain, Mr. Jagdish Dey, Mr. Biman Das, Honorable Minister of State, Mr. Rajeev Chandrashekar, Mrs. Uma Jain, Dr. Rashmi Das, Chairperson, AuTypical, Ms. Kanchan Chander, unveiling the catalogue of RJM.



Honorable Minister of State, Mr. Rajeev Chandrashekar with Mr. Uday Jain, Director DMG

Courtesy: <https://theautisticstudent.substack.com/p/mainstreaming-autistic-art>



DHOOMIMAL GALLERY
EST 1936

Ravi Jain Memorial Exhibition and Awards, 2022

The Ravi Jain Memorial Exhibition opened up with a preview on 29th of September, 2022, with the chief guest Shri Rajeev Chandrashekhar, Honorable Minister of State (MoS) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Electronics and IT.

A total of 55 artists participated in the exhibition and 10 autistic artists. The show opened up with the lighting of the lamp by the Minister of state and Mrs. Uma Jain, alongwith the other dignitaries. It was a magical evening filled with art, joy and colors at the Dhoomimal. The Guest of Honor for the award ceremony was eminent artist and Padmi Shri, Anjolie Ela Menon. It was an honor to have Anjolie ji among us. She interacted with the awardees and also the autistic artists.

Out of 55 artists, a total of 6 artists were awarded a fellowship for their best work. The names of winning artists are:

Raja Boro (Printmaking), Kaustav Chatterjee (Painting), Vikash Dhaman (Sculpture), Surajit Mudi (Mixed Media), Abhijay Tomar (Performing Arts), Harshal Khatri (Painting).

Team Dhoomimal wishes them all the very best for their brilliant future ahead. See you all next year!!!



RJM Awardees with celebrated artist and Guest of Honor Anjolie Ela Menon. From left to right: Kaustav Chatterjee, Surajit Mudi, Harshal Khatri, Vikash Dhaman, Anjolie Ela Menon (centre), Mrs. Uma Jain, Mrs. Sunaina Jain, Abhijay Tomar (back), Mr. Uday Jain (back), Raja Boro (centre)



From left to right: Mr. Hem Raj (First RJM awardee), Shri. Uday Jain, Director, DMG, Rakesh Gupta and artist Mr. Jagadish Dey.



Ravi Jain Memorial Award ceremony moments

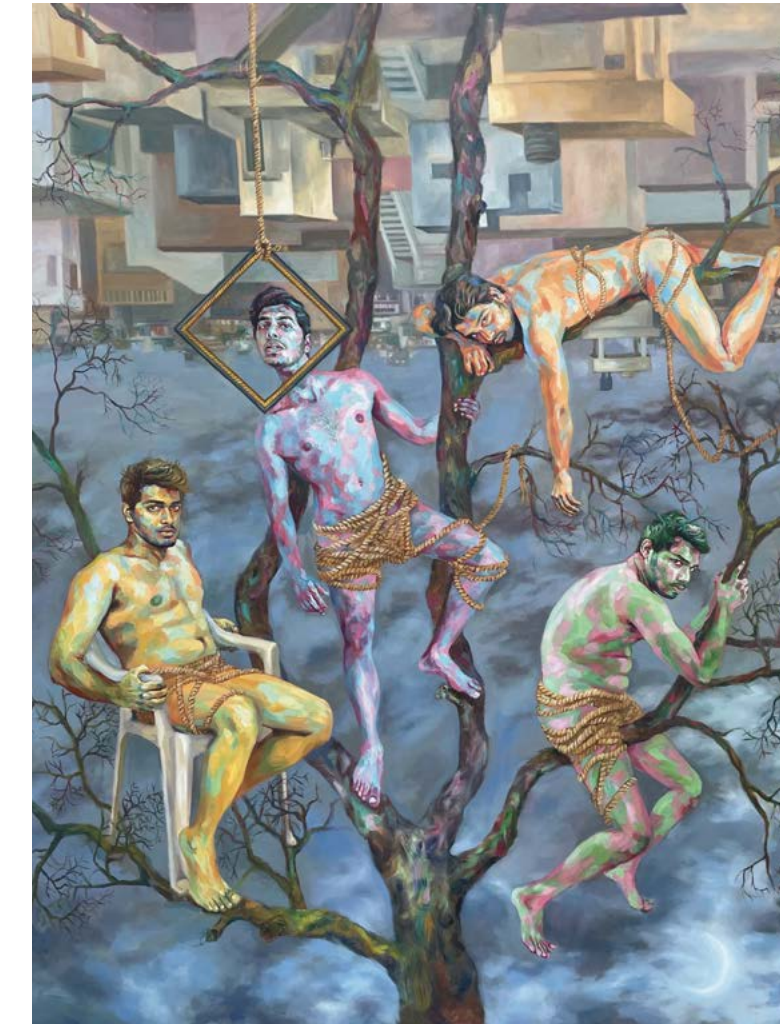


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EST 1936

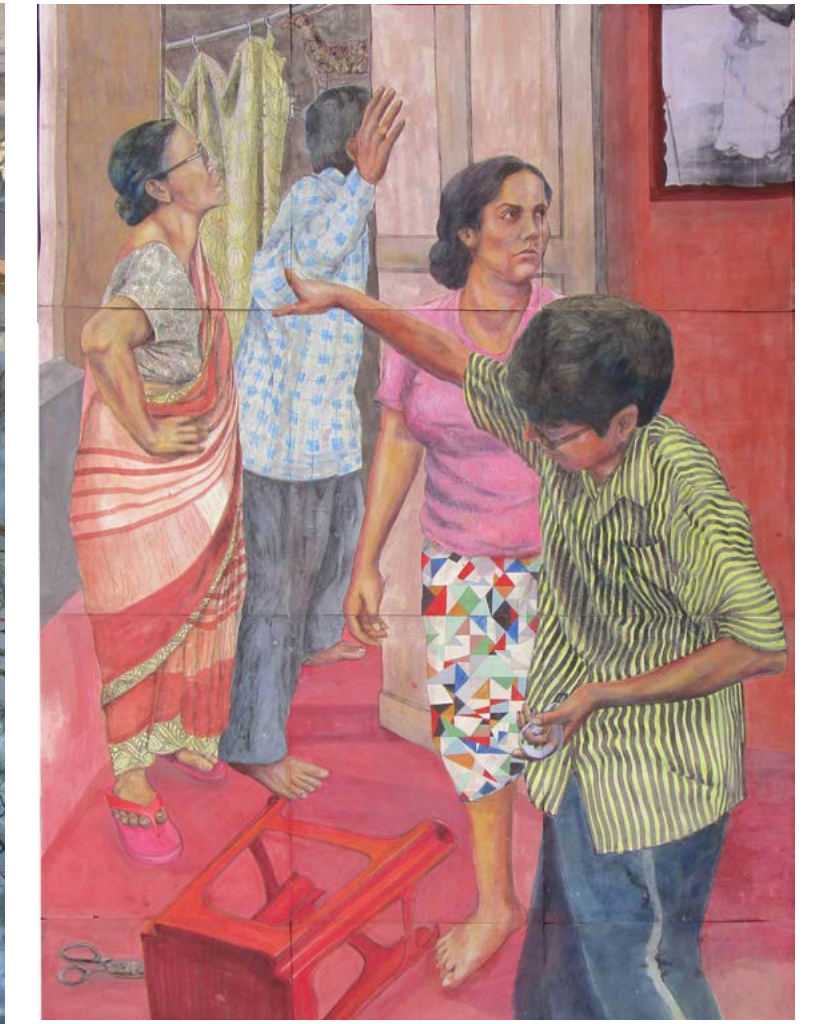
Artworks of Ravi Jain Memorial Awardees & AuTypical Artist



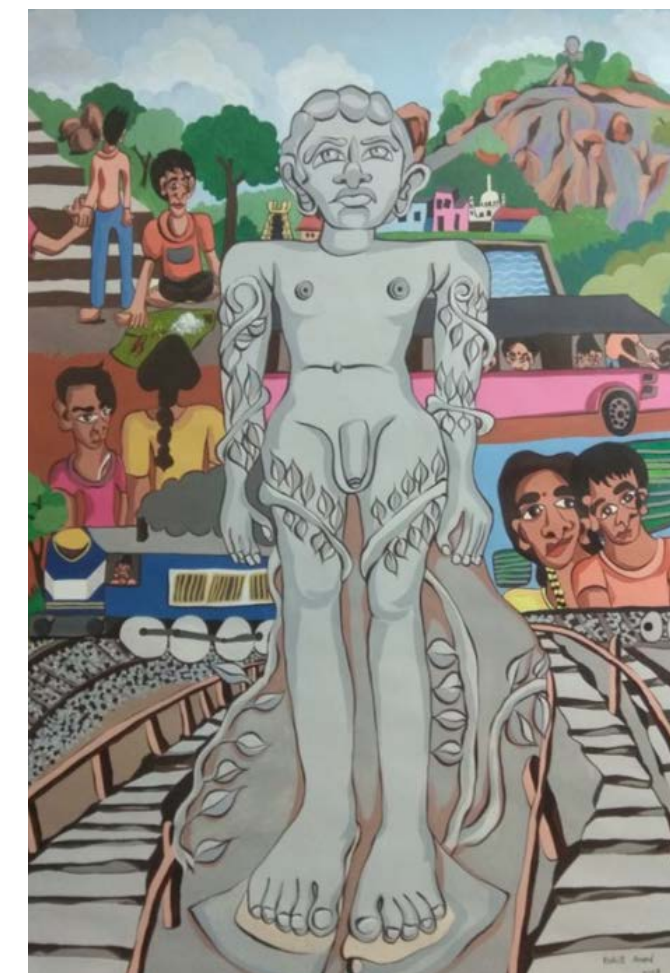
Vikash Dhaman | Searching For Land | Iron coating on fibreglass | 54 x 25 x 22 inches | 2021



Harshal Khatri | Self Contemplation | Oil on canvas | 84 x 66 inches | 2021



Kaustav Chatterjee | Domestion Scene With a 200 Watt Bulb | Mixed media on paper | 98 x 60 inches | 2020



Rohit Anand | Gomesteshwara | Acrylic colour on Canson on paper | 28 x 57.5 inches



Kalash Cariappa | Layer of love | Mixed Media on fabriano paper | 27.5 x 19.5 inches



Artist in Focus - Ravi Kumar Chaurasiya Infusing Poetry into Urban Dystopia

Artist Ravi Kumar Chaurasiya brings to his work the duality of development addressing how urban concretization and unplanned cities creates waste and denudes nature. His paintings are mostly figurative but they are not 'academically realistic', they do carry elements of folk and miniature in their stylization. His concern for the environment is well documented and he combines his lived reality with elements of research in the field so that the artwork that he executes is factually significant and emotionally moving. His work conveys a sense of angst and yet adds poesy to the human condition. While his landscapes appear idyllic at first glance, one may unpack them to discover that the artwork is actually packed with hidden references to urban waste and pollution under the playful and expressive appearance of the artwork.

Urban waste impacts all aspects of our lives, the air, the soil and the waters. It impacts the quality of our lives in terms of biodegradable material and the addition of nutrients, which contribute to eutrophication, which is a good process. However it also causes too many plants to grow on the surface of the water because of the chemicals that are used to fertilize plant-life and spread through rain and air. It leads to an imbalance of the natural forces that are often delicate and need attention but go unchecked leading to drying out of even natural ponds and smaller rivers.

Hailing from the township of Yusufpur in the Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh, Chaurasiya belongs to a working class family and he has faced challenging socio-economic conditions. He had to struggle to complete his art education and it is with dedication, scholarship and support that he has finished his Masters at Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) in Delhi after his Bachelors at Banaras Hindu University (BHU). The city of Banaras formed an important part of Chaurasiya's emotional landscape, for it was here that he began visiting the Banaras ghats, sketching on his own and it is here that he created the 'dog series', a study of the stray dogs that populated the ghats and befriended him. It is here that he was led to discover animals as 'fellow compatriots. One experiences that sense of camaraderie with animals, even in the way that he renders his study of the beast of burden like camels, donkeys, birds, trees, hill-tops the earth's crust and the night sky filled with stars, that possess a sensitivity in the manner in which they are rendered.

into reality," says Chaurasiya. Such is the ambition and the potential that Chaurasiya has been gripped by ever since he has been struggling to eke out his survival in the big city. He now speaks of human accountability and brings to it the actuality of his lived situations. Delhi is currently his city of residence but the metaphor he still carries through his artwork relates well to difficulties of small town life and the harsh realities of unplanned urban-rural development. His painterly language has evolved from just working with mainly canvas to now including a new found object of computer e-waste that he has converted into aesthetic elements which he incorporates into his work as part of his artistic expression. His current body of work focuses on waste and the darker side of the human condition in relation to our environment.

Chaurasiya's works sometimes feature a large hill-like structure or a mushroom shaped cloud with the textures that are created with matchstick heads where he transfers the burnt-out effect of the matchstick onto the canvas and textures on the surface indicating how this constant sense of burn-out finally affects the climate. He is also currently working with E-waste workers, interviewing them and getting a slice of their life.

Chaurasiya addresses the issue of class in his work, as well. He often feels that 'development' has been glossed over as this 'amazing process' without taking into consideration the pitfalls of blind capitalist growth that does not always keep the interests of humankind and nature at heart. Rather, it is focused on profit and sales. Unplanned development leads to forced migrant-labour that further leads to the development of 'slum areas in the city' and that too leads to unequal and often unhygienic 'growth'. Population needs to be well planned and located in the city in a systematic manner where even those who chose economic living have a place to stay and they do not end up in the underdeveloped slums of the city living off the margins of society.

Georgina Maddox
Critic-Curator
New Delhi

"It's very easy to dream, but it's very hard to turn dreams



Artist Ravi Kumar Chaurasiya with his artworks at the opening at Dhoomimal Gallery



Jeevan Yatra (IX - XIII) | Watercolour & dry pigment on canson paper
11 x 10 inches (each) | 2022

Temporary Beauty of Nature | Watercolour on paper
8 x 11.5 inches (each) | 2022



Dhoomimal Gallery at Masterpiece, London, 2022



Dhoomimal Gallery (DMG), established in 1936 by Shri. Ram Babu Jain is the oldest contemporary art gallery in India. Having recently completed 75 years of successfully promoting Indian contemporary art, Dhoomimal has always been more of an institution than a mere commercial gallery.

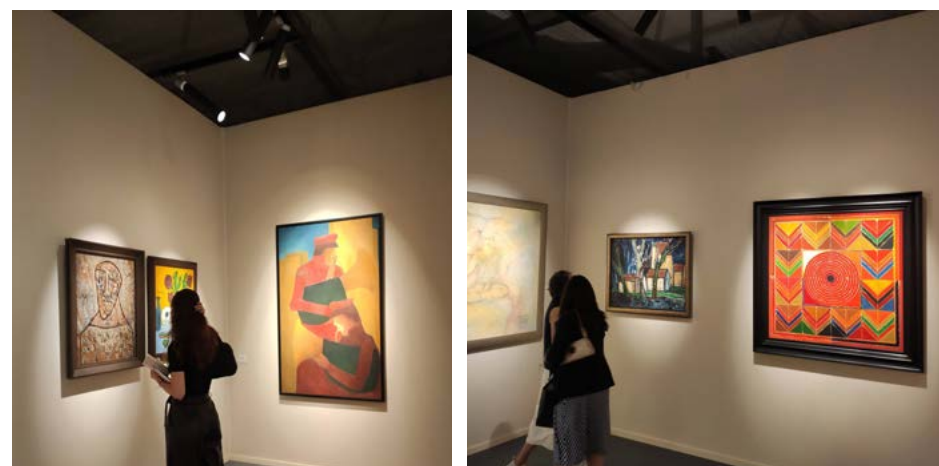
Sh. Jain, an art lover, was primarily into the printing and publishing business. His appreciation of art over the years brought him into contact with some leading artists of the period. This led to the birth of Dhoomimal Gallery at Connaught Place. The gallery made its beginnings by displaying the works of well-known painters of yesteryears like late Sailoz Mookherjea and Jamini Roy and soon became a hub for contemporary art as well as a meeting place for the capital's artists.

In the late thirties, Dhoomimal establishment came to support "Kalakar" a forum for the art minded individuals of the capital who organized musical evenings and sponsored art exhibitions. Shri Ravi Jain also initiated publication of monographs on some of the well-known artists of the country like Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Jamini Roy, Sailoz Mookherjea and others. This brought light to the otherwise yet obscure art world.

After the untimely demise of Shri Ram Jain, the leadership of the gallery passed into the hands of his son Shri Ravi Jain who had just returned from America where he was involved with Indian art. The gallery under his leadership was rejuvenated and in the 70's, the Gallery entered its most active and glorious phase, by coming in close proximity and having regular exhibition of artists such as M. F. Husain, J. Swaminathan, Shanti Dave, F. N. Souza, H. A. Gade, Krishen Khanna among a host of others. Mr Ravi Jain and J. Swaminathan were considered as one of the best artist-dealer teams and played arguably the most influential role in making Indian contemporary art popular on a country wide basis. The gallery played a pivotal role in bringing forth the genius of F. N. Souza

to the Indian public by having several important shows of his, including one in 1976, which was visited by the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and another show titled "Souza of the 40's" in 1984, which is considered as one of the most acclaimed exhibitions of Indian art till date. Today, Dhoomimal has as of the best private collection of artworks of stalwarts such as F. N. Souza, J. Swaminathan, H. A. Gade, Bimal Das Gupta, Jamini Roy, Sailoz Mookherjea, Anjolie Ela Menon, Krishen Khanna among many others. The gallery today under the leadership of Mr. Uday Jain and his mother Mrs. Uma Jain is the forebearer of the fast growth of the Indian art market not only in India but globally too. Under the banner of "Ravi Jain Memorial Trust" the gallery continues to promote art and artists offering scholarships to young and upcoming artists. Many of these young artists such as Hem Raj, G. R. Iranna, Somnath Singh, M. S. C. Satya Sai are today big names in the contemporary art world.

Last year has been wholesome at Dhoomimal Gallery, when we got the opportunity to exhibit at the prestigious Masterpiece, London. We were at Booth 518 and the exhibition was held at the Royal Chelsea Hospital South Grounds, London. Dhoomimal put up show surrounding their best collection of Master artists like J. Swaminathan, F. N. Souza, M.F. Husain et al. The show was up from 30th June to 6th of July, 2022.



Visitors viewing the artworks at Masterpiece, London.



The artworks on display at Masterpiece, London.



Om Prakash Sharma - A Hidden Gem in Indian Modern Art

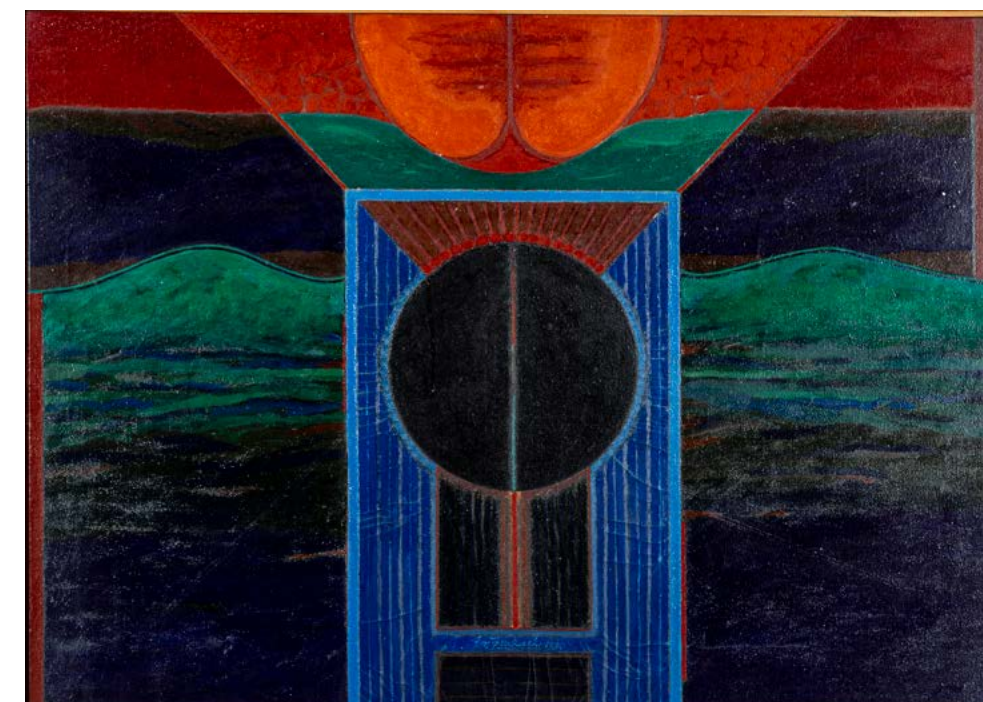
Yet another feather into the world of art, Om Prakash Sharma's genius touches the sky and beyond. Born on 14th of December, 1932. Sharma was a painter, visual artist, professor, writer and sitarist based in New Delhi. In a career spanning over six decades, his work was always been centered around New Delhi and he was known for his uniquely Indian visual style. His artworks have been exhibited at over 100 solo and group exhibitions. He was known for his unique style, treatment and for establishing a new form of art called Neo-Tantrism.

Neo-Tantra can be defined as a new perspective towards the modern and more western interpretation of traditional Hindu and Buddhist tantric sex. The west took an interest in Tantra and its perception has deviated from the Tantric traditions. It was seen as a "cult of ecstasy", combining sexuality and spiritually to change Western attitudes towards sex.

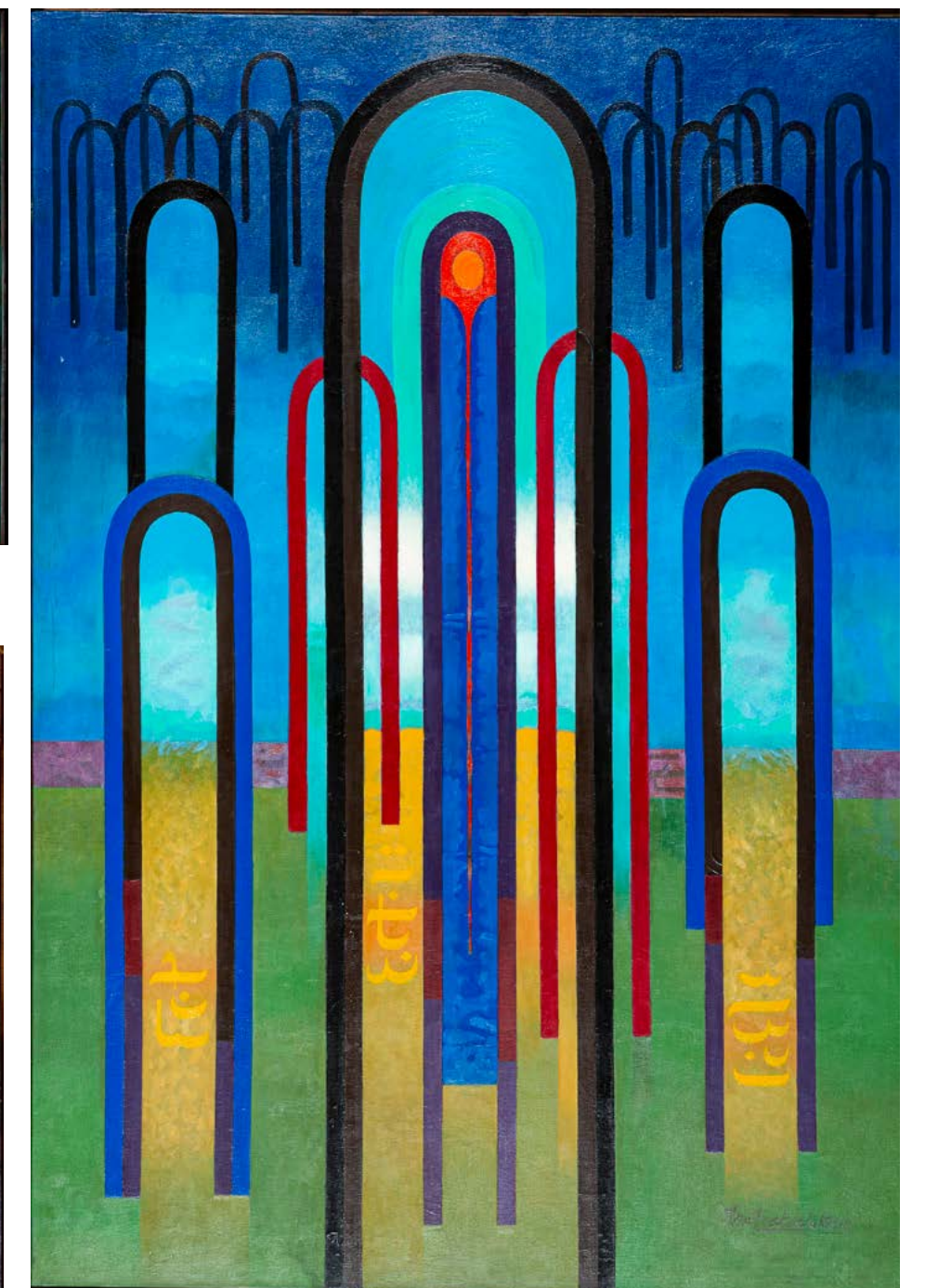
Om Prakash Sharma was a remarkable sitar player as well. He learnt the instrument back in 1956 when he came in contact with Pandit Ravi Shankar, who helped him in identifying the traditional iconography of different ragas which inspired him to paint 25 Ragamala paintings in watercolor. Sharma also has authored numerous books on art including "Art in art" in 1994, "Om Prakash-Forty Years 1958-1998" in 1999 and "Om Prakash-Sixty Years 1951-2012" in 2013.



O. P. Sharma | Parallax Mandala | Oil on canvas | 36 x 62 inches | 2006



O. P. Sharma | Out of the Hills | Oil on canvas | 33 x 46 inches | 1989



O. P. Sharma | Gateways of Faith | Oil on canvas | 70 x 48 inches | 1998



DHOOMIMAL GALLERY
EST 1936

DHOOMIMAL GALLERY IN RETROSPECT...



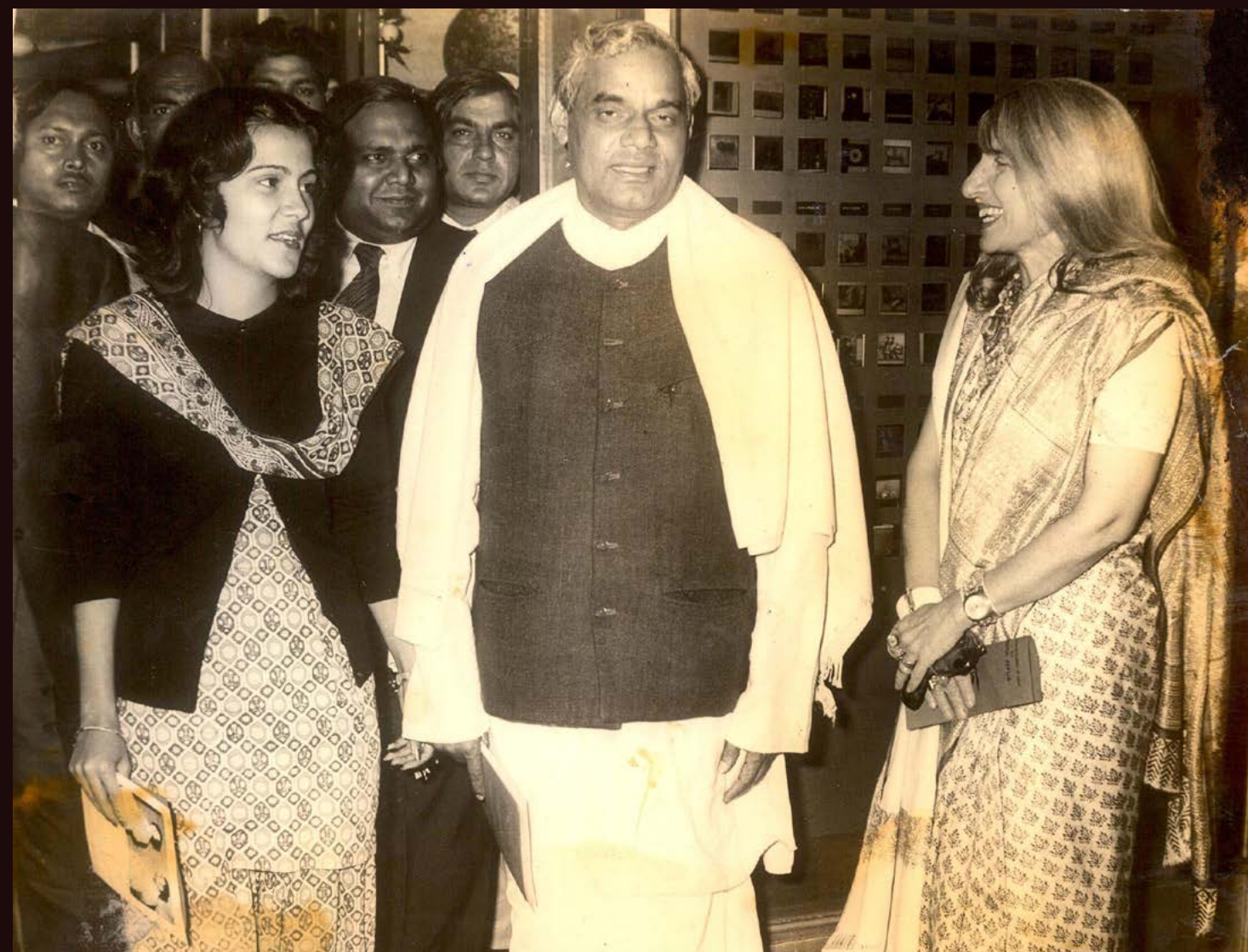
Shri. Ravi Jain, Director Dhoomimal Gallery, with Artist Arup Das and a visitor



DHOOMIMAL GALLERY
EST 1936



Artists and Guests at an opening at Dhoomimal Gallery



Former Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee inaugurating the exhibition of paintings of Mrs. Amina Ahuja (wife of the then Indian Ambassador to Former USSR - now Russia), standing to his left



Dr. Fred Harrington of the Ford Foundation studying intently a painting.



UNDERSTANDING QUEER ART

BY: SAYONEE GOSWAMI

Queer artists of India have taken the subject of Queer Art to the next level across pan India. Contemporary art has hit a new level of freedom as the Supreme Court of India struck down Section 377 of IPC. The Queer identity has reached new highs with the implementation of this law where we celebrate 'love as love' in its purest form. Like the Queer community, Queer Art also has seen a considerable amount of growth in its own way. In modern India, with the limitations and the adherence we have considerable number of queer artists who have represented the idea of queer identity in the new and fresh forms. From prints to canvases, to etchings to street art, we have it all. If we consider the modern art masters, there are only a few artists of the country who have contributed towards the queer art. However so, the queer community has received much appreciation and relevance towards the art sector. The queer community of the country saw a new light for taking their creativity to the next level. Although, queer art has been continuing for quite some time now, however, it gained momentum when Bhupen Khakhar's 'You Can't Please All' was painted, which included life sized figure of a naked man, who leans over a balcony and surveys a townscape below him. The figure comprises the major part of the composition. The scene is sparsely populated and painted in cool blues, greys and greens which along with the dark sky in the top left corner and the lights in the windows of the buildings, evoke twilight. Two figures and a donkey are seen together in three seemingly separate instances, which appear to represent the same characters at different moments in time, implied by the difference in scale between each depiction.

Elsewhere, a man tends to his car and figures congregate inside homes. The balcony wall on which the naked man leans have a large section cut out of it, which along with the visible interiors of the houses and the car door flung wide open, gives the scene a sense of openness, heightened by the aerial perspective afforded by the view from the balcony. In contrast to the scene below, the building occupied by the naked man is painted in warmer reds and pinks, which serves to magnify the distinction between the private realm of the man's abode and the public world outside.⁽ⁱ⁾

The Queer art critics saw this as a way of bringing out the art of community. Many criticized Khakhar's paintings as blasphemous and not reaching to the propagandas that are laid down by the mainstream artists and modernists. Fast forwarding towards the end 20th century, the art world saw the emergence of a lot of queer artists. From

photographer Sunil Gupta to comic artist Arzoo Naqvi, the queer artists have perfectly summarized queer art and have been working meticulously towards the advancement of queer art at large. Sunil Gupta an India born Canadian photographer, based in London, is paving out a remarkable way for 'gay rights and how homosexual men are treated. Kalki Subramaniam is India's first ever transgender artist who also runs Sahodari Foundation, a pioneer organization in India working on social empowerment of the transgender community raising funds for their empowerment via art. Her visual art mostly comprises portraits with colors of the rainbow, featuring figurative art meshing with pop art.

Uttam Chitrakar is a unique artist who comes from West Bengal's Midnapore. He is known for revolutionizing the street-side Pat painting of Kalighat by introducing queer and transgender elements into the traditional art. From the depiction of Hindu gods to mythological characters, Kalighat paintings also reflect a variety of subjects, including everyday life, the representation brought into them by Uttam is an important step towards larger LGBTQA+ acceptance.

Durga Gawde is an artist, sculptor, activist and self-professed "India's first drag-king" genderfluid, nonbinary and pansexual. Chronicling their own journey with their body and identity, their art is an honest and pathbreaking insight into queerness. They are known for performance art and undertake various interactive initiatives to educate people about gender and sexuality. T. Praveen Kumar is a Bengaluru based artist and has a gritty take on the artistic depiction of queerness. These sketches and watercolors tend to take on darker hues and veer often into the territory of contemplative portraits of a diversity of individuals; themes of sexuality are also explored with power and grace.

Queer Indian artist Priya Dali has been in the news for exploring sexual identity through the uncommon mechanism of a comic book. The art by the graphic designer and illustrator veers distinctly towards the comic book territory, all the while busting stereotypes, addressing sexuality and remaining super-accessible for viewers. The young illustrator, Veer Misra in many of instances takes up a rose-tinted look at the world of queerness in art, quite literally awash with shades of pink, depicting unabashed love in all its glorious avatars. But, along with intimacy, the illustrations also explore themes of loneliness, self-discovery, contemplation,



companionship and more. Opashona Ghosh is an artist and facilitator now based in London. According to her website, "their work explores feminist approaches to mental and sexual health and club culture locating the intersections of body, community and ritual." The art in unapologetic and has a modernist pop culture vibe meshing with surrealist depictions.

Debasmita Das', ink-like swooshes drenched in colors bring life to the nuanced experience and nature of growing up and the exploration of the self that subsequently follows. Her illustrations talk about her own personal narrative through captured instances of her discoveries about sexuality, gender with sketched flushes of mood and the queer female body. Her iconographic style incites the subject of her art. From outlines of pink vibrant lotuses to a dancing figure with side swept hair; her subjects are always inhabiting a motion.

Arzoo Naqvi exemplifies the desi Indian girl exploring her queerness through witty and quirky comic-like illustrations. Her queer pieces include comics on bisexuality, the haze of conforming to the gender binary and desi queerness. Arzoo also extensively illustrates about body positivity, mental well-being and body acceptance⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

Any art that can be considered "queer" refers to the re-appropriation of the term in the 1980's, when it was snatched back from the homophobes and oppressors to become a powerful political and celebratory term to describe the experience of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people.⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

Adhering to no particular style, for over more than a century, queer art has used photography, portraiture, abstract painting, sculpture and collage to explore the varieties and depths of queer identity. While homosexuality has a long history, the modern sense of the term is relatively new. Since the late 19th century cultural and legal responses to homosexuality have evolved, but it was only in the second half of the 20th century, that many of the laws criminalizing homosexual acts were overturned. It wasn't until the late 20th century that homosexuality no longer considered a pathology by psychiatrists and it wasn't until the 21st century that marriage rights were granted to the same-sex couples. Throughout all of these circumstances, queer art has addressed these issues covertly and overtly, insisting on a voice in the art world that routinely suppressed it.^(iv)

It is always said that the society always condemns something that it doesn't understand. The criminalization of the homosexual acts were as always condemned by the society and it also majorly affected the representation of

queer art in general. The queer artists resort to symbolism and subtle hints in the interpretations of their artworks.

In a horrific incident surrounding the exhibition of Balbir Krishan, a queer artist from Haryana, Krishan in his many interviews often claimed that it was very hard for him to 'come out from the closet' and host a solo exhibition in the Lalit Kala Akademi. The artist in his interview has admitted to be threatened and one of his paintings damaged. The culprit had escaped leaving the artist broken. Krishan shares that he almost gave up on his show and was wrapping up the entire show when he received support from a senior artist and that is when he saw the community coming together and he was proud about it. In his interview with Grazia, Krishan also revealed about his family not being supportive about his sexuality.^(v)

With the rise of activism in the wake of the Civil Rights protests and the AIDS epidemic queer art became more frank and more political in its subject matter, forcing the viewers to recognize queer culture and to underscore the institutional inequalities and hypocrisy that fueled homophobia.

The Identity Politics surrounding queer art has sparked much debate, with some artists embracing Identity Politics and other eschewing it as not important for their work. The shifting nature of identities in particular and changing contexts has induced much questioning in queer communities and produced a myriad of answers.^(vi)

In conclusion, queer art has been gaining momentum slowly. With the solo and joint exhibitions by various queer artists across the country, queer art has been made accessible to all the people. Also, not only in the art market, Queer art is also important in spreading an awareness about the community, to educate people more on the art.

Credentials:

- (i) <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/khakhar-you-cant-please-all-to7200>
- (ii) <https://homegrown.co.in/article/803624/5-amazing-queer-indian-artists-tackling-identity-through-their-art>
- (iii) <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/queer-art/>
- (iv) <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/queer-art/>
- (v) <https://www.grazia.co.in/people/balbir-krishan-on-queer-art-coming-out-more-5650.html>
- (vi) <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/queer-art/>



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**DHOOMIMAL GALLERY
EST 1936**



Lalit Lal
Sahay Bhabhani (1906 - 1960)
Untitled
Oil on canvas
34 x 22 inches, 86 x 56 cms