

Cognitive Realities

16th, May, 2011

@ Level 10

Jumeirah Emirates Towers



Cognitive Realities

The exhibition, **Cognitive Realities**, features an interesting amalgamation of some of the most creative contemporary artists of the optimistic Indian art scene and burgeoning Emirati art vistas. They have made their presence felt at the international level and are recognized as the harbingers of growth and transformation. The exhibits featured in the show are significant for their exploration of capturing images and turning them into inspired manifestations that pulsate in no uncertain way.

The form and content chosen by the artists is original as they discover newer paths to present the expressions of their aspirations and realities. The potent images created to etch the pictorial space with precise ideas and thoughts are definite to each artist's thought process and hence the work evolves on its own referential context and becomes persuasive to involve us to discover further. Distances and differences of experiences and origin blur in this togetherness.

What constitutes Art?

In today's age, BC could very well stand for Before Camera. The ubiquitous camera has gripped the mind's gaze to such an extent that a lot of artistic "seeing" happens through the camera lens. It has certainly taken a toll on the expanse of ophthalmic experience and its subsequent expression. The advent of camera did away with the need to preserve people and places and things in realistic terms for posterity. Precamera times had led to varying genres of art over the centuries and now when the camera's eye itself has become the medium or even idiom of seeing, where does the artist go from here? It would be only logical to assume that the artist's gaze would perceive cognitive reality in an interesting variation of Roshomon's truth. After all, nothing is absolute and nothing is complete.

And yet when one is delving into expressions of contemporary reality, be they thoughts, emotions or experiences, the form must strike a chord and that can only happen when one is convinced that it cannot be expressed any other way. Be stylization or realism, if it fails to convince the onlooker about the reason of its very existence, obviously there is something lacking in its very use. This especially true in the case of human figures that populate canvases of contemporary masters – for they take forms as malleable entities. And what they do it is what sets them apart and their works distinct. And if the initiated onlooker is left wondering about its form and its *raison d'être*, will it be considered the



artist's failure? It is the exploration of this creativity that is manifest in the form of all art. And yet, the nebulousness of this dream-like state is not obscure or oblique. Its inherent strength lies in its ability to develop to encase within its domain the manifestations of images. Can images that are not nebulous, but classic ideations be mirrored? Not as unspoken presences, but entities that leave an ineffaceable notion on all that comes within its sphere and territory. It is this indelibility then which becomes the factor that impels change – not as a destination to be arrived at, but as a journey that passes through the entire scope or prism of experiences. The exhibition features an interesting amalgamation of some of the most creative contemporary artists of the optimistic Indian art scene and Emirati origin. They have made their presence felt at the international level and are recognized as the harbingers of growth and transformation. The exhibits featured in the show are significant for their exploration of capturing images and turning them into inspired manifestations that pulsate in no uncertain way. The form and content chosen by the artists is original as they discover newer paths to present the expressions of their aspirations and realities. The potent images created to etch the pictorial space with precise ideas and thoughts are definite to each artist's thought process and hence the work evolves on its own referential context and becomes persuasive to involve us to discover

further. Distances and differences of experiences and origin blur in this togetherness. If art be the embodiment of the finer sensibilities, then it must perform its primary purpose of creating in the mind's canvas a space that in turn, distills to perfection, tranquility in tune with the higher consciousness of the universe. And by definition art must enrich and nourish the inherent creative impulse of both its creator and the beholder. It must unfold a spectrum of emotions that flow with the moment like a veritable deluge that envelops to create anew that silent moment. Silence that celebrates the pulsating life breath, sans the cacophony of sound, but yet alleviates the senses with its pauses. And where the mind is an ocean, it has so many things, thoughts, emotions – not necessarily in that order – that the ripples create a reverberation that lights up the chosen path. The light and resonance of these creates echoes in silences.

Only the sensibilities need to be attuned to hear them and see them as we see them visually. This sensitivity needs to be perfected over time, only to multiply manifold which create spirals of sound, sight and thought that continue to be part of the significance of creative impulses. Perhaps it is the perfection of the reflection when the creator looks within to merge with the without, is what sets the works apart. This exhibition captures the joyous moment when reflections resonate with the

exhilaration of creation. Creation that is pristine in the purity of that special moment. Creations where reflections that cast a shadow don't deter, but find the path to a newer horizon. The creator and the creation and the onlooker amalgamate into a whole. It is art that one wants to cherish for a lifetime and more.

The works that revel in the creative impulse that unfolds within the quietitude of aloneness. Painted by different artists, yet there is a sense of tandem that prevails through the works. They breathe as if in unison and are imbued with the serenity of silence. They explore the lines in context of the mystical myths that are a part of the cultural ethos of the Indian milieu. The stunning abstract works capture the essence of existence on a myriad level in perfectly balanced aesthetics that energize the space they are placed in. The works reflect the magnificent metallic jewel colours of the desert and the harmony of the earth's eternal dance in all its glory as they echo the underlying philosophy of lines that convey a thousand thoughts in art works by the artists of Emirati origin.

These works have an inherent need to be simple, yet specific, and quiet. These forms are conceived and transformed into an overall language that is an emotional response to life and its mystery. It is a subtle interplay with the romantic content of a personal language that can induce, indeed seduce, the viewer to look at the canvas. One

cannot divorce the newness of the idea from the artistic representation in each case. All the frames have a definite mettle and stand out as separate entities when juxtaposed with works of the same series. However, the forms go beyond merely providing surface for the forms to manifest. The paintings lend credibility to the fact that technique is instrumental to their being. The manner in which many of the idioms have evolved— underlines that technique is pivotal and not merely a secondary creative tool. That is to say that representation of sheer ideas in the absence of being grounded and well-aware about the procedural nuances takes away from an artist's projection of ideas. And the outcome of such a thoughtful marriage of craftsmanship and imaginative capabilities is what transforms their canvases into an act of reverence and expression of gratification. What one needs to look for is the meaning that lies beyond the obvious. Just like the lines which fade away into the undefined territories and take a leap into the unknown, one has to notice the finer elements, which carry the actual inspiration and have the mystical ability of transporting you as the audience into the third world, the secret territory of the artist's imagination.

That has been the persuasion evident in the work in this exhibition. They are the product of the artist's free-wheeling expression, where much is left to the imaginative faculties of the

onlooker. This enables their works to establish a dialogue with the audience, thereby making them an intrinsic part of the idea projected as a whole. It demands from the viewer a certain amount of time, a close association, understanding and friendship. And the outcome of such a thoughtful marriage of craftsmanship and profound imaginative capabilities is what transforms the canvases into an act of reverence and expression of gratification, it is up to you to allow it wash over you in a dance that is rather like the Indian monsoon or a desert storm – inundating with its sheer magnitude and at the same time spiritual in its quest to unite the creator and its creations seamlessly.



LIST OF ARTISTS

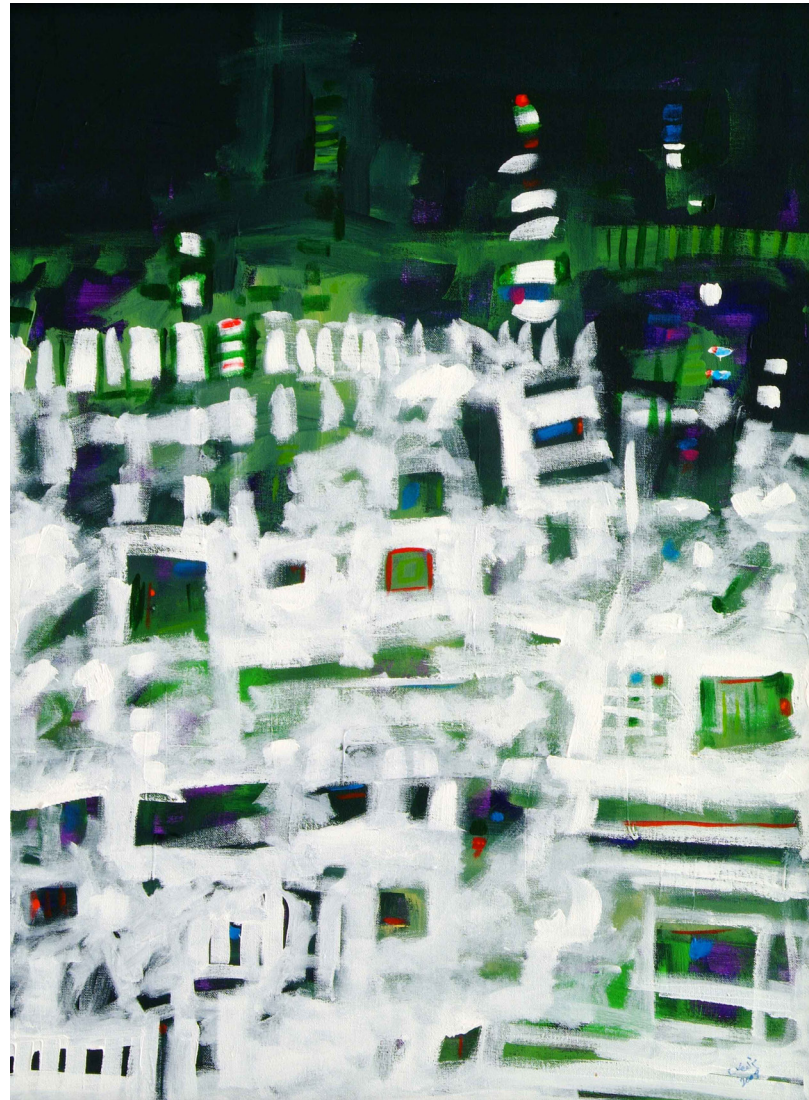
U.A.E

- Mohammed Al-Qassab
- Mattar bin Lahij
- Jalal Luqman
- Mona Al-Khaja

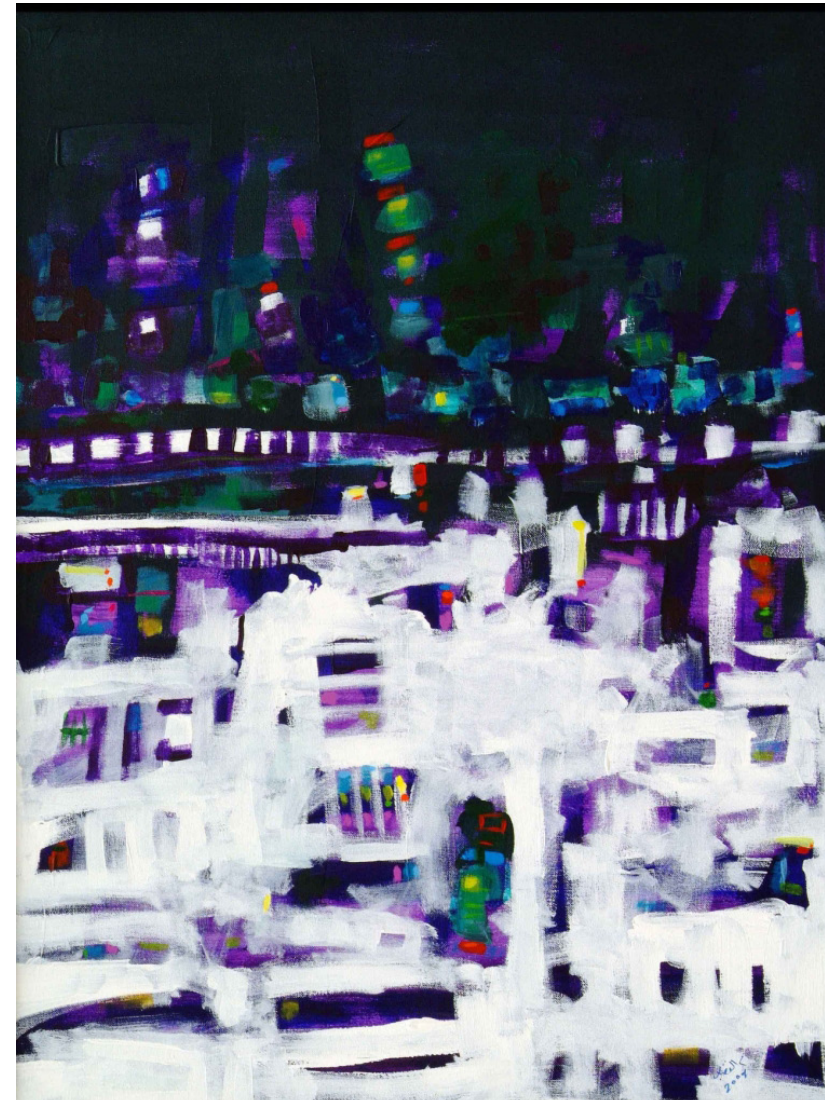
INDIA

- Anjolie Ela Menon
- Amiya Bhattacharya
- Bose Kshnamachari
- FN Souza
- Jaideep Mehrotra
- Seema Kohli
- Surya Prakash
- Laxma Gaud
- Lalu Prasad Shaw
- Harsh Vardhan
- B Prabha
- Prabhakar Kolte

Artist: Mohammed Al-Qassab



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Artist: [Mattar Bin Lahij](#)



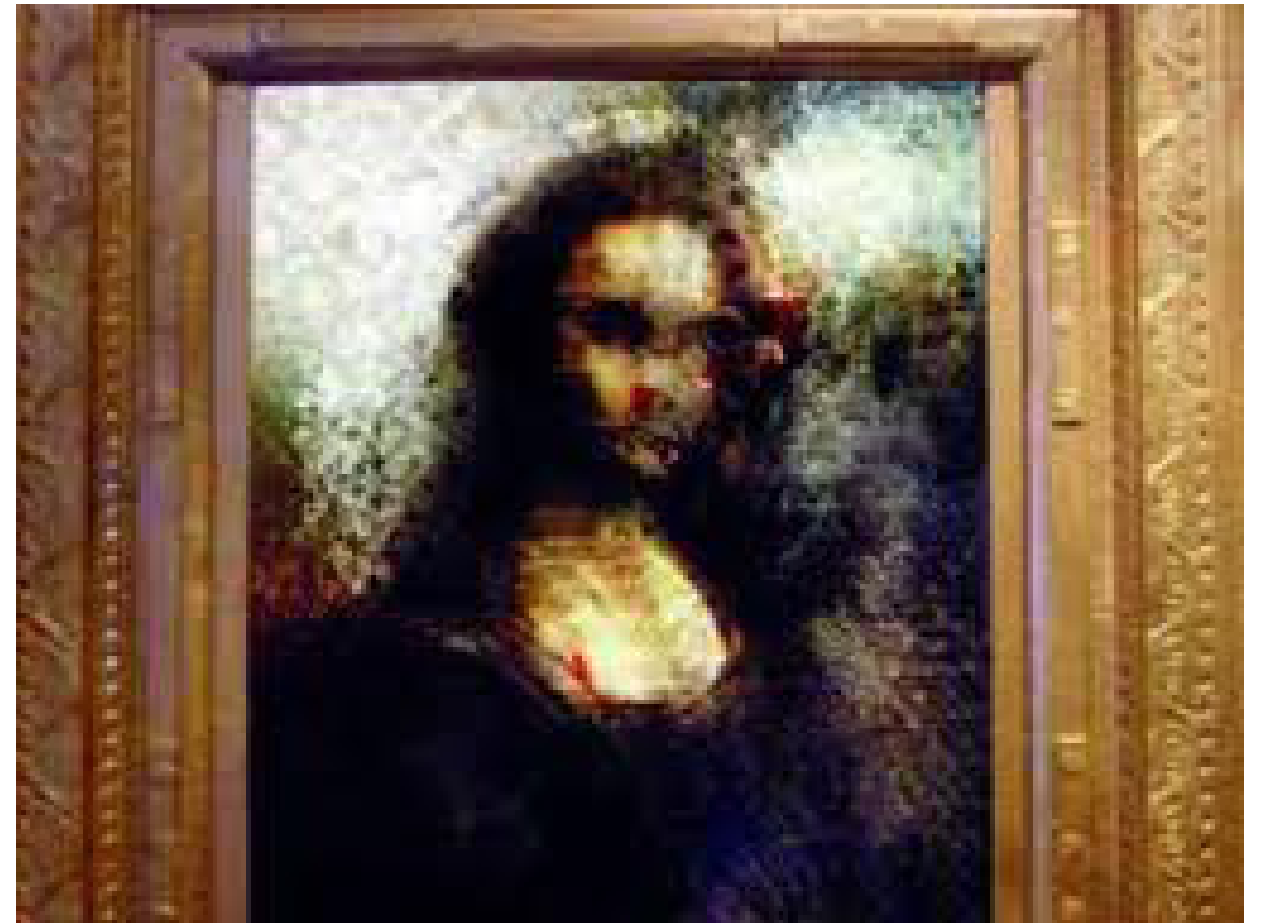
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Artist: Amiya Bhattacharya



Artist: Bose Krishnamachari



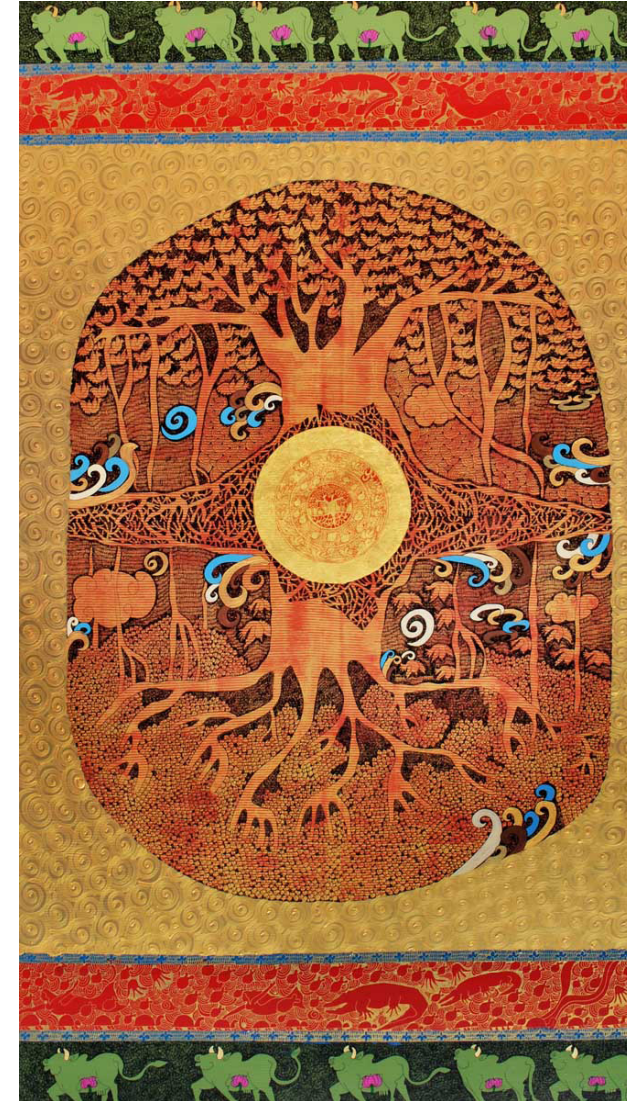
Artist: F N Souza



Artist: Jaideep Mehrotra



Artist: Seema Kohli



Artist: Surya Prakash



Artist: Laxma Gaud



Artist: [Lalu Prasad Shaw](#)



Artist: [Harsh Vardhan](#)



Artist: B Prabha



Artist: Prabhakar Kolte



Dr. Alka Raghuvanshi

Dr. Alka Raghuvanshi, wears many hats for she is among the few authorities on the arts who traverses the folk and classical arts, performing and plastic arts, crafts and aesthetics with ease and is known for her crusading spirit for the arts. She is an unusual combination of scholarship and hands on person who has constantly strived to put the arts centre stage with her multi-disciplinary approach traversing the various media.

She is India's first trained art curator, having trained at the Goldsmiths College, London and the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford. She has curated and designed major exhibitions many of which travelled to other parts of the country and the world as well. All the exhibitions were marked by an amazing interplay of indigenous design and their contemporary connect. The detailed catalogues she wrote, designed and edited as part of exhibitions have withstood the test of time and are valid in the contemporary global context.

The major exhibitions she has curated along with catalogues of the same name include – Dancing Hues, Vicarious Pleasures – why not?, Resonating Metaphors, Silent Dreams Voluble Realities, Reflections Within, Parallel Realities, Mindscapes of Mindspaces, Call of the Bamboos – art from the North-East, The Sikhs – soldiers of destiny, Livable Art – a silent moment, Shatadru,

Sakshar – posters for social change, Sabla – women's voice, Swatantrata – 50 years of education, Shamiyana – the big top of literacy among others.

A keen painter herself, her solo shows titled Painting a thread at The Emporio, New Delhi, Expanding Metaphors at Gallery Ragini, at Whispers of Light held at the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and Showers of Meteors at Kalahita Art Gallery, Hyderabad, Sundrops and Moonbeams in New Delhi and Bangalore drew valued response from both audiences and critics alike and is able to perceive and experience the various arts from the vantage position of a doer as well as an onlooker. She has participated in some very important group shows in New Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Turkey, Italy, UAE, UK, Germany, France and United States and her paintings form part of a some important collections both in India and abroad. Her work has been part of the Adana Biennale in Turkey.

In her writing career on the arts spanning nearly 30 years, she has documented an entire generation of artistes and artists who have shaped the artistic heritage of the country in the last quarter of the century – captured in two books written by Dr Raghuvanshi – A Moment in Time with legends of Indian arts and Pathfinders – artistes of one world. She has authored

and edited over 25 books including, Garhwal Himalayas – Where the Gods whisper, Indian Jewels – for a queen's ransom. As series editor and initiator of the seven-part series Classical Dances of India with one book for each classical dance form written by top performers of the seven forms. She commissioned, edited and curated the visuals of the books. She commissioned and edited Smoking Beauties, a first-ever Indian publication on the heritage of steam engines in the country.

She wrote a very popular column for the Hindu newspaper where her attempt was to create a multi-disciplinary language across the various arts. She has been consistently writing and putting into perspective folk and traditional arts and crafts into the mainstream. She writes an internationally published column on art every week for the Asian Age.

