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SHAPING CREATIVE ECONOMY IN ARTS

From the time it was established 18 years ago, **gallery g** has strived to be different from the rest. It had always been my intention to make it an inclusive space where art, artists, writers, authors, researchers can converge and truly make it a place for all.

While promoting art and supporting artists is **gallery g's** USP, it also hosts and supports two foundations in its inclusive premises, the Sandeep & Gitanjali Maini Foundation and the Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation. Given the circumstances in a year that was largely spent working remotely, **gallery g** was quick to adapt and provide a platform for the two Foundations.

With webinars being the way forward, the **gallery g** team upped the ante in the digital world. From hosting entertaining web talks and debates on diverse topics ranging from art and art forms to throwing light on the historical significance of the city through Inscription Stones, it was in a manner of speaking, reinventing the wheel.

Over the past few years, we have been keeping our social media presence on priority and the 2020 situation just naturally warranted an upgrade. The **gallery g** team initiated a whole new concept of audio-video series, something that's been seen only in larger museums and galleries abroad. It was our way of keeping our patrons and well-wishers connected with the art world through a short, yet, descriptive rendition of a series of paintings of different genres. It was educative, entertaining and engaging. Needless to say, it elicited a positive response resulting in a steady increase in the numbers on our social media profile and it has been gratifying to say the least.



With SGMF also moving into the Podcast domain, a digital world that is still in its nascent stages in the art arena, the onus was on **gallery g** to raise its game. In a first of its kind, we combined an online and physical 'hybrid' show of sculptures, while also exhibiting traditional and new art forms over the last six months..

As we celebrate our 19th year, we opted to go 'vocal for local' keeping our artists styles and raw materials local. It is a proud moment for us to partner SGMF as it joins the Google Arts and Culture platform and it is exciting to showcase several of the artists who have been part of Kochi Muziris Biennale and **gallery g**, by extension.

What pulled us through a year of crisis is the team at **gallery g** - energetic, spirited and true art lovers. Everyone came together to make 2020 the best one yet for **gallery g**. And for this I'm very grateful.

Art, we know, is a good investment, and probably only second to investment in the right people!

Cheers to a Happy & Healthy 2021. ■

- Gitanjali Maini

IN LOVING MEMORY

Dr. Sudarshan K Maini was a guide, mentor and someone whom I could rely on for advice when needed. Always encouraging and supportive, he was instrumental in establishing **gallery g**, 18 years ago. He was there for the inaugural event and would religiously attend almost every event/exhibition that we hosted.



Having been there for us since inception, his passing away on December 26, 2020 has left a void that can never be filled. Yet, his words and thoughts are what takes us forward. Although his support can never be replaced, we aim to stay true to his ideals, and the fondness that he had for everything connected with **gallery g** will forever remain in our hearts.





BEAUTY AND BLOOM OF taamara

Globally, the Pandemic brought every industry to a grinding halt making it year that is best forgotten. Then again, there is an opportunity in every crisis and so it was for **gallery g**. Having always supported and encouraged artists and realizing the need for it more than ever at this juncture, we opened our doors as soon as the lockdown was eased with an exhibition titled **Taamara - The Genesis of Nature** by Kerala-based artist **P K Sadaanandan**.

There were many firsts in the show. Sadaanandan was exhibiting a solo show for the first time ever in Bengaluru and it was also our first show since March. Sadaanandan is an accomplished artist with a strong base in mural painting. Murals are his forte and his exquisite works adorn many public and private collections stretching from New Delhi to New York.

Curated exclusively for **gallery g**, Taamara, as the name suggests, is inspired by the lotus, and its unique spiritual and meditative attributes. Using natural colours on a variety of mediums - namely canvas, board and paper, the artist also used ancient mural painting techniques to create 11 visually stunning works.

Given that his paintings express a rare finesse as manifested in this series of works, with forms that radiate warmth and luminescence,



it was well received by the art lovers of Bengaluru. His usage of colours are exuberant, yet subtle, his strokes bold, but not overpowering. His mastery of the brush in multiple mediums speaks volumes of his depth, skill and passion in reflecting the earthy beauty of nature.

*"I deeply appreciate **gallery g** hosting my show amidst Covid. This demonstrates **gallery g**'s underlying principle to support artists even during tough times,"* said Sadaanandan.

Needless to say, **gallery g** put into place strict protocols of social distancing, no-contact and visitation by appointment only to ensure high safety standards.

Taamara was exhibited between June 22 - July 12, 2020. ■



timeless MASTERPIECES

As a tribute to Raja Ravi Varma, one of India's greatest artists, Bengaluru-based **Sangeeta Abhay**, one of the earliest recipients of **gallery g's** Artists Initiative Programme (AIP), created an exclusive merchandise series.

Coinciding with the occasion of Diwali, Sangeeta, who was commissioned by Sandeep & Gitanjali Maini Foundation, the principal patron of **gallery g** and Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation, created 16 limited edition timepieces featuring iconic works of Ravi Varma.

*"Sangeeta Abhay has been a part of SGMF's Artist's Initiative Programme for several years now. She had received a grant from the Foundation for her participation at the XII Florence Biennale and has also continued to sell her work through **gallery g** since 2010.*

We have a long-standing association with her and were very excited to support her when she proposed this idea of creating time pieces using Ravi Varma's works," explains Gitanjali Maini.

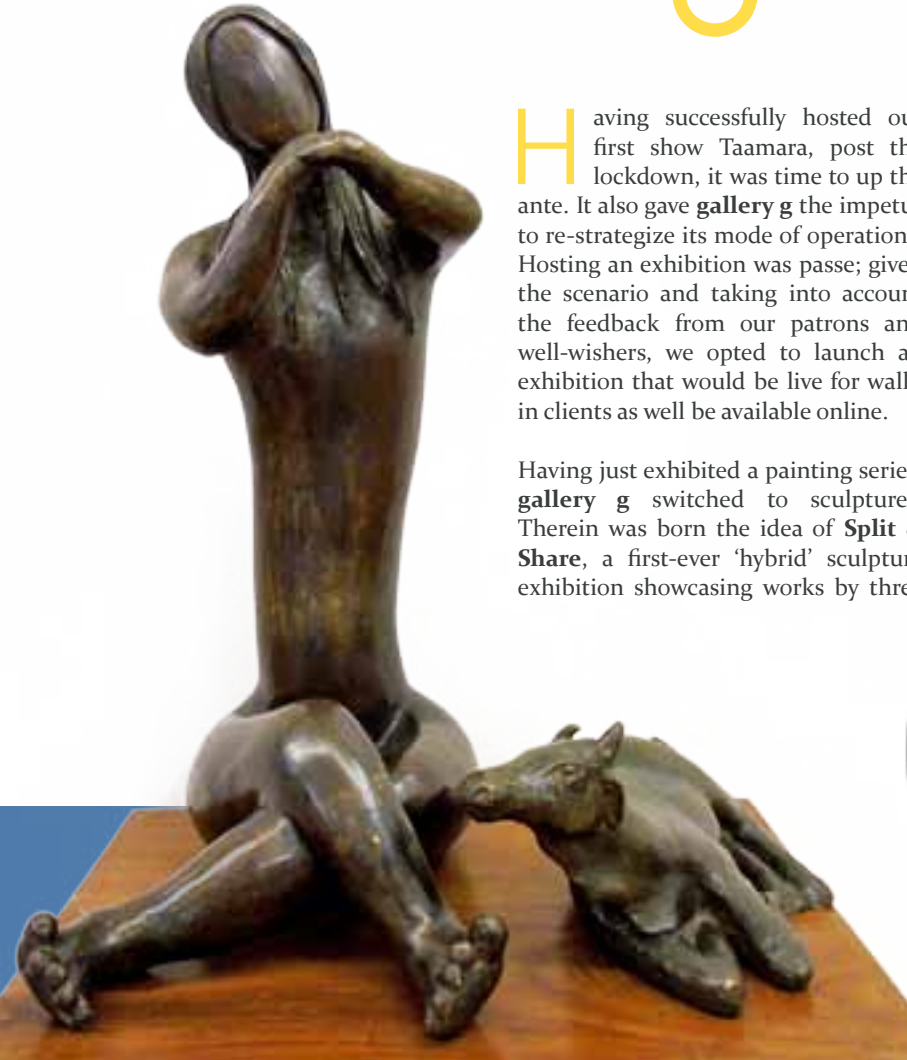
Sangeeta says the exclusive series is dedicated to Raja Ravi Varma. *"Every artist is inspired by his works. He has been instrumental in giving Gods and Goddesses the human face. His works are timeless... I wanted to do something where some of his works could reach the common man's house. That is where the idea of clocks came from,"* says the artist.

Sangeeta selected 16 images from SGMF's collection of artworks and then culled out sections of it to create a unique timepiece. She enhanced it with fine detailing in attire, jewelry and flowers to create stunning new effects on each work.



These 16 limited edition timepieces were part of the display of *'Festive Recall'* at **gallery g** from November 3 - 30. ■

SPLIT & SHARE



Sunita Lamba's Lady and Calf

Having successfully hosted our first show Taamara, post the lockdown, it was time to up the ante. It also gave **gallery g** the impetus to re-strategize its mode of operations. Hosting an exhibition was passe; given the scenario and taking into account the feedback from our patrons and well-wishers, we opted to launch an exhibition that would be live for walk-in clients as well be available online.

Having just exhibited a painting series, **gallery g** switched to sculptures. Therein was born the idea of **Split & Share**, a first-ever 'hybrid' sculpture exhibition showcasing works by three

artists. Delhi-based **Sunita Lamba** and **Tarun Maity's** works were on display at the gallery while the internationally acclaimed **KS Radhakrishnan's** works from the famed **Musui and Maiya** series, were available online.

"It's a new experience for us as we have never shown an artist's work in this manner before," said Gitanjali Maini, Founder and Managing Director of **gallery g**. "It's interesting because we have been able to show the works of a sculptor of KS Radhakrishnan's calibre through this new model. It takes years to book a show with Radhakrishnan; he is always busy and his works are in great demand. Through this hybrid model



he was happy to share images of his works which are available, and we opted to bring those down for interested customers only."

Sunita's works have a human touch and connect with nature even as she experiments with different media. For instance, a woman lost in conversation with a sparrow seated on her knee, a mother enjoying her space with her new-born, or a lonely woman encased in her own quagmire. Most of them have a lyrical element, the reason being her intense interest in music.

"I would like to place on record my deep sense of appreciation and gratitude for organising the **Split & Share** exhibition at **gallery g** during the time of Pandemic. Your adoption of new norms to reach out to clients is unique. This sort of support to artists for displaying their creations is very encouraging," said Sunita Lamba.



4 Sunita Lamba's Mother & Child



(Left and Right):
KS Radhakrishnan's
Musui & Maiya

Maity was showcasing his works for the third occasion, having previously exhibited at **gallery g** in 2011 and 2016. Maity's transmutation sculptures reveal a deep-rooted paradox of modern life. His intense and realistic imageries of animals and birds hit a raw nerve with the viewers and exude a sense of anxiety our time is beset with.

The works were on display between July 27 - August 15, 2020. ■



Tarun Maity's Wood-Brass Cow

Podcast in the Pandemic

World over, commuters have traded their playlists for podcasts and online listening series. In just the last couple of years, the popularity of podcasts has been on an upswing. One of the biggest reasons has been the shift to hand-held gadgets; consumers are moving away from desktops and using mobile devices more often.

We saw the shift in the trend, the way businesses were capitalising on the use of podcasts as marketing tools and decided to adapt the strategy to our favourite business - art! With **gallery g's** Principal Patron, Sandeep & Gitanjali Maini Foundation launching the *Expert Hour* podcast series, talks on art, history, heritage and culture, which are exciting and invigorating, brought in a whole new audience. And we thought what better way to kickstart the project than have some of our favourite artists connected with **gallery g mic'd up**.

While all artists are creative, to say the least, many of them have diverse skills in the creative space. So, we spoke to *Rukmini Varma* on 'Spirence' or her interpretation of Spirituality and Science. Some of the points she makes will make you sit back and think, for it's only a deep-thinking mind that is able to analyse and associate as clearly as she does.

Jay Varma had a lot to share on why it's never too late to learn - he should know for he began his journey into the realm of oil painting when he was way past 50!

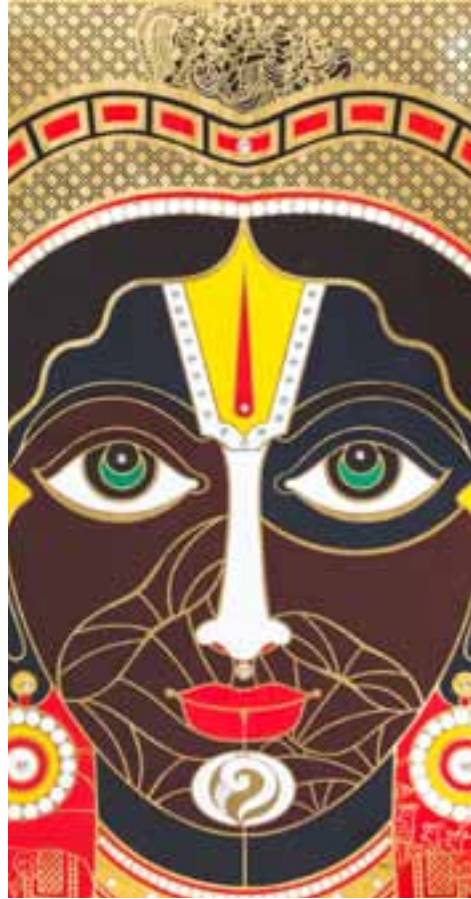
Bose Krishnamachari, one of our favourite artists and the Founder of Kochi Muziris Biennale spoke on how art had gained new meaning and dimension in India post the Biennale's inception a decade ago.



And finally, we had photo artist *Shibu Arakkal* share his views on the 'uniqueness' in art. An overly used and abused word explained brilliantly by an artist who sees and visualises far more than what meets the eye.

So, look for 'Expert Hour by Sandeep & Gitanjali Maini Foundation' on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher Podcasts, Castbox FM, Castro Podcasts or any other listening platform and catch up with interesting thoughts and ideas trending in the world of art, history, heritage and culture.

Happy Listening! ■



Unique, hand paintings on brass

The last of our three shows culminated with the festive season of Dussehra and Diwali. In association with principal patron Sandeep & Gitanjali Maini Foundation, gallery g presented **Heaven Sent**, by Bengaluru-based artist **Dinesh Magar**.

A set of 15 artworks done in Magar's signature style of hand painting on brass were on display. The artist's USP is in creating a series of divine figures, a kind of hybrid between a mural, painting and sculpture, and embellishing them with special Swarovski elements. Each work is riveting due to his use of bright colours, yet symmetrical, proportionate and aesthetically appealing.

Dinesh Magar's work spans a range of media and themes - intricate pen and ink drawings, paintings on brass, sculptures and mixed media on canvas. His work is an exploration of extensive detailing using intricate lines and vibrant colours.

Magar has an exclusive tie-up with Swarovski and uses special elements to embellish his works. His paintings create hope, solace and tranquility, empowering the viewer to embrace one's origins.

"In this series my work awakens the universe, the creator and the restorer, compelling one to resort to traditionalism, and to take on the improbability of modern times," says the artist.

His works provide not just a visual delight but also understanding, expanding and refining the sentiments of the viewer. It is not bound by restrictions, language or practice but is universal in aesthetics and context.



Heaven Sent

"There is never a specific time or place for one to enjoy a particular style of art. I saw images of Dinesh Magar's work and found it very different from what I have been seeing of traditionally interpreted modern art forms. I felt it would be a great time for us at gallery g to showcase something unique and support local talent," says Gitanjali Maini.

The works came in for appreciation from several quarters.

The show was on from September 15 - October 15, but owing to its traditional appeal, was extended through November. ■



Performance art



Draupadi

In tune with its aim of promoting art and culture, gallery g's principal patron Sandeep & Gitanjali Maini Foundation conceptualised a five-part Monodrama series featuring characters from mythology and the epics.

Performance artist **Anajana Chandak** brought forth tradition and mythology, combining both the old and the new and came up with riveting shows. The first monodrama of the series titled **Aaj Bhi Mandodari** was performed for a select, invite-only gathering of gallery g and SGMF's patrons.



Sandeep & Gitanjali Maini with Anjana Chandak

It also threw new light on Mandodari's character, whose position as the silent, suffering wife of Ravan is grossly misunderstood and underplayed. With her immaculate voice modulation and portrayal of Mandodari's character, Anjana kept the audience glued to their seats. Switching between Mandodari and Manda, the new-age form of the character that she has scripted, Anjana's performance, lasting a little less than an hour held the audience spellbound and earned rave reviews.

The five-part monodrama series of the strong women from the epics also includes **Draupadi, Ahalya, Kunti** and **Tara**.

Following the success of Mandodari, Anajana then performed a splendid monodrama on **Draupadi**. Though initially slated for a launch in Pune, it was showcased before a special gathering at **gallery g** in March. Juxtaposing the travails of Draupadi and bringing it into relevance in today's scenario, Anjana gave a sterling performance leaving the audience asking for more.

With action shifting to the digital platform from March following the change in the global scenario, Anjana's Draupadi was streamed free via the webinar in July to a bigger audience comprising **gallery g's** well-wishers and many others around the country.

The next on the series is **Ahalya** which is scheduled to be showcased soon.

Aaj bhi Mandodari



Dr. Sudarshan K Maini & Reva Maini with the artist

ART TRENDS



VASUDEV S. GAITONDE (1924-2001)
Oil on canvas, 60 x 40 in. (152.5 x 101.6 cm.), 1974

Gaitonde's art soars

In every sense of the word, 2020 was the year that changed everything – in the art world and outside it. It was a crisis that could have turned tumultuous, pushing museums and galleries to the brink but that's when the opportunity presented itself.

In many ways, it's fortunate that we're living in a world so connected. Online sales through auctions and virtual viewing rooms became the norm and significantly, interest in art perked and peaked during the pandemic.

An untitled 1974 oil on canvas by V.S. Gaitonde became the most expensive work of art by an Indian artist when it fetched ₹32 crore at Pundole's auction in September. The work, bought by an unnamed international buyer, was part of an auction titled Looking West: Works from the Collection of the Glenbarra Art Museum, Japan. The Glenbarra Art Museum is owned by Japanese businessman and prominent art collector Masanori Fukuoka, who has one of the foremost collections of modern Indian art.

This jaw-dropping sale bested the earlier Indian record, also held by a Gaitonde painting that fetched ₹29.3 crore at Christie's in 2015. What it showed was works by the Masters – Gaitonde, Amrita Sher-Gil, and Raja Ravi Varma, are invaluable. It's not often they come up for auction but when they do, they are priceless.



Global livestream auction

When auctioneer Oliver Barker stepped into the Sotheby's London salesroom on June 29 to helm its first-ever global livestreamed auction, the whole art world was watching. It would not only show whether Sotheby's could pull off a major sale in the social distancing era but also silence the whispers that predicted difficult times for the art market.

In the first three months since March, art sales like the rest of the world, had hit a new low. But, by the end of the four-and-a-half-hour marathon sale, Sotheby's had managed to pull in \$363.2 million—including \$84.6 million for a triptych by Francis Bacon.

This global auction spanned three continents, crazily different time zones and yet, bleary-eyed as they were, it proved to be a successful venture, and dare say, a hint of things to come. A rare, self-portrait of Rembrandt was sold for almost \$19 million.

The lockdown era has transformed the traditional auction business. From conducting socially distanced outdoor appraisals to navigating shipping hurdles to holding appointment-only, mask-mandatory sale previews in cavernous gallery spaces, the virus forced venerable houses to make drastic changes almost overnight.

Pre Covid-19, buyers and collectors would be wooed in parties, lunches and by private viewings. Live streaming is the new way to sell even multi-million-dollar artworks.

The trends are becoming clear. Just as, for many companies, a hybrid work-from-home model is likely to stay in place long after the vaccine has been administered, the auction market may retain its shift toward private and online sales well into 2021.

Source: www.artnet.com / news.artnet.com. ■



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