

## **Anjolie Ela Menon**

### **1. Country : India**

#### **Born**

1940 - Burnpur, West Bengal, India

#### **Education**

- Bachelors in Literature, Delhi University, Delhi
- 1959-61 Atelier Fresque, Ecole Nationale des Beaux Art, Paris

### **2. Medium and Technique :**

#### **CV-**

**<http://www.saffronart.com/artists/anjolie-memon/>**

#### **Selected Exhibitions**

#### **Selected Solo Exhibitions**

**2013** 'Recent Paintings', Grosvenor Vadehra, London, UK

<http://grosvenorgallery.com/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/anjolie-ela-memon/>

**2013** Institute of Contemporary Indian Art (ICIA), Mumbai

**2010** 'Through the Patina', organized by Vadhera Art Gallery at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India

<http://www.vadehraart.com/press/viewDetails/22>

**2007** 'Menongitis-Three Generations Of Art', Dhoomimal Gallery, New Delhi, India

**2006** 'Celebration', Gallery Arts India West, Palo Alto, California, USA

**2005** Arts India West, Palo Alto, California, USA

**2004** Gallery Arts India, New York, USA

**2003** Vadehra Art Gallery at Shridharani Gallery, Delhi, India

**2002** 'Four Decades', Vadehra Art Gallery at National Art of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishad, Bangalore, India

- 2000 'Gods and others', Apparao Galleries at Admit One Gallery, New York, USA
- 1996 Vadhera Art Gallery, Hong Kong, China
- 1996 Mutations, organized by The Gallery, Madras, at Wallace Galleries, New York
- 1988 'Retrospective 1958-88', organized by The Times of India, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 1976 Gallery Chemould, Mumbai
- 1963 Alliance Francaise, Mumbai
- 1959 Gallery 59, Mumbai

## **Selected Group Exhibitions**

- 2013 'Ideas of the Sublime', presented by Vadehra Art Gallery at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi  
<http://www.vadehraart.com/exhibition/viewDetails/103>
- 2013 'Edge of Reason- and beyond, into pure creativity', presented by Indian Art Circle at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
- 2012 'Talking Heads', Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi
- 2012 'Iconic Processions', Aicon Gallery, New York  
[http://www.aicongallery.com/exhibitions/2012-09-11\\_iconic-processions/pressrelease/](http://www.aicongallery.com/exhibitions/2012-09-11_iconic-processions/pressrelease/)
- 2012 'Gallery Collection', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
- 2012 'Women: Sacred and the Temporal', Shrishti Art Gallery, Hyderabad  
<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-fridayreview/perfect-10/article3000181.ece>
- 2012 'Contemporary: A Selection of Modern and Contemporary Art', presented by Sakshi Gallery at The Park, Chennai
- 2011 'The Lost Sparrow', presented by Gallery Threshold at Visual Art Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi
- 2011 'Masterclass', Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi
- 2010 'Figure/Landscape - Part One', Aicon Gallery, New York  
[http://www.aicongallery.com/exhibitions/2010-10-28\\_figure-landscape-part-one/pressrelease/](http://www.aicongallery.com/exhibitions/2010-10-28_figure-landscape-part-one/pressrelease/)
- 2009-10 'Unclaimed Spaces', Gallery Threshold, New Delhi
- 2009,10 'Master Class', The Arts Trust, Mumbai
- 2009 'Indian Art After Independence: Selected Works from the Collections of Virginia & Ravi Akhoury and Shelley & Donald Rubin', Emile Lowe Gallery, Hempstead
- 2009 'In Search of the Vernacular', Aicon Gallery, New York  
[http://www.aicongallery.com/exhibitions/2009-11-12\\_in-search-of-the-vernacular/images/](http://www.aicongallery.com/exhibitions/2009-11-12_in-search-of-the-vernacular/images/)
- 2009 'Kalpana: Figurative Art in India', presented by The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) at Aicon Gallery, London; The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)
- 2008 'X at the rate of Jehangir', presented by Art Musings at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2008 'Mapping Memories – 2, Painted Travelogues of Bali and Burma, Gallery Threshold, New Delhi  
[http://www.gallerythreshold.com/Mapping-Memories2\\_2008.html](http://www.gallerythreshold.com/Mapping-Memories2_2008.html)
- 2007 'Sitaaray - A Galaxy of Artists', Indian Habitat Centre, Delhi
- 2005 'Drishti', Bodhi Art Gallery, New York
- 2004 'Confluence 2004', Gallery ArtsIndia, New York  
[http://www.aicongallery.com/exhibitions/2004-09-10\\_confluence-2004/pressrelease/](http://www.aicongallery.com/exhibitions/2004-09-10_confluence-2004/pressrelease/)
- 2004 'Jiva- Life, Contemporary Indian Painting', Bodhi Art Gallery, New York 2001 Saffronart and Apparao Galleries, Los Angeles 2001 Saffronart, Hong Kong
- 2001 'Kitsch Kitsch Hota Hai', organized by Gallery Espace, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

galleryspace.com/publications/01\_kitch.htm

- 2001 'The Sacred Prism III', organized by Apparao Gallery, London, New York, San Francisco
- 1993 'Reflections and Images', Vadehra Art gallery at Jehangir Art gallery, Mumbai
- 1986 'Indian Women Artists', National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai
- 1980 Exhibition at Washington D.C and New York

## **Participations**

- 2012 'Art for Humanity', Coomaraswamy Hall, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai
- 2011 'Of Gods and Goddesses, Cinema, Cricket: The New Cultural Icons of India', Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2011 'Resonance', Art Musings, Mumbai
- 2010 'Art Celebrates 2010: Sports and the City', represented by Art Alive Gallery at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi to coincide with the hosting of the Commonwealth Games
- 2010 'Art Dubai 2010', presented by Aicon Gallery, New York
- 2010 'Manifestations IV', Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi
- 2010 'ARCO 2010 Madrid', presented by Aicon Gallery, London
- 1980 Paris Biennale, Paris, France
- 1968,71,75 1st,2nd,3rd International Triennale, Lalit Kala Akademi, Delhi

## **Awards / Reviews :**

**2013** Lifetime Achievement Award

**2000** Padmashri Award, Government of India

**1959-61** Received French Government Scholarship for Higher Studies in Paris

**1980-81** Invited to study by The Government of France, UK and USA

## **SEE MORE:**

### **TEXT**

**Interview-** My new work might be a little controversial: Anjolie Ela Menon, Subuhi Parvez, Hindustan Times, July 2013

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Entertainment/Art/My-new-work-might-be-a-little-controversial-Anjolie-Ela-Menon/Article1-1091415.aspx>

**Review-** Anjolie Ela Menon showcases recent work in London, Hindustan Times, June 2013

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Entertainment/Art/Anjolie-Ela-Menon-showcases-recent-work-in-London/Article1-1073558.aspx>

**Review-** An end and a new beginning? Jennifer Patterson, The F Word, June 2013

[http://www.thefword.org.uk/reviews/2013/06/an\\_end\\_and\\_a\\_new\\_beginning](http://www.thefword.org.uk/reviews/2013/06/an_end_and_a_new_beginning)

**Interview-** Anjolie Ela Menon back in Mumbai after 8 years, Debarati Sen, Times of India, March 2013

[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-03-11/people/37622740\\_1\\_vickram-sethi-bombay-master-artist](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-03-11/people/37622740_1_vickram-sethi-bombay-master-artist)

**Interview-** 'A Neo Romantic Necrophiliac', Charubala Annuncio, Outlook, Feb 2013.

[www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?219046](http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?219046)

**Interview-** 'Indians Can't Protest Art. We Accept Looking At Bare Lingas All The Time', Yamini Deenadayalan, Tehelka, Feb 2012

<http://www.tehelka.com/indians-cant-protest-art-we-accept-looking-at-bare-lingas-all-the-time/>

**Overview-** Of Menon And Motifs, Sunil Mehra, Outlook, Dec 1997

<http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?204747>

## Skip

<http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?214404>

<http://in.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/858718/take-an-art-walk-at-the-delhi-international-airport>

<http://in.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/914862/grosvenor-vadehra-shows-recent-work-by-anjolie-ela-menon>

[http://www.theartstrust.com/Magazine\\_article.aspx?articleid=236](http://www.theartstrust.com/Magazine_article.aspx?articleid=236)

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/anjolie-ela-menon-turns-70-exhibition-new-biography-launched/article520486.ece>

<http://www.firstpost.com/fwire/anjolie-ela-menon-honoured-lead-with-image-842061.html>

<http://www.dnaindia.com/lifestyle/1410905/report-anjolie-ela-menon-turns-70-exhibition-new-biography-launched>

## Video

**Interview-** Anjolie Ela Menon interviewed by Subuhi Parvez, July 2013

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R4n7gCzk8k&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R4n7gCzk8k&feature=player_embedded)

**Artist Talk-** Art Talk: Anjolie Ela Menon Part 2, Jujhar Singh, News X Live, June 2011

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFPCJqRTK3o>

## Text:

Throughout her career as a painter, Anjolie Ela Menon has regularly re-envisioned her role as an artist. Menon's early canvases exhibited the varied influences of van Gogh, the Expressionists, Modigliani, Amrita Sher-Gil, and M. F. Husain. Mainly portraits, these paintings, according to the artist, "were dominated by flat areas of thick bright colour, with sharp outlines that were painted 'with the vigour and brashness of extreme youth'." Menon admits that her work has undergone tremendous changes with every phase of her life and that as she has grown older, the narcissism of the early years has been transformed into nostalgia for the past.

Menon took up art while still in school, and, by the time she was fifteen, had already sold a couple of paintings. Finding the J.J. School of Art academically stifling, in 1959, at the age of twenty, Menon departed India to study art in Europe on a scholarship from the French Government. There, she was influenced by her exposure to the techniques of medieval Christian artists. While at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Art in Paris, she began to experiment with a muted palette of translucent colours, which she created by the repeated application of oil paint in thin glazes. Painting on hardboard, Menon enhanced the finely textured surface of her paintings by burnishing the finished work with a soft dry brush, creating a glow reminiscent of medieval icons. Menon utilized the characteristics of early Christian art – including the frontal perspective, the averted head, and the slight body elongation – but took the female nude as a frequent subject. The result is a dynamic relationship of the erotic and the melancholy. Menon

has developed this iconography of distance and loss in her later works through her thematic depiction of black crows, empty chairs, windows, and hidden figures.

It is extremely difficult to compartmentalize Menon's work, not only because she has been painting for so long, but because of the extreme changes that her oeuvre has constantly undergone. She notes that "dissatisfaction is the source of growth," and encourages artists to "abandon known (and often acclaimed) ground for new territory". The body of work she has produced bears testament to her disdain for categorization. Menon is more than happy to not fit into a single category and be termed a maverick who finds self-expression in an idiom out of context with the time and place in which she lives. She says "I am neither a didactic nor narrative painter. I am hardly concerned with events, though I like to lay my people bare – I like to bare them a bit beyond what is decent, sometimes ripping open a chest to reveal the heart beating within. Of course, there are many who have identified with the women I paint, especially those who are trapped or sitting alone on a chair, or those innocent ones with a newly-awakened sensuality, and those who are waiting."

Menon also disapproves of reading only symbolism in her art. Threads, necklaces, kites, the little animals or draped cloth, transparent or opaque, are the accoutrements and trappings that accompany the figure in her work. These are no conscious attempts at symbolism, sometimes it is mere ornamentation, the essentially feminine need to embellish or embroider, at other times it is the need to accent or to focus on the colour for purely painterly reasons such as perspective or tension.

Menon notes, "when repeated often enough, a motif becomes a symbol which in turn becomes a cliché; a cliché becomes an absurdity, a cartoon". Therefore in 1992, she staged an exhibit of household chairs, trunks and cupboards, all painted with images appropriated from her own paintings. This radical recontextualization of her work constituted a pre-emptive strike by Menon to "remove art from its pedestal". She continued the re-imagination of her corpus in her "Mutations" series of pentimenti works from 1996, in which Menon manipulated images from her best-known paintings on a computer, and overpainted the print-outs with acrylics and oils.

Anjolie Ela Menon was awarded the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honours, by the Government of India in 2000. Her most recent shows include 'Menongitis-Three Generations of Art' at Dhoomimal Gallery, New Delhi, in 2008; and 'Gods and Others' presented by Apparao Galleries at Admit One Gallery, New York, in 2000. In 1998, the Times of India organized a retrospective of her work at the Jehangir Art Gallery, and in 2002, another retrospective exhibition titled 'Four Decades' was held in Mumbai and in Bangalore. Anjolie Ela Menon has also been honoured with a six month solo show at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, featuring her large triptych entitled 'Yatra' in 2006.

Menon's works have been featured in several group exhibitions, including 'Kalpana: Figurative Art in India', presented by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) at Aicon Gallery, London, in 2009; 'Mapping Memories – 2, Painted Travelogues of Bali and Burma' at Gallery Threshold, New Delhi, in 2008; and 'Kitsch Kitsch Hota Hai' at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, in 2001. [Read Less](#)

<http://www.saffronart.com/artists/anjolie-menon>

**Anjolie Ela Menon** was born in 1940 in India of mixed Bengal and American parentage. She went to school in Lovedale in the Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu and thereafter had a brief spell at the J.J. School of art in Bombay. Subsequently she earned a degree of English Literature from Delhi University. After holding solo Exhibitions in Bombay and Delhi in the late 1950s as a teenager, Menon worked and studied in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in 1961-62 on a French Government scholarship. Before returning home, she traveled extensively in Europe and West Asia studying Romanesque and Byzantine art. Since then she has lived and worked in India, in England, the U.S.A., Germany and the erstwhile USSR. She had over thirty solo shows including at Black heath Gallery-London, Gallery Radicke-Bonn, Winston Gallery-Washington, Doma Khudozhnikov-USSR, Rabindra Bhavanand Shridharani Gallery-New Delhi, Academy of Fine Arts-Calcutta, the Gallery-Madras, Jehangir Gallery, Chemould Gallery, Taj

Gallery, Bombay and Maya Gallery at the Museum Annexe, Hong Kong. A retrospective exhibition was held in 1988 in Bombay, Menon has participated in several international or shows in France, Japan, Russia and U.S.A.

In addition to paintings in private and corporate collections, her works have been acquired by museums in India and abroad. She is also a well-known muralist and has represented India at the Algiers Biennale, the Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazil and three triennials in New Delhi. She has been invited by the British Council, the U.S. State Department and the French Ministry of Culture to confer with leading artists in those countries. Menon has served on the advisory committee and the art purchase - committee of the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, where she was co-curator with Henri Claude Cousseau for a major exhibition of French Contemporary Art in 1996. Her work recently went under the hammer at the Christie's and Sotheby's auctions of Contemporary Indian Art in London. A book titled "ANJOLIE ELA MENON: Paintings in Private Collections" has been published on her life and work.

Menon lives and works in Delhi.

[http://www.contemporaryindianart.com/anjolie\\_ela\\_menon.htm](http://www.contemporaryindianart.com/anjolie_ela_menon.htm)