

## Krishen Khanna

### Biography

1. **Country:** India
2. **Dates:** Born in 1925 Faisalabad, Pakistan
3. **Lives and Works:** The artist lives and works in New Delhi, India
4. **Education:** 1938-42 Rudyard Kipling Scholar at Imperial Service College Windsor, England  
1942-44 B.A. (Hons) English Literature, Government College, Lahore
5. **Medium:** Drawings and paintings mostly using oil on canvas

### Solo Exhibitions

2010 'Krishen Khanna: A Retrospective', presented by Saffronart, Mumbai at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

2008 'The Savage Heart', Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai

2005 Saffronart and Berkeley Square Gallery, London

2004 'An Airing', Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai

2001 Kumar Art Gallery, New Delhi

2001 Saffronart and Pundole Art Gallery, New York

1995 Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

1994 Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi

1991 Gallery Espace, New Delhi

1989 Centre for Contemporary Art, New Delhi.

1986 Exhibition of drawings and paintings at Sarla Art Centre, Chennai

1983 Exhibition of drawings, Garhi Studio, New Delhi

1980 Rabindra Bhavan, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

1979 Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi

1975 Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi

1974 Black Partridge, New Delhi

1973 Pundole Gallery, Mumbai

1969 Photographs, Kunika-Chemould, New Delhi

1969 Experimental Photographs, Pundole Gallery, Mumbai

1966 Kumar Art Gallery, New Delhi

1965 Egan Gallery, New York

1964 Kumar Art Gallery, New Delhi

1964 Watkins Art Gallery, American University, Washington D.C.

1962 Kunika Art Centre

1962 Leicester Galleries, London

1961 Ashoka Gallery, Kolkata

1961 Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

1960 Kumar Art Gallery, New Delhi

1960 Leicester Galleries, London

1959 Kumar Gallery, New Delhi

1958 Kumar Gallery, New Delhi

1957 All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society (AIFACS), New Delhi

1955 USIS, Chennai

## **Group Exhibitions**

### **2013**

'Ideas of the Sublime', presented by Vadehra Art Gallery at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

'Edge of Reason- and beyond, into pure creativity', presented by Indian Art Circle at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

'The Discerning Eye: Modern Masters', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi

### **2012**

'Talking Heads', Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi

### **2011**

'The Art of Drawing', The Guild Art Gallery, Mumbai

'Masterclass', Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi

### **2010-11**

'A Collection', Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

### **2010**

Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

'10 x 10', Gallery Threshold, New Delhi

'Black is Beautiful', India Fine Art, Mumbai

'Essential, Eclectic,...Ephemeral', The Harrington Mansions, Kolkata

### **2009**

'Bharat Ratna! Jewels of Modern Indian Art', Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

'Master Class', The Arts Trust, Mumbai

'Sacred and Secular', India Fine Art, Mumbai

'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**

'Faces', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai

'Baisakh 08', Polka Art Gallery, New Delhi

**2004**

'Concept and Form', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi

**2003**

Exhibition of drawings, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai

Transition at UBS in London

'Of Memories, Dreams, Reverses', at Anant, New Delhi

**2001**

'Living Legends of Indian Contemporary Art', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai

'In Conversations', Gallery Espace, New Delhi

Indian Art Circle, Habitat Centre, New Delhi

Saffronart and Pundole Art Gallery, New York

**1999**

'Mahabharat', Gallery 7, Mumbai

**1998**

'The Probing Eye', an exhibition of Photographs, Surendra Paul Art Gallery, New Delhi

'Drawings', Guild Art Gallery, Mumbai

**1997**

'Tryst with Destiny', Art from Modern India 1947-1997, Singapore Art Museum, organized by Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata

'Six Modern Masters', Kumar Gallery, New Delhi

**1996**

Modern and Contemporary Indian Paintings, Sothebys Auction, London

'A Tree in my Life', Village Gallery, New Delhi

'The Moderns', Inaugural Exhibition, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai

'The Mahabharata, The Card Player and The Scribe', Kumar Gallery, New Delhi

**1995**

'Indian Contemporary Paintings', Christie's Auction, London

'Bombay', presented by RPG Enterprises

'River of Art', Inaugural Exhibition, Art Today

**1994**

'Indian Drawing Today', All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society (AIFACS), organized by Gallery Espace, New Delhi

'The Solids', second Indian Drawing Biennale, exhibited as a special invitee

**1993**

'Reflections and Images', Vadhera and Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

**1992**

'Masters of Indian Art', Hotel Intercontinental, Mumbai

**1991**

'Remembering Kali Pundole', Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai

Birla Academy of Art, Anniversary Exhibition, Kolkata

'Addressing Gandhi', traveling exhibition by Sahmat

The Fifth Biennale, Havana Cuba

**1989**

'Timeless Art', Exhibition and Auction

Sothebys in Mumbai

'Artist's Alert', exhibition and auction by Sahmat, New Delhi

**1988**

Festival of India, Japan

First International Biennale, Lahore, Pakistan

**1987**

Festival of India, USSR

'Coups de Coeur', Geneva

**1986**

Baghdad International Festival of Art

**1985**

Ram Kumar and Krishen Khanna, Gallery 7, Mumbai

**1984**

Inaugural Exhibition, Gallery 7, Mumbai

**1982**

'Modern Indian Painters' Hirschhorn Museum, Washington D. C.

'Contemporary Indian Art', Burlington House, London

'Myth and Reality', Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK

International Triennale, New Delhi

**1981**

Inaugural Exhibition, Roopankar Museum, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal

'Indian Painting Today', Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

**1979**

'Modern Asian Art', Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan

**1976**

25<sup>th</sup> Pugwash Conference, Madras

'Pictorial Space', Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

'Indian Painting 1977', Chandigarh, organized by Black Partridge Gallery

**1975**

Third Triennale of Contemporary World Art, New Delhi

**1972**

'Art Now', Kunika Chemould, New Delhi

'One World through Art', Ben and Abbey Grey Foundation, St. Paul, MN, USA

**1971**

'Contemporary Indian Art', Renwick Gallery

Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.

**1970**

'Art Now', Kunika Chemould, New Delhi

Expo '70, Indian Pavilion, Osaka, Japan

**1969**

'Contemporary Art, Dialogue between East and West', Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan

'Indian Painters 69', Max Mueller Bhavan & Birla Academy, Kolkata

**1968**

New Art Centre, London

International Triennale, New Delhi

**1966**

Lincoln Centre, New York

**1965**

'Ten Contemporary Artists from India' University of South Florida, Tampa; Jackson Art Museum, Jacksonville; Delgado Art Museum, New Orleans; Hunter Gallery, Chattanooga; Colorado Fine Art Center, Colorado Springs, Long Beach; Art Institute, San Francisco; East Wing Center, Honolulu

'Ten Contemporary Painters from India' MIT, Cambridge; New Jersey State Museum, Trenton.

Annual Exhibition, Lalit Kala Akademi

**1964**

'Six Artists in Black and White', Shridharani Gallery, New Delhi

## **1963**

'Contemporary Painters from India', Gallery 63, New York

'Eight Contemporary Artists from India', Lever House, New York

## **1962**

National Exhibition, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

Venice Biennale, Indian participation

## **1961**

Tokyo Biennale

## **1960**

Sao Paulo Biennale

## **1959**

'Artists of Fame and of Promise', Leicester Galleries, London

'Trends in Contemporary Painting from India', Graham Gallery, New York

'Modern Indian Art', Cairo

'Contemporary Art from India', Essen, Dortmund, Zurich

Inaugural Exhibition, Gallery 59, Mumbai

## **1957**

Tokyo Biennale

## **1956**

'Eight Painters', Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society Building, New Delhi

## **1954**

With M F Husain at All India Fine Arts and Crafts society (AIFACS), New Delhi

## **1952-53**

Progressive Artists at Madras College of Art, Chennai

## **1949**

Progressive Artist Group, Chetna Restaurant, Mumbai

Progressive Artist Group, Artists Aid Centre

## **1946**

Punjab Art Society, Annual Exhibition

## **Awards**

1962 Rockefeller Fellowship

1965 National Award Lalit Kala Akademi

1965 Fellowship of the Council of Economics and Cultural Affairs, New York

1968 Gold Medal First Triennale of Contemporary World Art, New Delhi

1986 President's Award, International Festival of Art, Baghdad, Iraq

1986 Gold Medal First Biennale Of Art, Lahore, Pakistan

1990 Padma Shri by Gov't of India

## See More

**Interview** <http://www.saffronart.com/artists/krishen-khanna>

**Interview-Review** [http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/ive-gone-back-to-childhood-in-lahore-artist-krishen-khanna-interview-with-images\\_100301896.html](http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/ive-gone-back-to-childhood-in-lahore-artist-krishen-khanna-interview-with-images_100301896.html)

**Overview of the Artist** <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/krishen-khanna-the-most-underrated-master-of-indian-art/1/193031.html>

**Interview** <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-metroplus/wall-to-wall/article4776633.ece>

**Interview** [http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/lunch-with-bs-krishen-khanna-110011900055\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/lunch-with-bs-krishen-khanna-110011900055_1.html)

**Preview** [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2010-01-17/news/28387020\\_1\\_saffronart-dinesh-vazirani-krishen-khanna](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2010-01-17/news/28387020_1_saffronart-dinesh-vazirani-krishen-khanna)

**Article** [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-06-26/gurgaon/40206175\\_1\\_krishen-khanna-young-artist-golden-age](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-06-26/gurgaon/40206175_1_krishen-khanna-young-artist-golden-age)

**In Conversation with** [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-01-23/trends/28143687\\_1\\_m-f-husain-s-h-raza-f-n-souza](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-01-23/trends/28143687_1_m-f-husain-s-h-raza-f-n-souza)

**Article on the artist** <http://www.artnewsviews.com/view-article.php?article=krishen-khanna-the-fauvist-progressive&iid=30&articleid=845>

**Article on the artist** [http://www.theartstrust.com/Magazine\\_article.aspx?articleid=328](http://www.theartstrust.com/Magazine_article.aspx?articleid=328)

**Interview** <http://artistsspeak.blogspot.in/2010/09/krishen-khanna.html>

**Interview** <http://thisishowitshouldbe.blogspot.in/2008/03/article-971-art-is-not-just-for.html>

**Review** <http://girishshahane.blogspot.in/2010/02/krishen-khanna-at-lalit-kala.html>

**Review** <http://www.kumargallery.com/catalogs/krishenkhanna2/krishenkhanna.htm>

**Review** <http://www.thewallartmag.com/Article/the-delhi-diary-119>

**In conversation** <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2013/20130719/ttlife1.htm>

**Article** <http://www.dnaindia.com/lifestyle/1339304/report-krishen-khannas-painting-peeves>

## Videos

**In conversation with** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtD-qT6jzEw>

**In conversation with** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvIZIpeljS4>

## Text:

From the universality of Biblical episodes to the microcosm of localised happenings like the procession of Bandwallahs or even a Chai in Ramu's Dhabha lend subject matter to Khanna. He became the first Indian artist to take up photography and hold an exhibition of projected prints in 1969.

However, there is a twist in every tale that Khanna tells with his brush. His biblical characters take their hue and form from contemporary India and his Arjuna can well don the medieval knight's armour. He also tends to revisit his themes periodically, spinning variations on them, much as a musician or composer does.

Read more at: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/krishen-khanna-the-most-underrated-master-of-indian-art/1/193031.html>

"I've painted the middle class and lower middle class not out of pity but because they are the people of this country. But I'm dumbfounded at the popularity of the bandwallahs," something he attributes to the grand Indian wedding fantasy which has kept at least this one British institution — complete with red coats, brocade trimmings, hats, trumpets, "the whole jolly lot" — intact. "I'd been painting the truckwallahs before this, so the bandwallahs was a release of colour for me, it took over." Yet, his streetscapes come with their share of colour too — the vegetable and fruit sellers, the roadside *dhabas* with their *gupshup*... "I like to paint a difficult situation because it makes work more interesting, that's my forte. I think a great deal. The whole business of art anywhere is to awaken awareness."

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/lunch-with-bs-krishen-khanna-110011900055\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/lunch-with-bs-krishen-khanna-110011900055_1.html)

As they trace his career, the works on display also highlight the artist's complex narratives, his deep interest in human relationships and his technical virtuosity."

The series begins with an oil drawing of Gurbaksh Rai, an old homeopathic doctor, saying goodbye to his family after being arrested by police. He was an ardent Congressman. I have used monochrome because if there is something I want to say, it is best to avoid the dynamics of colour. Then you are not dealing with the man, the subject matter, any more."

[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2010-01-17/news/28387020\\_1\\_saffronart-dinesh-vazirani-krishen-khanna](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2010-01-17/news/28387020_1_saffronart-dinesh-vazirani-krishen-khanna)

A raconteur who peppers his conversation with anecdotes, Khanna is equally adept at telling tales with his brush. He may have chosen to plough only a few thematic furrows but still continues to rake up fresh soil each time he revisits an idea. And whether it is powerful depictions of biblical scenes, urchins glutting on slices of watermelon or brassy paintings of bandwallahs, the essence of **India** vibrates in every hue and stroke. His *Pieta* - a far cry from Michelangelo's classic marble statue of Mary cradling the broken body of her son - has a Punjabi woman so devastated by loss that she is yelling her head off and slapping her head with her hand. *Christ Carrying His Cross* is work full of tension, starkly reminiscent of a skeletal rickshaw-puller straining up a slope. *Last Bite* is his cheeky version of *The Last Supper* (of which he has painted many versions since age seven when his father first brought



home a print of Leonardo Da Vinci's famous work). It portrays Husain as the figure of Christ with the progressive artists grouped around him in a dhaba.

If the Bible and Mahabharata dominate much of his work, so does the common man, from monochromatic truckwallahs to his servant storyteller from Lahore. "Some say life and art are two different things. Not for me." Refugee, his most recent work, which hangs in his living room captures the human exodus of Partition.

[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-01-23/trends/28143687\\_1\\_m-f-husain-s-h-raza-f-n-souza/2](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-01-23/trends/28143687_1_m-f-husain-s-h-raza-f-n-souza/2)

Tracing this trajectory of exploration, he was also gripped by memories of India's freedom struggle and the conquest of colonial rulers. In his drawings, he also dwelt on his favorite figures for decades: truckers in vehicles, resembling crumbled war chariots. Lauding his artistic excellence, Pheroza Godrej of Cymroza noted: "The controlled movement of each line, accompanied with a meaningful stroke of his pencil, communicates his refreshing thoughts, poignantly captured long ago in the artist's mind. This dexterity presents a delightful treat to the viewer. Powerful, determined and effortless are the strokes that burst forth from the pencil of a master, who knows exactly how to express his mind and heart on paper. For a young impressionable mind, it was no easy task to comprehend the inescapable sordid happenings witnessed at the time of the Partition. His works have been skillfully executed from an almost photographically captured memory, bringing to life his journey through time."

The residues of past remain submerged in his art, and the horror of the haunting past pulses beneath the outwardly calm surface. Fathoming his art and life, critic-curator Ranjit Hoskote mentions: "Krishen Khanna was a witness to these cataclysmic events at first hand, and gradually embarked on the course that would establish him as a distinguished member of the first generation of postcolonial Indian artists. A connoisseur of extreme conditions: he invokes not only the desperate and the damned, but also the quixotic, and the sublimely mad. His portraits of dervish-like figures, and of saints with matted hair and rough garments exploring the wilderness, have a dual origin: if they owe much to the artist's measured engagements with art history, they also spring from the quirkiness of his personal experience."

[http://www.theartstrust.com/Magazine\\_article.aspx?articleid=328](http://www.theartstrust.com/Magazine_article.aspx?articleid=328)

<http://www.cymroza.com/theexhibition.php?eid=39&st=Past>