

Manu Parekh

Biography :

- <http://www.saffronart.com/artists/manu-parekh>

1. **Country :** India
2. **Dates :** Born in 1939, Ahmedabad, Gujarat
3. **Lives and works :** New Delhi, India
4. **Education:**
1958-62 Diploma in Drawing & Painting, Sir J.J. School of Art, Mumbai
1951 Student of Mukund Shroff, Ahmedabad
5. **Medium and Technique:** A modernist painter, Parekh works mainly with oil on canvas, occasionally experimenting with other mediums.

Solo Exhibitions

- 2012 'Faith: Manu Parekh in Benaras: 1980-2012', Art Alive Gallery, Gurgaon
2009 'The Pursuit of Intensity', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
2004 'Banaras', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2003 'Portraits of Flower and Landscapes of River', at Jehangir Art Gallery and Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
1999 'Ritual Oblations', Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi
1999 'People for Animals', Art World, Chennai
1999 'People for Animals', Alliance Francois, Chandigarh
1999 'Ritual Oblations', Sakshi Gallery, Bangalore
1999 'Ritual Oblations', Sakshi Gallery and Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1998 'Homage', Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1997 ARKS Gallery, London
1996 BosePacia Modern, New York
1995-96 'Still Lifes', sponsored by Seagull Foundation, Mumbai, New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai
1994 Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
1992 Exhibition of Twenty-Five Years of Work sponsored by Seagull Foundation, New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai
1991 'Small Drawings', Sophia Duchesne Art Gallery, Mumbai
1991 'Banaras Landscapes', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
1990 'Small Drawings', Village Gallery, New Delhi
1990 'Man-Made Blindings (Bhagalpur Blindings)', Cymroza Gallery, Mumbai
1989 Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1988 Paintings, Chitrakoot Art Gallery, Kolkata
1988 Paintings, Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi
1985 Paintings, Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi
1984 Ten Years of Work, Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata
1984 Paintings and Watercolours, Urja Art Gallery, Baroda
1981 Paintings, Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi
1978 Paintings, Taj Art Gallery, Mumbai

1976 Paintings, Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi
1975 Paintings, Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi
1974 Paintings, Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi
1970 Paintings, Taj Art Gallery, Mumbai
1968 Graphics and Paintings, Ahmedabad

Group Exhibitions

2012 'On A Journey', Art Alive Gallery, Gurgaon
2011 'The Lost Sparrow', presented by Gallery Threshold at Visual Art Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi
2011 'Form and Formlessness', Art Alive Gallery, Gurgaon
2011 'Aureus 2011', Gallerie Nvya, New Delhi
2010 '10 x 10', Gallery Threshold, New Delhi
2010 'Who Has Seen Gandhi?', presented by Tangerine Art Space at Raj Bhavan; KynKyny Art Gallery and Tangerine Art Space, Bangalore
2010 'Evolve: 10th Anniversary Show', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
2010 'Snow', The Palette Art Gallery, New Delhi in collaboration with Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
2009 'Zip Files', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
2008 'Faces', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
2008 'Urgent Conversations', Visual Art Gallery, India Habitat Centre and Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi
2004 Nature Morte, New Delhi
2004 Rituals at Gallery Sumukha, Bangalore
2003 'Celebration of Colours', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, and Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
2002 'The Affordable Art Show', People for Animals, Maurya Sheraton, New Delhi
2001 Eight Artists from Bengal, Indian Embassy, Berlin
2001 'Works on Paper', Bose Pacia Modern, New York
2000 'Faces', Gallery Espace, Dubai
1999 'Icons', Lakeeren Gallery, Mumbai
1999 'As You Like It', Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, and Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1998 Opening Show, Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai
1997 'Colours of Independence', organized by Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata at National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi
1997 'Fifty Years of Independence', by National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi at Vadehra Art Gallery, Mumbai
1997 'Through the Looking Glass', Lakeeren Gallery, Mumbai
1997 'Gift for India', Sahmat, New Delhi and Mumbai
1997 'Major Trends of Indian Art', Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1997 'Intuitive Logic', HEART, New Delhi and Mumbai
1997 'Kali', exhibition in Topical Museum, Amsterdam
1996 Contemporary Indian Painters associated with Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1995 'Heads', Maya Art Gallery, Hong Kong
1995 Postcards for Gandhi, Sahmat

1993 'Wounds', Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata and National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi
1993 Vadehra Art Gallery at Husain Ki Sarai, New Delhi
1993 Opening Show, Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1982 Seven Indian Artists, Travelling Exhibition in Worpswede, Hamburg, Hanover, Braunschweig, Bayreuth
1982 Modern Indian Painting, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Hirschorn Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC
1964-85 Thirty group shows in India and abroad

Books

1. **Manu Parekh – The Dialogues Series**, Ranjit Hoskote, Nancy Adajania , 2011 , Published by Popular Prakashan
2. **Manu Parekh: Banaras: Eternity Watches Time, 2007, Mapin Publishing**
<http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/Details/21093>
3. **Manu Parekh: New Painting by Peter Osborne, 2007**
<http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/Details/24620>
4. **Manu Parekh: Benares Landscapes, Published by Vadehra Art Gallery, 2004**
<http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/Details/29693>

Reviews

1. Group Exhibition Review 2013 <http://www.thehindu.com/features/friday-review/art/showcase-on-an-even-keel/article4414554.ece>
2. Book Review
<http://www.hindu.com/lr/2007/12/02/stories/2007120250310600.htm>
3. Report <http://www.dnaindia.com/lifestyle/1365114/report-banaras-encore-manu-parekh>
4. 2012
http://archive.tehelka.com/story_main52.asp?filename=hub070412CITY.asp
5. 2012 <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/the-colours-of-faith/922463/0>
6. Review 2012 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2115626/Painter-Manu-Parekh-finds-muse-city-undying-faith.html>
7. Book Review 2007 <http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9780853319634>
8. Literary Review 2007
<http://www.hindu.com/lr/2007/12/02/stories/2007120250310600.htm>

Articles

1. Tryst with photography 2013
<http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/Food/finer-tastes-in-life/article5193019.ece>

2. 2012- http://zeenews.india.com/entertainment/art-and-theatre/artist-manu-parekh-showcases-love-for-banaras-in-retrospective_111771.html
3. 2011 http://www.theartstrust.com/Magazine_article.aspx?articleid=355
4. Interview 2012 <http://www.fridaygurgaon.com/news/1246-between-faith-and-fear.html>
5. Interview(Madhvi and Manu Parekh), 2012 <http://www.timeoutdelhi.net/art/features/happy-home>
6. 2012 <http://www.mydigitalfc.com/leisure-writing/varanasi-comes-forth-unique-experience-manu-parekh's-art-713>
7. News Story 2012 <http://in.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/802983/keeping-the-faith-artist-manu-parekh-to-speak-about-his-banaras-series>
8. 2009 <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Entertainment/Art/Manu-Parekh-goes-solo/Article1-467284.aspx>

Text

1. Interview - <http://www.saffronart.com/artists/manu-parekh>

Q.The imagery in your work tends to signal animation and has a restlessness about it. What is the source of this?

My work is a reflection of my personality - I, as a human being have an energy that comes out in my work. I paint different subjects and have seemingly different styles, however the central theme is that of the importance of organic life: the human being and his interaction with nature. I believe that organic elements of nature have a powerful energy. For example, the flower - it's origin, appearance and growth. I believe that the flower is one of the most impressive forms in nature. It is organic in nature but has seemingly contradictory forces inherent within it: sexuality and spirituality.

Q.Your work contains such diverse subjects - is it this contradiction in forces or elements of nature which you feel are central to your work or binds it together?

This contradiction is the source of my inspiration. I believe that human nature, actions and reactions are a cycle of faith, belief and fear. Human beings perceive a situation or make judgements based on an initial faith, or preconceived notion. They then react to the situation based on a belief or out of fear. I believe that the most powerful contradictory forces are sexuality and spirituality, because there is a convergence between them at some point. Sexuality in the larger sense is about finding a rhythm with another human being. This is incredibly powerful because it is about two human beings and two separate manifestations of organic energy. When we are able to create this rhythm and are satisfied, content or happy within that rhythm, we are able to become more spiritual beings. Perhaps I place such importance on this because of my positive relationship with Madhvi, my wife.

Q.Are there any physical sources of inspiration that manifest themselves within your work?

I use theater language to create. Like a stage, the characters take a few seconds to appear when the curtain rises. This is the experience that I try to create for someone looking at my work. You should take a few moments to realize the situation and the energy or contradictory forces reflected. The presence of organic energy is essential - like when the actors leave the stage, they take the aura of the energy away with them. I work like an actor: I remain the same actor, but perform and create situations within a different role. This is why I feel that eyes are one of the most important elements in my work. The eyes perceive....I don't paint faces - I paint situations and eyes perceive situations or expressions. The Dalai Lama is one of the best examples that I can think of - his eyes are very expressive and say more than his physical facial expressions.

Q.Would you describe your works as being distortionist?

No. I don't feel that I distort - I communicate with layers. Layers represent complexity and capture contradictory forces in a way that I feel makes my representations of life richer. That's what life is ...layers.

2. **Manu Parekh at Jehangir** -

<http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/reviews/kumar/kumar4-24-07.asp>

Founded in 1952, the **Jehangir Gallery** is a Mumbai institution (it was founded at the urging of Indian painter **K.K. Hebbar** and nuclear scientist **Homi Jehangir Bhabha**). If only it didn't look so, well, institutional -- the renowned space suggests a public school cafeteria more than an art gallery, with a drab, faded interior and funereal lighting.

In such bleak environs, however, the vivid colors of **Manu Parekh's** show "Banaras: Eternity Watches Time" were all the more affecting. Born in 1935, the Delhi artist's paintings imagine Banaras (or Benares, also known as "Varanasi"), considered by many to be the world's oldest continuously inhabited city. Banaras is one of India's most important pilgrimage sites -- many Hindus believe that bathing there in the river Ganges washes sin clean, and that dying in Banaras allows the soul to break the cycle of rebirth. For thousands of years, the city has been synonymous with wasted beggars, devout pilgrims and burning funeral pyres.

Amid all this, Parekh presents unruly natural landscapes of untamed vegetation and volatile passions, populated by earthy figures of sexuality and brutality. Ironic for the eternal city of

Banaras, the effect is one of profound instability. Rubbery and swollen, almost cartoony, Parekh's houses and shrines lean crazily at 45 degree angles as if threatening to blow away, and ghostly faces appear in the muddy swirls of the river. The city, both precarious and timeless, seems to have been teetering on the brink of ruin.

The artist renders Banaras in different palettes (blue, red, brown, green or black) to reveal the city's multiple dimensions, its holy river alternately a contemplative field of blue, or a blood-soaked red (a blue Banaras dyptich sold for \$84,370 at **Saffronart** last year -- an auction record for Parekh). Eyes peer from every doorway in these paintings -- as in Kolte's work, the motif suggests a familiar image of people huddled in slum housing, peering warily at the street. Trees and vegetation are shrouded in a lingering darkness in the background, even as the foreground teems with color and energy. Yet despite the sinister edge, Parekh's work is finally elegant, full of graceful movement and sinuous lines.

3. Press Release of 'Faith' at Art Alive Gallery, Gurgaon, 2012

<http://www.artslant.com/ind/events/show/208918-faith>

Art Alive Gallery presents the eminent artist Manu Parekh's work in Benaras and is the first major solo show held in Delhi in over six years. Parekh first went to Benaras in the throes of an artistic crisis and traveled the Ganga by boat, all the while observing the life of this ancient city at various times of the day and from various perspectives. Later, he got off the boat and climbed the ghats; here he saw the temples and the people conducting private rituals in common spaces. Flowers, festivals, faces and rituals all became fodder for his work. These repeated visits to Benaras gave his practice a new direction and his works visual coherence and intensity. It allowed him to imagine a modernity that embraces the everyday life in India's provinces. Faith presents this body of work from the perspective of a painter engaging with vernacular religiosity and spirituality as well as from the perspective of Benaras as a place that has shaped the subjectivity of many modern artists in the twentieth century.

Organized into four sections, the exhibition begins with 'Glimpses from a Boat' that has his virtuoso modernist, landscapes of Benaras, which Parekh developed along his journeys on the Ganga. The paintings are richly hued explorations that depict the artist's experience of the corruption, beauty and sheer force of Benaras, an antique city in which there are many shadows formed between the light and the darkness. The second section, titled 'Transformed Stone,' celebrates the hopes and desires that humans bring to objects they deem sacred. If landscape is the transformation of natural scenery into cultural artifact, then Parekh's paintings specifically render the simultaneous elevation and domestication of the sacred. 'Repeating Forms,' the third section, uses the concept of repetition, a process which has long

fascinated Parekh, to arrive at something profound about making art and revisiting familiar visual tropes and places over an extended period of time. For the artist, repetition always holds the possibility of something new, without necessarily creating alienation from the familiar. The exhibition closes with 'Flowers,' in which Parekh telescopes into the sexual, sacred, otherworldly interior of forms that exist in the world as interior decoration, as items of worship, as objects of study and as still life. In Parekh's hands, flowers become parts of the human body and contemplating this idea allows us to become more intimate with our own embodiment.

The exhibition thus stands as a journey from the exterior to the interior much in the way modernism has allowed artists to objectify subjective, individual experience for the aesthetic contemplation of others. Accompanying the show is a soft-cover catalogue with essays by Annapurna Garimella and Baishali Ghosh.

Videos

1. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcTbq_WLCy0
(link doesn't seem to be working)
2. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyVJwtChz-o> OR
<http://www.thewallartmag.com/eachVideo/71.html>

Participations

2012 'Art for Humanity', Coomaraswamy Hall, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai

2011 'Ethos V: Indian Art Through the Lens of History (1900 to 1980)', Indigo Blue Art, Singapore

2011 '1:3:1- Part I', W+K Exp, New Delhi

2010 Annual Exhibition, Chawla Art Gallery, New Delhi

1981 5th International Triennale, Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi

1980 Kasauli Art Centre Workshop

(<http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/CollectionOnline/Details/14043>)

1978 4th International Triennale, Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi

1975 3rd International Triennale, Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi

Honours and Awards

1992 Padma Shree by the Government of India

1991 Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Calcutta

1982 National Award, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

1974 All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society Award, New Delhi

1972 President of India's Silver Plaque, All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society Award, New Delhi

1971 Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Calcutta