



July, 2019 | Issue No. 6



**SAARC CULTURAL CENTRE - SRI LANKA**



South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

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SAARC

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## Message from the Director

Painting is an art form which is expressed on different mediums such as walls, paper, silk, canvass, and has been in existence for more than two millennia. Commencing with the prehistoric paintings of Altamira rock shelter in Spain and Lascaux rock shelter in France, humans engaged in paintings to depict their life and personal beliefs. In South Asia Bhimbetka rock shelter in Madhya Pradesh in India and Tantirimalai rock shelter paintings in Sri Lanka indicate the human need to create and reflect their life through art. Paintings of the World Heritage Site of Ajanta in India and Sigiriya in Sri Lanka indicate the development of paintings in South Asia. The Mongol Empire of the 13th and 14th centuries created the pathways for the expansion of paintings from east to west and European expansion to Asia brought the western techniques and ideas of paintings to South Asia.

This issue of the Art Magazine gives a view of contemporary art and artists of South Asia including techniques and styles used by different artists. Contemporary art in South Asia is also developing rapidly with artists expanding on to different materials and mediums such as creating paintings using recycled material, waste, coloured paper, etc. The emerging paintings of South Asia is diverse, creative and beautiful using different styles and techniques to portray the artist's ideas. Today, South Asia is home to a rich heritage in paintings – traditional paintings which is a part of the intangible cultural heritage and post 20th century paintings which are considered to be contemporary paintings.

SAARC Cultural Centre is the custodian of a large collection of contemporary paintings of South Asia created by the artists of South Asia at the annual Artists Camp held by the Centre since its inception. These paintings too portray the emergence of different styles, techniques, merging of eastern and western styles, development of traditional paintings and styles to portray contemporary themes and ideas. I hope that this issue of the Art Magazine will broaden the knowledge of South Asian Contemporary paintings at all levels.

**Renuka Ekanayake**  
Director





# Contemporary Paintings of Afghanistan

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**Dr Yousef Asefi**

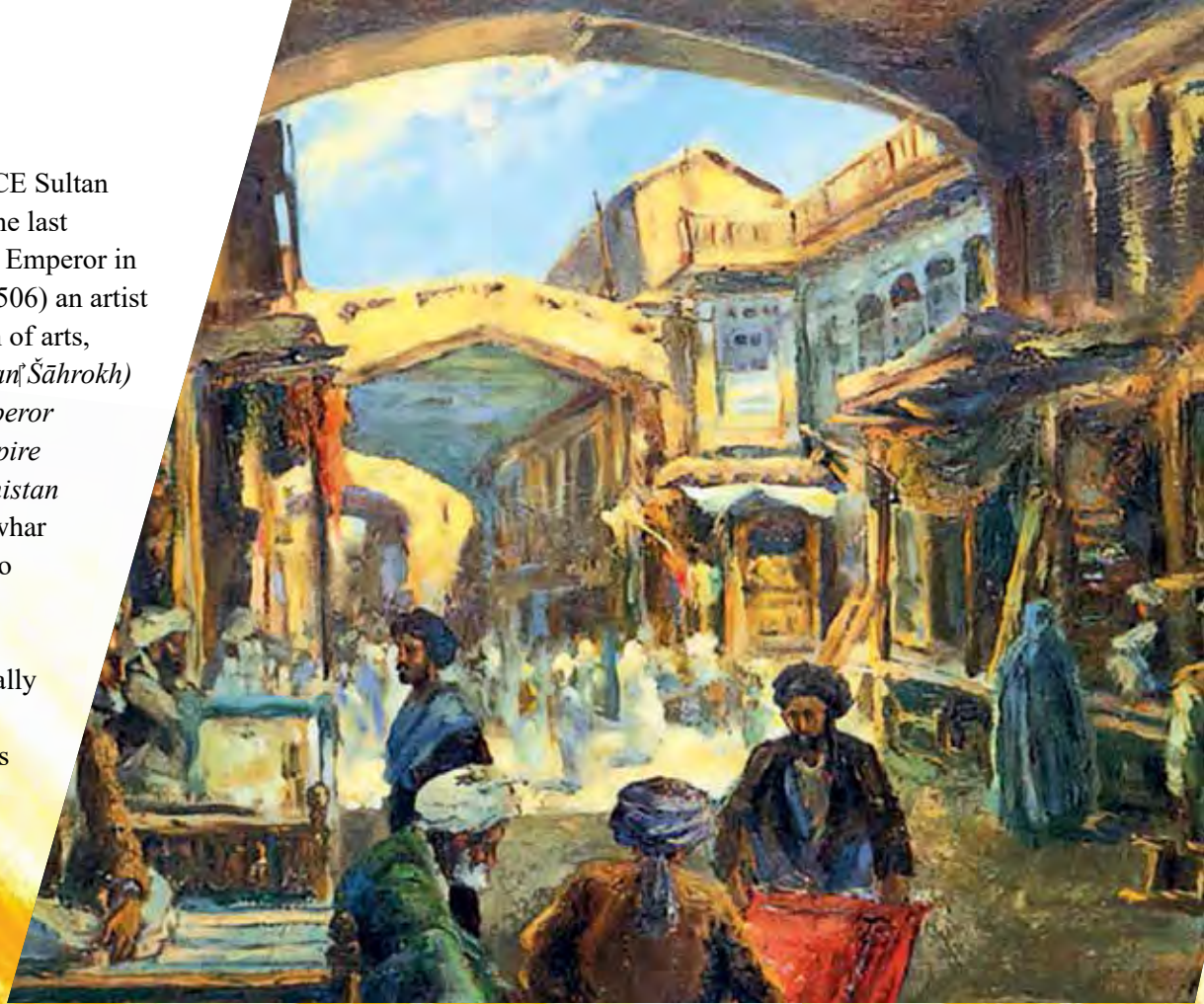
Art is a reflection of history and culture and provides an understanding of the changes brought with the passage of time. Paintings specially reflect the nuances of time from the ancient Greco-Bactrian art of Afghanistan to Kushan and Buddhist era, Islamic period to modern period.

*Painting by Dr. Asefi*



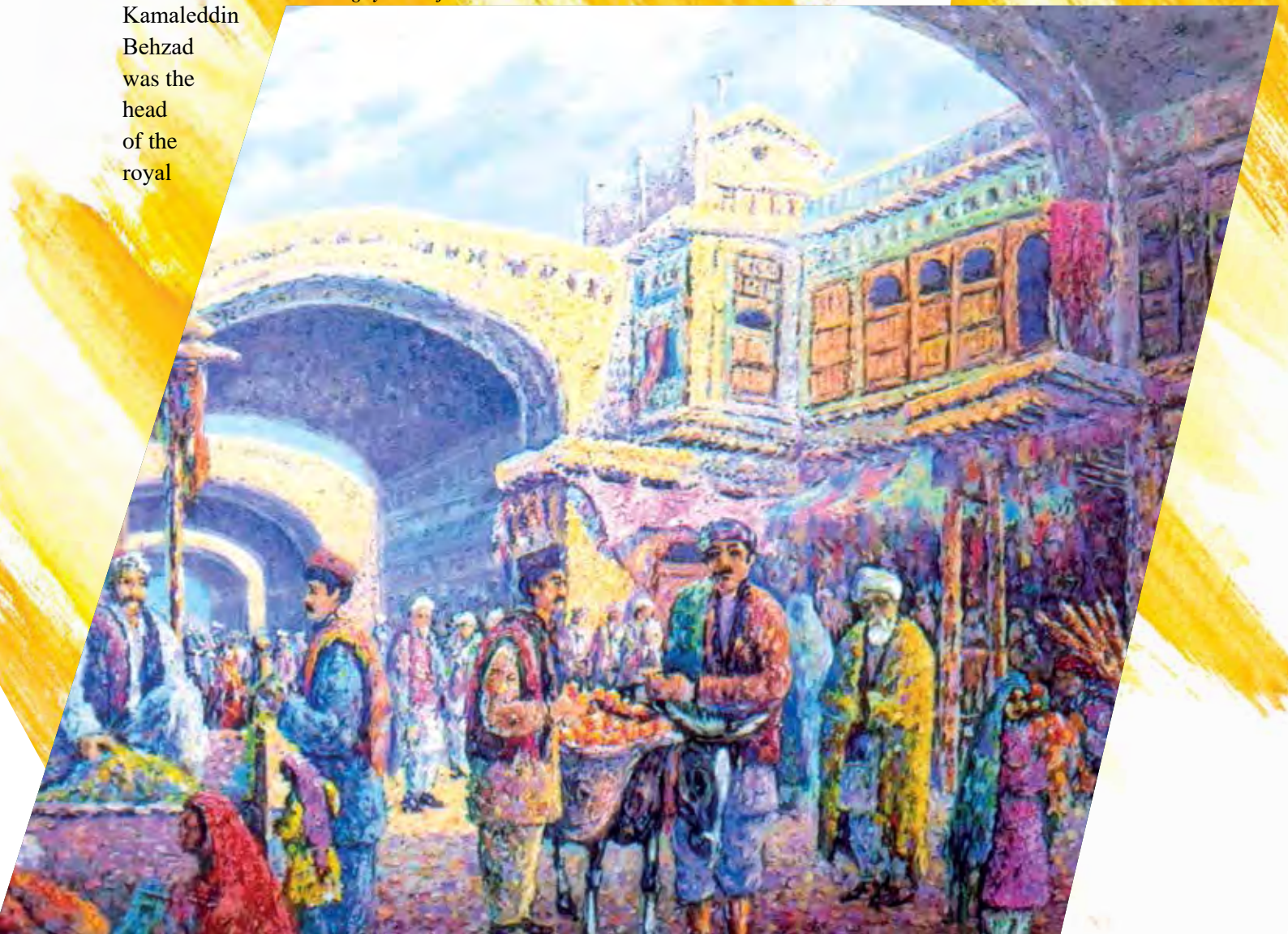
The 15th century CE Sultan Ḥosayn Bayqara the last important Timurid Emperor in Khorasan (1470-1506) an artist himself and patron of arts, Shah Rukh (*Persian* Šāhrokh) (1377 - 1447) *Emperor of the Timurid Empire of Herat in Afghanistan* and his wife Gowwhar Shad contributed to the development of art traditions in Afghanistan specially in paintings, miniature paintings and calligraphy.

Kamal ud-Din Behzad (c. 1450 – c. 1535), also known as Kamal al-din Bihzad or Kamaleddin Behzad was the head of the royal



*Char Chatta Bazar in Kabul by Abdul Ghafoor Breshna in 1932*

*Painting by Dr. Asefi*





ateliers in Herat and Tabriz during the late Timurid and early Safavid Persian periods. He was a famous miniature painter and manuscript illuminator. Sultan Ali Mashhadi (1453-1520) – Poet and Calligrapher of the Timurid Court was another artist who was able to influence the artistic traditions of Afghanistan.

One of the pioneering artists of the 20th century is Abdul Ghafoor Breshna (10<sup>th</sup> April 1907 – 4th January 1974) Painter, Music

of war in Afghanistan, he is still considered one of the best artists of Afghanistan who has left a lasting legacy.

Ghulam Muhammad Musawwer Maimanagi established an art school in Kabul in 1930s to introduce western art styles to Afghan painters.

Centre carried out yeoman service in providing training in different art techniques to young Afghans.



*Painting by Dr. Asefi*



*Painting by Dr. Asefi*

Composer, Poet and Film Director whose use of vivid colours left a lasting impression on art of Afghanistan. Although many of Breshna's paintings were lost or destroyed during the many years

This art school is now known as Ghulam Mohammad Maimanagi Art Center and still teach different disciplines of art including traditional arts such as calligraphy, miniature paintings etc. This Art

Among the contemporary Artists Nasrulleh Sarwary, Mohammad Yousof Asefi, Anzourgar Ashraf, Faryad Farooq have made a name for themselves as Afghan Painters both locally and internationally holding many exhibitions around the world. Many of these contemporary artists follow naturalism and impressionism in their paintings, generally depicting scenes from life in Afghanistan. During recent years the theme Buzkashi, the national game of Afghanistan has become popular among artists, with vivid depictions of the game becoming popular in Afghanistan and globally.





Mohammad Yousof Asefi is one of the painters who creates in diverse themes – culture and heritage of Afghanistan, natural landscape, society and people, etc. He is a master painter who understands his subjects which is reflected in the brush strokes of his paintings. His paintings also reflect the changing life and culture of Afghanistan. His gallery in Kabul is a haven for all artists and his

support to the next generation is invaluable.

Karim Shah Khan is a water colour artist whose realistic depiction of the ancient city of Kabul is becoming popular these days. His paintings bring life to the Afghan Culture through the medium of water colours have become popular in Afghanistan.

Since 2002, many Afghan artists have developed different styles and modernistic and post-modernist paintings and painters are coming to the limelight. Shamsia Hassani, Malina Suliman and Akram Ati are some of the younger generations who create their paintings in modern and post modernistic styles. This younger generation of artist also use the language of paintings to depict the culture and life of Afghanistan.



**Yousef Asefi**

Yousef Asefi is a doctor who received his medical credentials from the Kabul Medical Institute and turned into an artist in 1980s. In 1981, he learned the fundamentals of painting from his teacher, the honourable Nasrullah Sarwari who was one of the most successful teachers of painting in Afghanistan. Painting became a part of his life as he worked on improving his art. His enthusiasm, dedication, effort and energy towards his art is an inseparable part of his life. He has now painted more than a thousand valuable, charming and attractive paintings, and is considered to be one of the most talented painters of Afghanistan. He has participated in many competitions, and held many exhibitions in Afghanistan and abroad. He has also participated in many artist exhibitions, camps and competitions organized by the Ministry of Culture and Information in Afghanistan, and has won many awards and honours for his paintings. Dr. Asefi is a Member of the Central Council of Artists Association, a Member of the Inspection Committee of Art Contests of Information and Cultural Ministry, Member of the Afghanistan National Gallery, Member of the Afghanistan High Council of Artistic Directors of the Art Gallery (AAG) and Member of the Cultural Centre of Germany, etc.





# Modern Indian Painting and Path to Contemporary with Special Reference to Bengal

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**Dr. Jayalakshmi  
Yegnaswamy**

The terms  
'modern' and  
'contemporary' in  
a colloquial way  
refers to 'current'  
or a 'recent'  
period and  
both terms are  
interchangeable.



However, in Indian Art, especially in painting the term 'modern' and the 'contemporary' are classified under two different periods, and the paintings evolved in both spheres hold distinct features. The period referred as Modern Art in India is the period between the year 1900 to 1947 and it is identified as an era associated with the Indian Nationalism. Modern Art of India is predominantly linked with the Bengal Art Movement. Contemporary Art of India is considered to be Post-Independence (after 1947) when theoretically the period classified as Modernism in India ended and as the artistic experimentation and expressions are everlasting, the Contemporary Art is continuing.

The Modern Art in Indian painting sprouted initially in 'Bengal School' (Bengal Art School) which was established by Abanindranath Tagore (7th May 1871 – 7th August 1951) – a publicly recognized artist, art educator, and a nephew of the Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). The objective of Bengal School was to revitalize the ancient paintings of India, which was being overshadowed by Western art. The British East India Company (1757-1858), with their business interests came to Bengal precisely in Kolkata (Calcutta) and initiated Western style paintings of Indian landscape and people to their European buyers. Consequently, the gates were opened to the western painters, who created paintings on Indian subjects, which is stylistically known as the 'Company Paintings'. Alongside



*Motherland (Bharata Mata) by Abanindranath Tagore*

their art activities, the western authorities drastically disrupted the areas of traditional Indian art; and this phenomenon was strengthened in 1858 with the formation of British Empire (Raj) in the Indian Subcontinent. The British domination increased in every sphere of Indian life, which created unrest, thus the Indian nationalists launched the 'National Movement' and demanded freedom from the British. The Bengal Art Movement (*Bangalernavajagrana*) guided by Abanindranath Tagore, came in the forefront; it included the Bengal School, Tagore's Art Institution *Shantiniketan*, and the support of E.B. Havell (1861-1934) who was an English art historian, teacher, author, and an insightful backer of the Indian cause. Unlike the National Movement, the well organised



*Abhinindranath Tagore*

Bengal Art Movement acted peacefully, as the artists expressed grievances in their own way by rejecting the European norms, and their art materials. At this point the eminent artist Raja Ravi Varma (29th April 1848 – 2nd October 1906) who is considered as the foremost Indian modernist, was also questioned for his Academic Realism for its western style, despite the fact that his subjects purely held the Indian ethos. Further to this,





*Hanuman by K.G. Subramanayan*

in the process of introducing modernism in Indian painting by both Abanindranath Tagore and E.B. Havell brought certain radical changes in the curriculum of Bengal School, which worked on the styles of ancient paintings e.g. Ajanta murals (circa 1st century BCE - 5th century CE), and the Mughal Miniatures (15th century CE), but alongside encouraged modern ideas, methods, expressions and styles, on subjects drawn from Indian culture. Abanindranath Tagore with his national sentiment (*swadeshi*) created a celebrated painting called '*Bharata Mata*' (Motherland), which not only received appreciation, but also inculcated the sense of nationalism. Gaganendranath Tagore (17th September 1867 – 14th February 1938) brother of Abanindranath Tagore, turned himself to a cartoonist and dealt

with country's current issues, delineated in a liberal caricature style in his work. Sunayani Devi (18th June 1875 – 23rd February 1962) sister of Abanindranath Tagore and Gaganendranath Tagore was a self-made renowned artist of this period who extensively projected feminism in her paintings. The other artists of the Modern Period include Jamini Roy (11th April 1887 – 24th April 1972), Nandalal Bose (3rd December 1888 – 16th April 1966), Ramkinker Baij (26th May 1906 – 2nd August 1980), etc., developed their own distinctive styles on depicting Indian subjects. Rabindranath Tagore (7th May 1861 – 7th August 1941), founder of Santiniketan emerged as a painter in the Bengal art scene around 1924 and he displayed his own individual style. Tagore's work in terms of concept, material,

method and style, were distinct from the paintings of earlier and his contemporary period. According to Professor R. Sivakumar Tagore's style may be perceived as 'Contextual Modernism' – a fused form of Modern and Contemporary styles. Tagore created over two thousand paintings in the Modern style and he conveyed the message through his paintings were spontaneity, personal authenticity, obscurity, and individuality which indicated a new path of freedom to Indian artists by setting their wings free to proceed in a new direction.

### Contemporary Art

The trend of expressionism evolved further in India's post-independence era commencing from 1947. The foremost post-Independence group was the Progressive Artists Group (PAG) which comprised of six



contemporary painters – Krishnaji Howlaji Ara (16th April 1914 – 30th June 1985), Sadanand Bakre also known as S.K. Bakre (10th November 1920 – 18th December 2007), Hari Ambadas Gade (19th August 1917 – 16th December 2001), Maqbool Fida Husain better known as M.F. Husain (17th September 1915 – 9th June 2011), Sayed Haider Raza (22nd

February 1922 – 23rd July 2016) and Francis Newton Souza (12th April 1924 – 28th March 2002). The Group dissolved in 1956, but left profound influence as the pioneers of Contemporary Art of India.

The legacy of the Progressive Artists Group continued as the Indian artists began to explore new concepts, materials and

methodology and their ideas and expressions went to sky high with India's growing economic liberalization, increase of patrons of art and art communities, enthusiastic connoisseurs and buyers etc.

There are only a few eminent Contemporary artists of the 21st century who were influenced by the Modern art of India of the pre-Independence era. Kalpathi Ganpathi Subramanian also known as K.G. Subramanian (15th February 1924 – 29th June 2016) a recipient of India's Padma Vibhushan Award is one of the renowned artists who was trained under the Bengal



Untitled pen and ink by Rabhinindranath Tagore

Horse attack by M.F. Hussain



Untitled painting by Akbar Padamsee





artists of the Modern art such as Nandalal Bose, Benode Behari Mukherjee (7th February 1904 – 11th November 1980) and Ramkinkar Baij (26th May 1906 – 2nd August 1980). Another distinguished artist of the 21st century is Akbar Padamsee (born 12th April 1928) who is considered to be the pioneer of 'Modern Indian painting of the Contemporary era.

The Bengal Art Movement or the Bengal School of Art became a role model for Indian painters as it introduced "Modernism"

and produced many significant artists and varied styles which laid the foundation for the future generations of artists in India. Enriched by the Bengal School of Art Indian painters have developed ideas, expressions and styles which will lead the Indian artists to the international arena.



*Lady with flowers by Benode Behari Mukherjee*



**Dr. Jayalakshmi  
Yegnaswamy**

Dr. Jayalakshmi Yegnaswamy (also known as Jaya Swamy) is a painter who studied visual art at the Lansing Community College and Michigan State University in USA. She obtained her Master's degree in History of Art specializing in Indian art from the College of Fine Arts at the Karnataka Chithrakala Parishat in Bangalore University. She received her Post Graduate Diploma in Indology from M.H. Krishna Indological Institute also of the Bangalore University and PhD from the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology of the University of Mysore in India. Her research includes Costumes and Ornaments of Lambani a nomadic tribe of Karnataka through Nehru Small Scale Study associated with Victoria & Albert Museum in England, Language Centre of the University of Mysore funded her research on 'Hyder Ali' an Islamic Ruler of Karnataka, etc. She worked as visiting faculty at the College of Fine Arts, Karnataka Chithrakala Parishath, Jain University and in the Department of Masters in Visual Arts (MVA) in Bangalore University. She has membership many professional organisations such as the Art Centre of Mumbai, Indian Art History Congress, Epigraphy Society of India, Place Name Society of India, Ancient Sciences and the Archaeology Society of India and regularly contributes research articles to the journals of these organisations. She has exhibited her paintings since 1990 in India and abroad and currently works as an independent scholar and writer and lives in both Bangalore in South India and New York in USA.

As a painter she is exhibiting her paintings since 1990 in India and abroad. At present she is an independent scholar and a writer, lives in Bangalore, in South India, and in New York in USA.





# Paintings of the Contemporary Period in Maldives

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**Hussain Ifhal Ahmed**

The Maldives consists of over 1,200 islands and sandbars with approximately 200 islands being inhabited. The art and artists of Maldives reflect the natural beauty of the islands specially under the sea depicting the marine life which surrounds the tropical islands of Maldives.

*Painting by Zain Riyas*



Sarudhaaru Dhonbe also known as Sarudhaaru Dhon Maniku (SDM) is the most important pioneer painter of the contemporary period who used marine themes in his paintings which gradually became an important part of Maldivian art. Sarudhaaru is a member of a crafts family in Maldives and started his career as painter of portraits. He became the pioneer in marine themes in painting through meticulous documentation of shells and fish commonly found in the Maldivian reefs and lagoons. He became a fisherman to ensure food supply during the world war II and this led to his love and passion of depicting the natural under sea environment of Maldives. Sarudhaaru became a diver and expanded his paintings to include the beauty of the ocean which he saw through his diving. Despite lacking formal training in painting Sarudhaaru experimented in different media and techniques such as pencil, water colours, acrylic, oil paintings, etc., and developed his own style and became a role model for generations of Maldivian artists. Sarudhaaru now in his eighties still continue to paint using his memory to portray the beauty of the ocean around Maldives.

Hussain Ihfal Ahmed is another artist who is well-known for his contemporary paintings. He is also another artist who loves the environment and followed in the footsteps of Sarudhaaru in diving to get a better understanding of the ocean environment. One of his major accomplishments was the 7 paintings he did underwater for an exhibition regarding global warming and sea level rising at the National Art Gallery in Maldives. His paintings are considered to be mixed medium realism. Hussain Ihfal was the first artist in Maldives to create painting underwater using diving



*Hussain Ihfal Ahmed creating his painting under the sea.*



*Painting by Hussain Ihfal Ahmed*



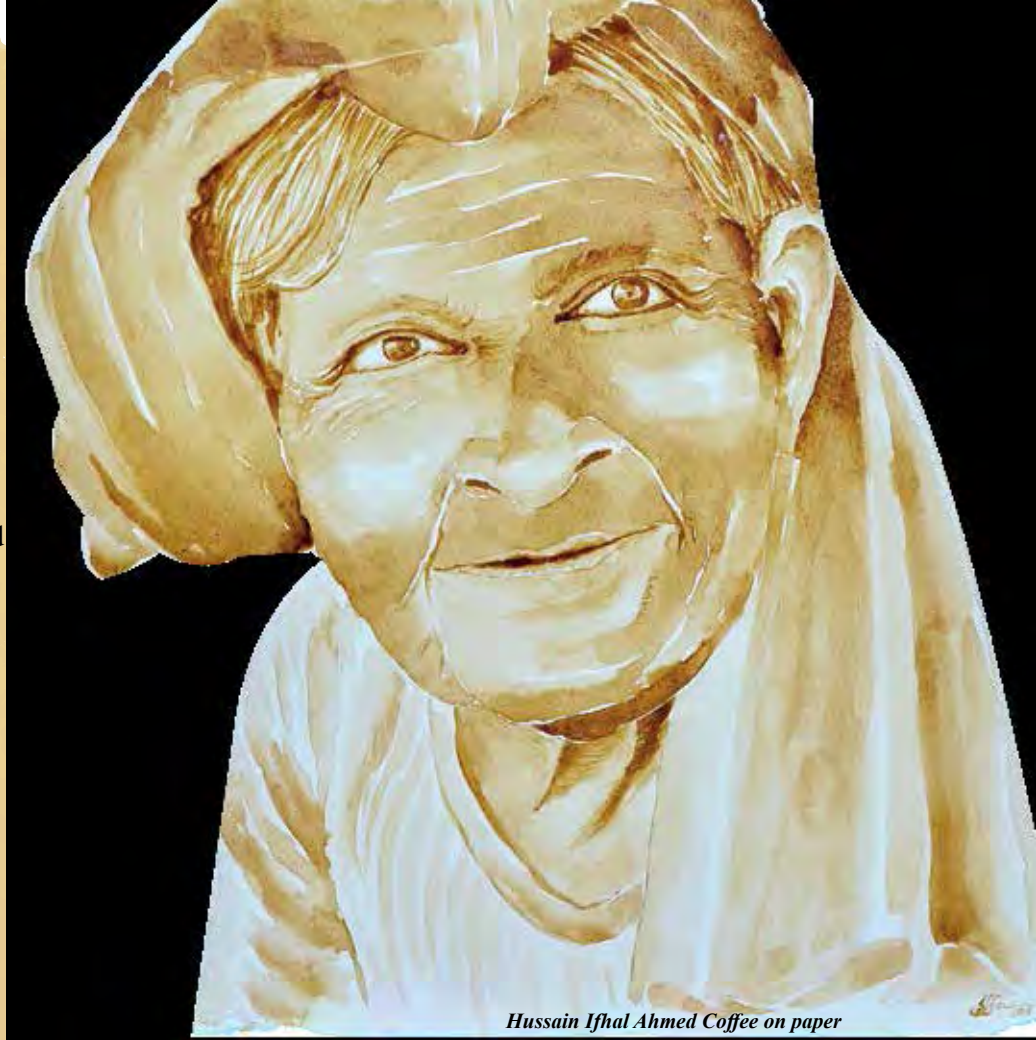
*Hussain Ihfal Ahmed Coffee on paper*



equipment. As a pioneer in his own right, Hussain Ihfal Ahmed also created a series of paintings using coffee as the medium, introducing new techniques and mediums to the contemporary art of Maldives.

Hussain Atheek is another self-taught artist of Maldives. He started painting at the age of 9 and experiments with different forms of art which includes digital art, painting, etc.

Art is only taught in Maldives up to Grade 10 and lack of art schools and artists in Maldives hinders the development of contemporary art in Maldives. Many of the artists are self-taught and a few artists have travelled abroad to be trained. However, recently the Maldivian Artist Community (MAC) a non-governmental organisation established a few years ago has created space to share ideas, training and exhibitions to



*Hussain Ihfal Ahmed Coffee on paper*

promote artists of Maldives. The MAC holds an annual exhibition which is open to all Maldivians. This has become a highlight in the art scene of Maldives and an integral part in bringing together artists



**Hussain Ihfal Ahmed**

Hussain Ihfal Ahmed is a prolific artist who has been working in the field of art for more than 15 years. He is the co-founder and the general secretary of the Maldivian Artist Community (MAC) a non-governmental organisation for the artists in Maldives. During his career as an artist, he has explored diverse media and applied different techniques to build his confidence in the field of art. He is the first Asian artist to paint underwater and hold an exhibition of his underwater paintings. He has participated in many Solo and group Exhibitions in the Maldives and abroad including the Maldives Contemporary Art exhibitions, SAARC Artist camps, etc. He is also a sand artist who performed at Internationale Tourismus-Börse Berlin (ITB Berlin), Germany, the largest international fair for tourism.





# Contemporary Paintings of Sri Lanka

**Kasun Chamara  
Wickramasinghe**

Roots of Sri Lankan paintings are embedded in the Asian art traditions but evolved in to its own distinctive tradition through the centuries with the crowning glory being the 5th century CE paintings of Sigiriya World Heritage Site.

*Dragon fly on lotus leaf by Kasun Chamara Wickramasinghe*



Since the 16th century the paintings styles received direct influence from the South Indian consorts of Sri Lankan kings in Kandy and European influence from Portuguese, Dutch and British who gained political authority in Sri Lanka. The contemporary paintings of Sri Lanka emerged during the last years of British colonial power in Sri Lanka through an amalgamation of European and Asian techniques and styles used to portray Sri Lankan themes including culture in their paintings.

Contemporary paintings of Sri Lanka had its roots in the Colombo 43 Group established in 1943 by a group of artists. The Colombo 43 Group initial members were W.J.G. Beling, A.C. Collette, Ralph Claessen, J.E.P. Daraniyagala, R.D. Gabriel, S.R. Kanakasabai, George Keyt, L.T.P. Manjusri, Ivan Peries, Lionel Wendt, Harry Pieris and George Claessen. These artists along with the Lanka National Art Front, Lanka Art Association made an attempt to revive fine arts in Sri Lanka but their attempts were an indirect reinstatement of European art in the country. Colombo 43 Group also had a great impact on South Asian contemporary art after the Venice Biennale in 1955 where the Group was recognized as a radical example of modern Asian art.

Sri Lankan artists were using natural dye, a combination of herbs, roots, and soil in their paintings for centuries and have survived to the present, however, these paintings mostly revolve around religious themes. The art of oil painting and water colours was introduced to Sri Lanka by the Europeans were spread in the country by the above collectives contravening their very own



*Colombo 43 Group by A.C. Collette*

purpose of establishing a Sri Lankan art form. The creations they produced including landscape art, and oil painting shifted the art form from its religious focus to the mundane and secular. The art of Sarlis Master also took a similar form to the European art form and introduced it the religious art of Sri Lanka. Kelani Temple Murals by Solius Mendis and Gotami Temple paintings by George Keyt pushed the paintings of Sri Lanka to a new dimension changing the traditional mural paintings to a new form of Sri Lankan Temple paintings. However, Ven. Mapalagama Vipulasara and S.P. Charles of the Lanka Art Association contrived to promote traditional Sinhala arts through their creations. The National Emblem of Sri Lanka, National Flag, and the mace of Sri Lanka parliament bear testimony to their contributions.

Thereafter, the Colombo-based Aesthetics Studies Centre came into being under the patronage of

J.D.A. Perera. Even though this initiative enriched the Sri Lankan art scene during its early years, the influences of the generational shift in the European art form had an impact on this initiative. These shifts moved us forward in tandem with global trends, the Sri Lankan traditional art diminished as a result. The creations that emerged out of this shift equaled to that of its European style paving way for contemporary or global art.

Another reason behind this tendency towards contemporary art was H.A. Karunaratne's style was inspired by the abstract expressionism style which was popular at the time. His European education played a major role in acquiring the abstract expressionism art in Sri Lanka. His free style approach to art is evident in his paintings titled 'niwana' (nirwana), 'sanda paya' (moon rising) and in some untitled paintings. His paintings are able to draw the onlooker into the painting through various





*The Bee by Kasun Chamara  
Wickramasinghe*

styles of paintings. He also incorporated nails, iron, and rods etc., introducing mixed media art. His students and disciples who became teachers later on showed an interest to depict the contemporary outlook of Sri Lankan art through paintings.

Chandraguptha Thenuwara's Barrelism was also another turning point in the Sri Lankan art trends. The barrel being a symbol which was common to war-ridden Sri Lanka was used in his creations depicting the contemporary war and its thoughts woven around it. Jagath Weerasinghe's creations which can be named as a 90s trend, questions the war at the time, rights of women and nostalgia created by war.

Even though contemporary art spread as a form of expression of the present status, creations of some artists were mere architectural art. This was an alternative solution to Sri Lanka's contemporary needs. At present, contemporary art



*A portrait by JDA Perera*

expression is utilized by some groups of artists and they all tend to look like self-expressions through the use of various styles. The contemporary artists today express how social issues, and inner personality affect their lives through the medium of art. While one manipulates his rapid brush strokes inside the picture, another tries to depict the nature one is surrounded by. However, it is evident that if an artist manifests his own impressions in a painting as an expression this belongs to the contemporary category of art.



The 21st century contemporary painters of Sri Lanka uses different techniques as well as mixed media in their paintings. Kasun Chamara Wickramasinghe a young contemporary artist of the second decade of the 21st century receives his inspiration from the environment and society around him. One of his creations titled 'blue whale' is an attempt to show the form of the blue whale by depicting it over and over again through various methods. He has shown the front view of the blue whale and its attractive jump. He has also included information about the blue whale through geometric shapes and lines in the painting. The use of light and speedy colour lines is a combination of various art forms. The painting of the bees also falls under the same style. The form of the bee, its colours and honey is expressed in the expressionism style rather than in a realistic manner. Only the form of the bee is depicted in its natural form while the rest of the symbols are expressed in a geometric form to expose the true nature of the bee in multiple ways.



*Blue Whale by Kasun Chamara Wickramasinghe*



**Kasun Chamara  
Wickramasinghe**

Kasun Chamara Wickramasinghe is a young artist who is from the southern province of Sri Lanka. He was trained in painting at the University of Visual and Performing Arts in Colombo where he obtained his Bachelor's degree and currently working as a visiting lecturer at the same University and as a freelance artist. He has exhibited his paintings in many exhibitions held both locally and internationally and won awards for his art. He has participated in the Art Walk in 2010, Imagine Italy 2012 of the Italian Embassy, SAARC Artist Camp in Bhutan in 2016, etc. His creations are semi abstract and geometric in style portraying contemporary ideas. He uses acrylic, oil and mixed materials in his creations.



A contemporary painting of two women in traditional South Asian attire. The woman on the left wears a white sari with a blue border and holds a bouquet of purple flowers. The woman on the right wears a red and yellow sari. The background is a vibrant, abstract mix of green, yellow, and blue. The title 'Contemporary Paintings of the SAARC Cultural Centre' is written in a large, black, serif font over the right side of the painting.

# Contemporary Paintings of the SAARC Cultural Centre

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**Bindu Urugodawatte**

SAARC Cultural  
Centre is the  
custodian  
of a large  
collection of  
contemporary  
paintings  
created by the  
artists of South  
Asia.

*Iromi Wijewardhana (Sri Lanka)*



This collection of paintings are the results of the annual SAARC Artist Camp which commenced in 2011 and invites the artists of the SAARC Member States to create their paintings amidst fellow painters of the Region. The SAARC Artist Camp provides an opportunity to the South Asian painters' study fellow artists at work, to establish friendships, exchange information on techniques and styles and create a fellowship among painters of SAARC Member States for future collaboration. SAARC Artists Camps have been held in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.



*SAARC Artists at Work Hulumale, Maldives, 2019*

*Untitled Painting by Dr. Yousef Asefi (Afghanistan)*





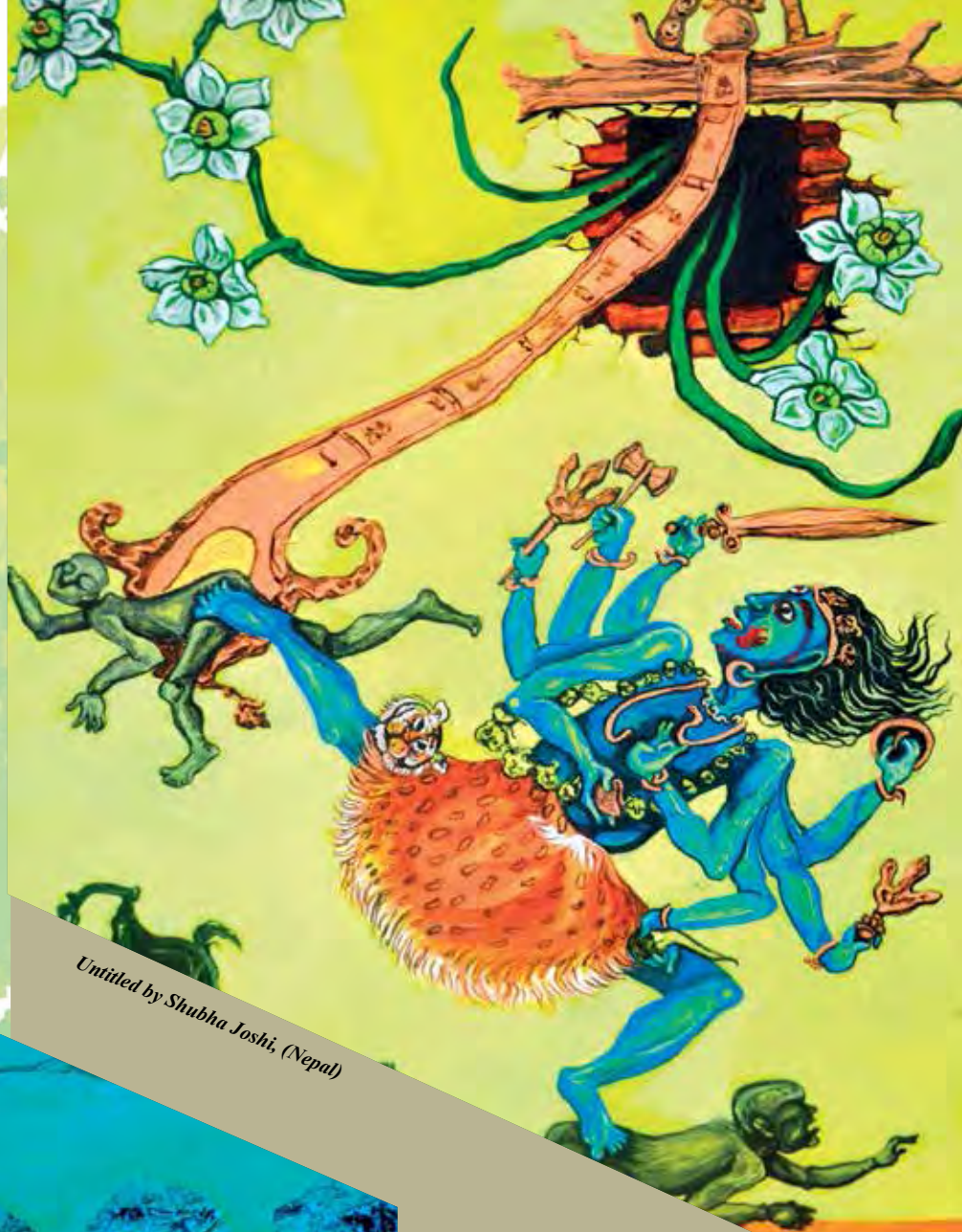
The inaugural SAARC Artist Camp was held in Sri Lanka at the *Janakala Kendraya*, Battaramulla in 2011. Twenty-two artists from Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka worked in harmony transforming their ideas to canvass amidst the comradery of fellow painters.

*Tiger Nest Monastery of Bhutan as portrayed by different SAARC Artists*

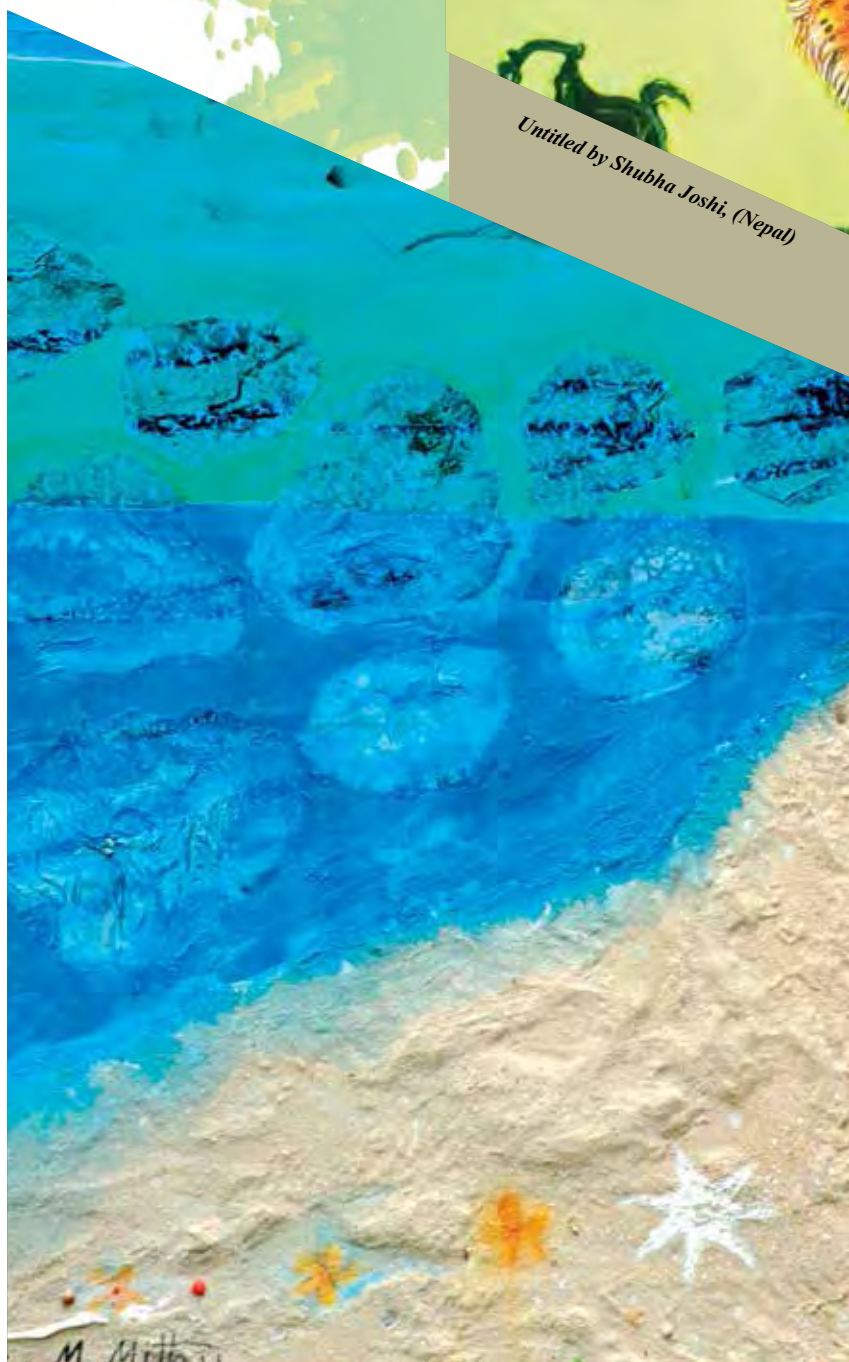




The second Artist Camp was held at the *Water's Edge* in Battaramulla, Sri Lanka with 26 participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. In 2013 the Artist Camp was held in *Kuda Bandos*, Maldives with 44 participants representing all SAARC Member States.



*Untitled by Shubha Joshi, (Nepal)*



*Khalid Mahmood Mithu, Peaceful land (Pakistan)*





*Untitled by S. Pranam Singh (India)*

The Artists Camp for 2014 was held in “Bandarban” in Bangladesh with participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In 2015, the 5th Annual Artists Camp of the SAARC Cultural Centre was held in the “Bamiyan Valley” in Afghanistan with 29 participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

SAARC Artist Camp in 2016 was held in Bhutan with 34 participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



*Nature between God Farjana Ahmed Santa (Bangladesh)*



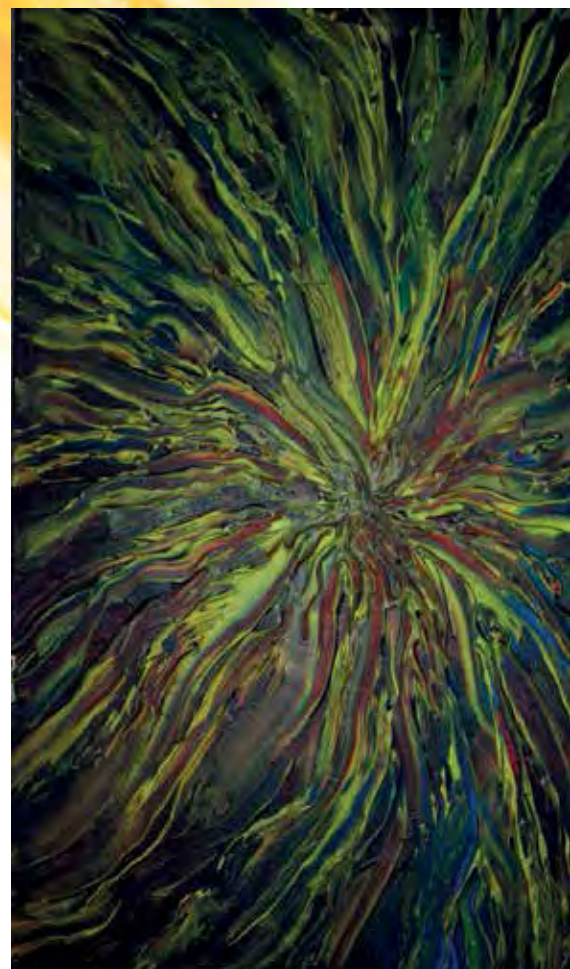


Seventh Artist Camp was held at the *Gokarna Forest Resort* in Nepal with 35 participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In 2018 the eighth Artist Camp was held at Jetwing Lagoon in Sri Lanka with 19 participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. The ninth Artist Camp was held in Hulumale in Maldives with 31 participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

*Flower of Nature* by Ahmed Azmee Haleem (Maldives)



*Untitled* Choney Pelzang (Bhutan)





There are more than 200 paintings created at the Artists Camps portraying the various styles, techniques and developments of contemporary art of South Asia. These paintings reflect the changing society, environment, cultural and social landscapes of the Region through the eyes of the artists. One of the interesting facets of the paintings in the collection is the paintings of the same theme, specially landscape or tangible heritage, by different artists using different styles and techniques as portrayed by 4 paintings of the Tiger Nest Monastery of Bhutan.

These paintings are preserved as a collection by the SAARC Cultural Centre as the custodian of culture of the SAARC Region.



Untitled by Savi Sawakar (India)



**Bindu Urugodawatte**

Bindu Urugodawatte is the Deputy Director Research at the SAARC Cultural Centre. She is an Archaeologist by profession, trained both in the East and West and carrying out her research in South, Central and East Asia. Her research interests include Buddhist Archaeology of Sri Lanka and South Asia, Silk Road Buddhist Archaeology, Buddhist Archaeology of Central Asia and China. Currently she is carrying out research on *Paintings of Jataka Stories at the Kizil Rock-Cut Cave Temple in Xinjiang Province of China*. She has contributed her research to both national and international publications and presented her research findings at national and international forums in USA, Europe and Asia. Her recent publications include *Buddhist Art and Architecture and Key Buddhist Centres of Devotion and Pilgrimage in Buddhism Living Religion Sri Lanka* published by the Ministry of Buddhasasana of Sri Lanka. *Buddhism in Central Asia in 2600 Years of Sambuddhatva: Global Journey of Awakening, Influence of European Diaspora on Sri Lankan Buddhist Art in the Circulation of Cultures and Culture of Circulation: Diasporic Cultures of South Asia During the 18th to 20th Centuries* are some of her publications. She has worked in governmental, non-governmental and private organisations in Sri Lanka, USA and China in various capacities. She is an avid photographer, a nature lover and an intrepid traveller.









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