CHAPTER 7

HER CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PAINTINGS
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The development of contemporary and modern art in India has been intimately linked with the development of modern art movements in Europe although its evolution in India has been unlike that in the west. The visual arts before the twentieth century were, above other things, a means, of conveying a message which was religious, literary, historical, or narrative, that is to say extraneous itself. In the present century, however, the arts have found their definition in their autonomous nature and particular aesthetic objectives.

The period of modern art, characteristic of there factors has been a period of highly significant pictorial revolution – a period of experiment and adventure. India has hard its share of impact art, although belatedly.

She wakes up to the strain of Abida Parveen and the gurbani. The leitmotif in her canvas is the Buddha. And she insists she doesn’t make beautiful paintings. When Nona Walia has close brush with Arpana Caur.

Last year, when the ‘New York Times’ raved about her multiple Buddhas on an invitation card, Arpana Caur smiled. The woman of many hues. The Buddha painter. The Sohini –Mahiwal narrator, madly in love
with Bulle Shah has painted a dancing Nanak. Her popular image of Raj Kapoor and Nargis under a umbrella from ‘Shree 420’ still resonates in the minds of many. In her studio, Buddha dominates. There’s a painting of Buddha leaving his sleeping wife and child in the night. She’s called it The Great Departure; another one shows Buddha’s journey from suffering to enlightenment.

But today, she’s tad worried. Her Budhhas are being imitated and sold as original in New York. “I’m alive today and my paintings are being faked. What will happen tomorrow when I’m gone? I have a show in New York in 2005, these fakes are a big problem. They’re so real, even I can’t tell the difference”. In her living room, the bronze Buddha has a multiple effect. He’s almost everywhere. Just back from Ajanta and Ellora caves after a holiday, Arpana shows her photographs: And therein, lies her story. A story of struggle, pain and heartbreak. Finally, savouring success and enlightenment. A long journey. And a lonely one, too.

After her sister ender her life in Paris, Arpana began her solo journey. “My painting were not beautiful, they had a deeper meaning”. It’s obvious. A walk around Arpana Art Gallery explains that explicitly. On display is an anti-war exhibition. “There’s always a purpose in life. You
have to give it a deeper meaning”, adds Arpana, who did a painting for Hiroshima Museum in 1995 to mark the 50th anniversary of the nuclear holocaust.

She struggled for 10 years. “This is my golden period. I feel I’m on a flying carpet, I’m dreaming. When I began painting, there were two galleries and two collectors in Delhi and you got two lines in the newspaper trashing and praising you,” says Arpana, whose work are now displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Bradford Museum, Dusseldorf and Singapore Museum of Modern Art.

Arpana Caur in her own words is passing through “My golden period”, she is rated as one of the top contemporary artists. Over a period of 28 years, her work has evolved. Structure and colour are the key to her art. She has appropriated the structure of Pahari miniatures – the rounded figures, the curved horizon, the division of the background into the sky, earth and water and the creation of many centres of activity in each work. In fact, she is carrying forward the tradition of art that has been the most successful in the modern India – the marriage of folk and contemporary schools.

Her love for India is immense she is quite attached to the country of her routs. Her friends in U.S. used to tease her about her love for the
“Mother Country”, she was offered a teaching job in an art institute in Chicago in 1990 – something many artists would have given their right arm for. But she could not bear being away from home and declined. She went to an art school in London on a scholarship but she was so homesick that she dropped out and came away. Simplicity reflects in her life. She doesn’t go out for dinner. She arrives at her studio at 7 a.m. every day and feels ecstatic in her being there.

She works up her colours on the basis of the techniques of preparing layered pigments. She has broken away from the flat colouring of miniature paintings by using elements of the chiaroscuro effect in a frame work that is based on colour and not on tone, reflecting on originality of approach to colour found in India murals.

Arpana Caur’s art has evolved along the path that emerged out of the nationalist movement: a blend of modern and folk art. We have, as examples, the Haripura panels of Nandalal Bose, the folk – inspired works of Jamini Roy, and work of M. F. Hussain that take up the strong narrative tradition of our folk – scrolls and compress it into a single image or in a series. And now, here is a collaboration between a folk artist, Laxmi Narayan Panday, and the modern painter, Arpana Caur, both of whose signatures appear on works they have jointly created.
She is quite inspired by Rammohan Gandhi. On January, 2000 he came to her and said “I have a millennium gift for you”. He had a dream of flaming tree, representing our turbulent times and a woman dousing the flames with her love and compassion, which he wanted her to paint. He even gave it a title, the water weaver. Now, she has one water weaver in every solo exhibition.

Arpana Caur’s art has always had a radical content. Starting with images of the loneliness of the creation person in characteristically Camus – like images of a performer playing to empty chairs, she really came into her own with works portraying the indifference of a consumerist society to what goes on around it, with Kite flying figures watching others down. These were done after the Delhi riots of 1984. After that we get the ‘Threat’ series, of trigger happy policeman aiming guns at innocent women. Women again are the subject of the series on the ‘Widows of Vrindavan’, in which we get serial images influenced by Pahari miniatures, These develop an optical character in later works of the ‘Body is just a Garment’ series often evolving into graffiti in works with industrial and street imagery. It is this evolution that has allowed Caur to collaborate with the repetitive and graffiti-like images of the traditional tattooists of Bihar, Godna Art, naturally. It is something that was emerging
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in her expression anyway. So the collaboration between the folk artist and the modern is something that has been evolved by the modern that integrates the traditional. But the traditional is not just appropriated. Panday actually began to evolve images, like the tree - woman, from Caur’s imagery. Also, the need to keep certain spaces empty allows the traditional artist to evolve an understanding of negative space as part of a whole composition, something folk art does not apply itself to today, when it is mostly design - oriented. In her words, “Indian contemporary art was largely marginalized, like everything else Indian. This was of course, 20 years ago. Now things have changed, and that’s also due to the efforts of Indian art lovers who live abroad, I was really thrilled when the Victoria & Albert Museum, London acquired my painting from the series, ‘In Vrindava’. I wouldn’t say that was one of my best works, but it really made me happy”.

‘Tears for Hiroshima’ incorporating canvas, acrylic, charcoal drawing, pots of water. This installation is similar to one Arpana Caur exhibited at the alternative ‘DOCUMENTA’ show in Germany in 1997.

Arpana Caur is quite disappointed with government she says that “In fact of if artists send their work abroad for an exhibition, they face a number of hassles. They have to get a RBI clearance. They are treated
on a par with exports and they have to fill the same GI form. They have to give it in writing that all the money will come back to the country in foreign exchange. The canvases which do not sell and came back to the country are held by the customs and duty is imposed on them.” She adds “They have paid for their ticket, lived on one meal a day abroad for want of money. As representatives of the culture of this country we are treated so shabbily. Because of these hassles most galleries abroad like to take Indian art for non-commercial exhibition”.

After that she explains “In New York people wanted my work but it could not be sold because of the non-commercial tag imposed by government. We face a lot of harassment. The customs does not clear your papers until the RBI gives a nod. The RBI does not sign the GI form, until you give a bank guarantee worth your work. If 10 works of art are going and you price them at 50,000 each, they need to give a guarantee of Rs 5 lakh. Where does an artist get this money? An exporter can get the guarantee money, but not us. When I had to send my Hiroshima painting, they held up my consignment in spite of the fact it was a honour for the country that an Indian painter had been commissioned. Officials in customs said, ‘How do we know it is not an antique’. “I said, ‘I am alive, it is my
work.' I had nightmares because there was a deadline to meet. Then I managed to find a photograph is a newspaper with me standing in front of the painting at the preview to show it was my work. We have approached to PM's minister and they assured as but nothing worked out”.

It also reintroduced into our traditional art a concept of narration which commercialization had completely divested it of. At the same time, like the Warli tribal people Godavari Parulekar writers of the folk artists in the exhibition are integrated not only with historical figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Bhagat Singh, but also with global events like the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima by the United States. At the same time, they confront their own humanity as the subject of artistic expression, which was essentially reduced to reproducing motifs of Gods, plants and animals.

For Arpana Caur, the collaboration represent reforming links with the traditional base of our artistic expression, the folk art of the peasantry, who formed the backbone of the resistance to colonial rule. This base has become increasingly tenuous with a consumerist society emerging in India's urban areas, looking increasingly towards Western Europe and the U.S. This would have created a serious break with the existing artistic tradition and would have resulted in totally isolating those benefiting from
economic and social progress from those who only pay for it. With even this tenuous link gone, India of the nationalist movement of the Five Years Plans, of concern for mass education and rural development would effectively be overtaken by two Indias unconcerned with each other. So, contemporary Indian art, particularly the art of the Arpana Caur, reminds us that “two Indias” are a dangerous mental construct in a situation where a small minority siphons off the wealth of the vast majority and squanders it on conspicuous consumption, something the “Two Indias” model hides effectively.

There is only one India, where the industrial and the agrarian coexist, where both Bhagat Singh and Mahatma Gandhi have their relevance, where women are worshipped as devis but are put to the hardest labour in a male-dominated society, the artist brings these are part of one reality. And it is that reality that requires mending.

ARTISTICALLY too, this process creates an environment with many possibilities. The narrative, motif and intelligibility enter our contemporary artistic expression, while the easy-to-carry scroll or fold-up folio forms also became part of it. As for folk art, it relearns its capacity to narrate historical events and express an opinion on them, a capacity it has lost by becoming airport art. More than that with the emergence of
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installation art with a folk element in it, its visual expression is expanded considerably, being freed of the ritual significance of shrine assemblages, like those at the foot of banyan trees. It has entered a new world in which art is art and gets aesthetic appreciation that is quite different from the reverence attached to ritual constructions. Art is to be felt, not revered.

This is very important to note as various forms of post – modernism have pushed back the origins of deeper and deeper into our past. A similarity of forms does not indicate that their content and function are the same. Very often, their evolution is from diametrically opposed poles. If modern art appropriates a folk motif or elements of design from our rural artistic expression, it retains its significance as an original way of putting across an artist’s view of life, the world and event. For folk art, on the other hand, the same process represents a radical break from a past of ritual standardization of imagery and its present relegation to the decorative. If modern art gains motifs, folk art gains much more in terms of breaking the traditional and commercial boundaries that have held it down too long.

'The Great Divide' reflects contrary trends in the national movement, highlighted by the lion and peacock motifs of folk art.

Arpana Caur, in her recent exhibition, Between Dualities which has been mounted at Delhi’s Academy of Fine art and Literature and the
Cymroza Gallery in Mumbai, serves as a link between the growth figures and actual poverty process and backwardness, innovation and stagnation, that characterise two faces of the same reality. Her art highlights their interconnectedness and forces one to assess them as two sides of the same coin and to question them. That indeed is one function of art in the contemporary context that is bound to grow in importance in the next century.

Arpana’s visual narration for several decade form the block: the concrete versus abstract. Arpana has always insisted in telling about thoughts and actions in her paintings. She follows thus tradition of sequences of tales as they are presented in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, but also in the Punjab where she came from. The way she tells stories is kindered to modern Asian – English literature as conceived by Salman Rushdie and Vikram Chandra. However inside the Indian art circle and in the International world of painting, Arpana represents an autonomous quality. She mixed different layers of time, liking them to differing methods of painting, graphic elements are joined with illustrative and pictorial ones. Each of them aims at a different frame of presentation. Abstract and realistic merge without blending form and colour gain importance smoothness and styling of the bodies leads to a level of abstraction in the
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concrete, which we experience in a similar way only in ancient Egypt art. No wonder she shares the prediction large eyes, ever mirror of the soul.

Arpana Caur’s Day and Night went for an impressive $19,250, Caur’s ability to play the tenor of the liked life between dualities sets her apart from others. Using the inverted female form and the images of the scissors and the thread she too brings in her metaphor of the thread that laces the yesteryear to the present and perhaps brings back memories of the Greek goddesses from mythology.

ARPANA CAUR PAINTS ON THE RIOTS OF 1984

‘Painting the pain of 1984’ this article was published in 1984 in Times of India by Soumya Menon on series ‘World Goes On’ and is reproduced blow–

Greatest works of arts are inspired by sorrow. And the trauma of 1984 and catharsis that followed set the canvas for Arpana Caur.

Today one of the top names in Indian art, Caur had been caught in the crossfire of hatred that swept Delhi after Indira Gandhi assassination. But she is a survivor rather then a fighter.

Her family nearly lost everything, but remains undaunted “My mother and I would pile blankets and medicines in our car and go to the riot affected colonies and refugee camps. It was chaos everywhere,
but we never thought of our safety”.

The trauma of 1984, however, gave greater depth and life to Caur’s creativity. Her series on the riots, World Goes On, captures the terrible self-absorption and imperviousness of the civil society to the horrors unleashed by mob violence. The series, perhaps the only one of the ‘84 riots’ won her the Triennale award in 1986. Caur has blended her passionate response to the violet political reality, with a philosophical approach. Simplicity is her mantra: an account of what happened carries a most effective message.

The series which begins with images of tortured bodies, heaps of corpses and inconsolable widows exhaust themselves in a stark comment: man affected by the violence around him, the attitude of selfish self-absorption becomes the recurring image in the series.

“My paintings are an expression of my pain. It was so inexplicable, so barbaric” Caur says.

Set on a backdrop of vibrant red and arranged on overwhelming canvases, the series does more than leaving you with an after thought. But the dark images have some shades in full bloom from the backdrop to many images. “Nature always runs its course, finishing a cycle, Gods don’t participate in human tragedy, they just watch”. Caur explains.
This is not her first series on the riots. The Missing Audience captured the emotions running high amidst growing violence, immediately after the riots. The brutal beast that man becomes in such times is portrayed in terrible colours as are the reason for it violent repression. Though the message is palpable, no lessons were learnt. "Even after all this time there is no justice. It almost seems like that life has no value in India."

Caur, however, hasn’t forgotten. Even in her 2003 series of Nanak some latent message of 1984 remains, “Why always depict something so tragic? We have to move ahead. Guru Nanak Kabir and Buddha are who the world should look up to”, she says. So her portrayal of “the first medieval thinker” has novel interpretation that are entirely Caur’s. Moving away from the typical depiction of calendar art, Caur depicts a dancing Nanak in Baramaha, Nanak snipping a thread with scissors (a symbolic distancing from the established path) a foot symbolizing the wandering ministrels and saints.

A dancing Lord Ganesha, Krishna Leela or Baddha have permeated art’s pantheon. But how many gallery hoppers recollect seeing Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, in a painting? “Communal violence and secularism are opposite forces. If they balance each other out, it might bring solace to the wounded,” she adds.
Reems have been written about the 1984 riots, but Caur’s canvas says more than what thousand of words couldn’t.

In 1993, after moving into new premises in northern India, the Deutsche Bank initiated a large-scale art project to furnish its Indian branches with complementary works by regional artists and artists from the German-speaking world. One happy outcome of this international alliance was the marriage between the Indian art historian who was advising the project and the German branch manager. Thus today in the sumptuously renovated Tata House in Mumbai for instance, paintings by Arpana Caur find themselves face to face with works by the “Nene Wilden” (New savage). In her “Time Image” the artist portrays herself floating above shaven – headed windows, high over the richness and variety of Indian history. Is she really “above it all”. Hardly, for Caur is herself deeply interested in the ever-recurring conundrums of space and time. In front of a glowing red sky she represent the fragile, gentle incarnation of female identity – which as in cultures elsewhere appears to be constructed of many different elements: the transparent sari and the white blouse decorated with heart-shaped geometrical ornaments evince heterogeneous influences. A tree in the picture appears to provide stability, yet all is in flux, all in movement. Even the heads rising like a flight of
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steps and the ritually cleansing holy water are witnesses to the fact that nothing stays the same.

**ARPANA CAUR: WHO PAINTED FIRST INDO-GERMAN MURAL AT MERCADO WITH SONKE NISSEN KNAACK.**

It is a component of a mural project accomplished under Schrimherrschaft of the UNESCO to the agenda 21, in which it concerns two questions: on the one hand around careful handing natural resources of the earth, on the other hand around the co-operation of artists from the industrialized countries and countries of the third world.

First a fire wall was intended in the Zeiss road for painting. After these two week before beginning of the project suddenly no more was not to Soenke Nissen, the BAR and members of the forum at the disposal (the adjoining property should be cultivated now nevertheless), looking feverful for an alternative. This was in nearly last minute over the garage entrance of the MERCADO of shopping centre, which supported the project actively in the consequence.

On 5th October of the past yearly the artists became acquainted with themselves and inhabitant inside the quarter with a cosy round in the quarter office of the BAR mutually. Cause of the attendance was the completion of the mural, which was financially supported by the forum.
Osterkirchenviertel not only enthusiastically taken up but also from the order fund.

What at Hamberg was positively noticeable?

Mrs. Caur considered it not enough: this wonderful peace.

Astonishment with the members of the forum Osterkirchenviertel; in addition, Soenke Nissen Knaack confirms: who knows Delhi again, Hamburg cannot feel differently than an oasis of the peace. Arpana Caur tells that she visited an exhibition of contemporary painting in the late afternoon over? The woman in the art; in the Hamburg arts centre to its surprise it went thereby however not around artists but around pictures, in which women were explained, naturally up to one of Kaete Kollwitz throughout from men painted. The more is pleased it now about the fact that in his quarter committee- at least in this evening – predominantly women are represented. At the least there it has the hearts of the most present ones (naturally also there of the men!) won.

The pictures are presented by Soenke Nissen who had already painted a mural with Mrs. Caur in Delhi: it consists of different symbols, which form the outside from approximately and others which are straight. They are again even connected with a spiral form representative of men and women with one another. Nearly in the centre an Indian fertility
goddess appears. The symbols stand as metaphors for the different kind of thinking in the western and Indian culture, i.e. for the purposeful on the one hand and in cycles on the other hand. From both different handling results evenly also with the environment.

The artist told that the people in spiral corresponds to an old Indian mark of tradition, with whom above all to Mrs. their houses it paints. A picture about two environment and intercultural dialogue fits according to the opinion of the forum completely particularly well into this quarter the forum in this quarter delicates itself both tasks in concrete way. In again Delhi differently than in Altona the topic agenda 21 plays so far still no large role, which few humans there have so far heard of. That may be however also because of the fact that India is not as clearly of questions and problems of the modern industries and information society certain as the western world. Arpana Caur tells that in its homeland modern trend and past exist at the same time next to each other. If it looks e.g. at home from its window, it sees a donkey station beside the modern Delhi also, where there animals are tied up. Still today a large part of the transport of goods is completed also in this large city with this traditional means of transport.

The daughter of Mrs. Ersoy from the forum radiates, when she receives an autograph with dedication from the well known artist. An artist,
who does not posses the trace of presumption despite its Bekannheit. And
Arpana Caur has Clementinen in this evening for the first time in her life
eaten.

Arpana Caur has painted a series of paintings on the theme. “The
Man Who Always Were a Watch” using gouache medium a paper. In this
series she has displayed the importance of time in our life. In the first
painting of this Devis. She has shown mother of this man who hears him
tickling in her womb while he is inside her womb. In the second painting
mother is shown looking at the clock and giving him food. Moving further
is this series, father is shown looking at the clock and driving him to the
school and his teacher is shown turning the hand of the clock faster. So that
the class should end sooner. In the next painting, he is shown to be loaded
with homework and burning midnight oil foiling hard to finish it. Then he
has been shown as a young guy who meets his sweetheart at the bus stand
every day. Both of them look at their watches when they meet and also
when they leave after happy reunion. Thereafter, he is shown to be careless
not realizing the worth of time. One of there paintings show him getting
late by five minutes to meet his lover. He finds her with another guy who is
more punctual than him. There, he loses the love of his life. In the next
painting, he is shown getting late by five minutes for work and finds
another person employed in his place at his desk. He loses his source of income too. His despair is quite evident in the next painting where he is throwing the watch into the sea. A mermaid, who is very beautiful, comes up and snatches the watch. In the next painting, he is sitting by the shore looking towards the waves. Waiting for mermaid to re-emerge from the sea water. The, he is shown to be is a state where he has forgotten time. It seems only has also forgotten him in a seme. He is shown taking pleasure in seeing water flow, flowers bloom, clouds float and fish swim. In the next painting he is shown seeing the seasons change. He never ever has the time before to look at the sky or the frees or the moon. In the last painting, he turns into a child once more, in timeless world freed of the laws of time and is shown getting soaked in the rain of eternal love.

**ARPANA CAUR: ONLY INDIAN ARTIST WHO PARTICIPATED IN 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIROSHIMA BOMBING IN JAPAN.**

On the fifth anniversary of the nuclear assault on Japan, Arpana Caur was one of the selected ten artists in the world, and the only Indian to be given this prestigious commission in Japan. She chose to Juxtapose colours in each part of the triptych rather than have the normal continuity of colours or image: the world as it was in the first part, the soldiers sent to death like folder; and then the window under nuclear rain. The work is
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proudly Indian in its form and colours while being universal in its subject. Everyone else’s paintings were in grey and black. Now, the world is like there’s a Hiroshima happening everyday. “Where Are All the flowers gone?” is one of her fine creative works.

“I had been called to Japan in 1994 for a function on the 5th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombings. I had got a letter addressed to me as ‘Mr’ Arpana Caur but had not corrected the mistake then because. I thought they might cancel my participation. The other nine participants were men. When I came to Japan, they were surprised but took it in their stride”.

HER IMPORTANT WORKS: AT A GLANCE

Juggler (1982)

This tragicomic image of exploitation is triggered off by the small deer balanced precariously on the finger of the oft seen traditional Nataraja sculpture, but here and in other works of this series, the deer is replaced by a female figure. The stark linear architecture which offsets the roundness of the figures, with the fourth wall dramatically removed is from the Basohli miniature of the Punjab hills, and is a device peculiar to Indian Miniature painting.

In 1984, the anti-Sikh massacre led to the series, *World goes on*, in which the tragedy of the victim is offset by the indifference of the onlooker. The drowning figure is the symbol used, and water becomes a device for dividing the canvas vertically, diagonally, or horizontally. Human tragedy is set against the vast backdrop of nature, which carries on its cycle, the elements of nature are adopted from miniature.

**Widows Of Vrindavan (1987)**

Vrindavan is a place of romance where Krishna danced with the gopis. In an ironic inversion of the myth, reality today points to thousands of old widows with shaven heads, mostly discarded by their families, praying for a morsel and deliverance, by the banks of the Yamuna, and yearning for union with Krishna. In this series Arpana Caur depicted the pain of the widows.

**Landscape With Knives (1989)**

After the 1984 riots, threat was the series that followed, focusing on the violence, in the universal sense, which pervades life today. But the musician, with the power of his music, is able to cool the flame of violence.

**Green Circle (1989)**

Sita’s circle of protection was painted by Lakshmana, the brother of Lord Rama, in the epic Ramayana. In the painting the girl-child paints a
green circle of protection, trying to shield herself from the impossible chaos of a city (Delhi) with its traffic and pollution. The urban graffiti has been used by the artist in several works on environment.

**Time (1990)**

From a series on the fallen leaf, which is the fate of all that breathes on this earth. However knowledgeable we may think we are, or however superior, we too shall fall like leaves, one by one. Only the tree (symbolising Nature) survives. The strip of the horizon line is from the Basohli miniature, as is the use of stark primary colours.


Having multiple figures within a single figure is an tradition of Indian painting with the figure usually being of an animal. It is appropriate here to convey the many times a single person may come and go in different forms, changing his ‘garment’. The starkness of red and blue is daring. 1947 (1997)

When India turned fifty in 1997, the artist did some work on Bhagat Singh and Udham, Singh which had never been done before by contemporary Indian artists. She also did some work on partition since her family had come to India as refugees. Here her grandfather carries on his head the sacred *Granth Sahib* (the holy book of the Sikhs), and a bundle
of memories on his back. He crossed the border again to rescue four old people; his parents and in-laws, hence, the Godna motifs of lions.


The Warli spiral of the dance of life is here broken into multiples and thus expanded on convey layer upon layer of creation and destruction (the embroiderer and the cutter becoming motifs of Nature, or of time). In one corner, a Warli tree grows, the threatening shadow of a traffic light reaching menacingly towards the centre.

**the great departure (2000)**

Buddha leaves his sleeping wife and child at night in search of truth. The abstract white sheet is a bold visual device against the black, their stark linearity creating surprising visual tension with rounded mountains and human forms. The use of white as a colour has been inspired from miniatures.


The dreams of the labourer for a better world or the dream of a woman for a piece of sky. The stark blue and yellow juxtaposed against each other and the break from the conventional continuity of colour or image, is bold and innovative.

**sohni in the night (2000)**
Sohni drowning, this time during a typically romantic, candlelit night. The post can be interpreted as a metaphor for the body; the one extinguished candle symbolises, of course, her tragically young death. The linearity of the candle builds visual tension with a rounded pot and body. The element of repetition is derived from miniatures.

**Black Sohni (2001)**

The abstraction of the flat black space offsets the golden swimming limbs of the beautiful Sohni. The upward pointing finger of Mahiwal painted in the colours of the blue God indicates the transcreation of earthly love into divinity.

**Pot (2001)**

The pot is a metaphor for the body, and the footwear indicates absence or those who have passed away. The abstraction of the black space is the void echoing the cycle of life and death, also indicated by the round form of the painting.