

PRESS RELEASE

Kiran Nadar Museum of Art
presents
from the collection of Architect Kuldip Singh

Amruta Kalasha

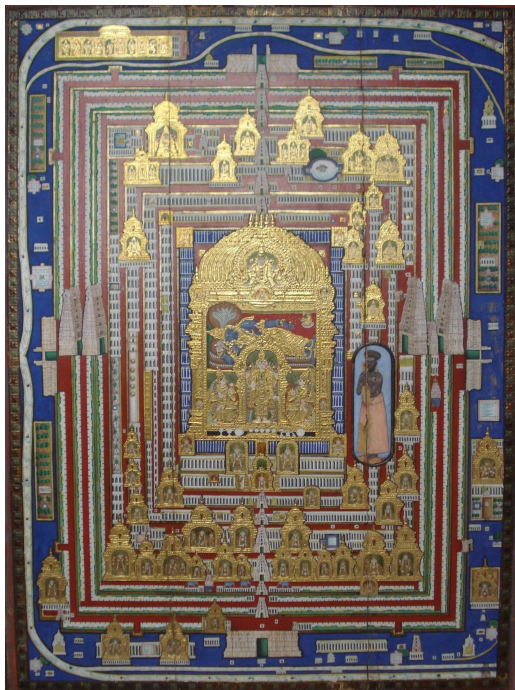
Thanjavur and other South Indian Paintings

Conceptualised by Roobina Karode

PREVIEW: 13th November 2017, Monday, 6.30 pm onwards

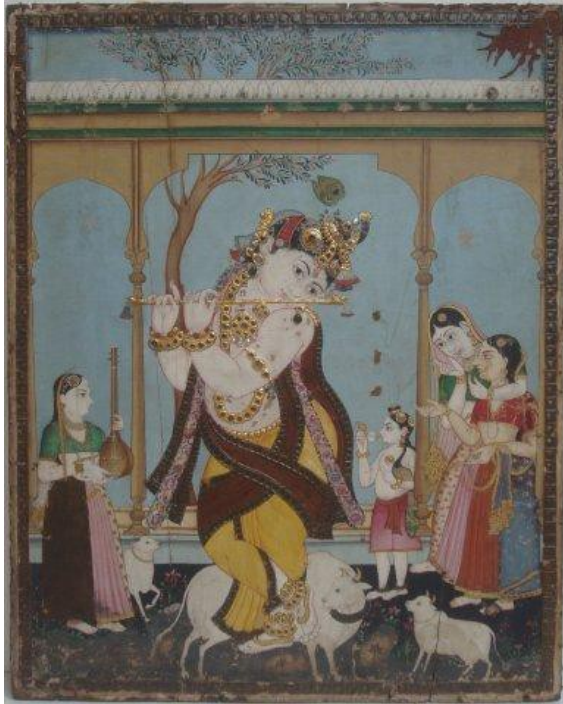
EXHIBITION DATES: 14th November - 13th December 2017

KNMA, 145 South Court Mall, Saket, New Delhi, 110017



The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) as an institution has been dedicated to optimize the visibility and engagement with the modern and contemporary art and

the plurality of its practice across India and South Asia. This time, as the winter sets in and the art season begins to blossom, KNMA is bringing to Delhi, to viewers in North India, a month- long special exhibition of South Indian paintings focused on Thanjavur, Mysore and Andhra, presenting 200 works from the extraordinary collection of renowned Delhi-based architect Kuldeep Singh.



This exhibition celebrates and compliments the passion of another private collector, who solely driven by his energy and savings travelled extensively in the South, to locate works, document and research them and over the last forty five years or so, collected the rarest paintings from this popular and prevalent tradition from the 19th and early 20th century. Moved by what he chanced upon while doing his building projects in the South, through an academic approach, he entered a territory that was unknown to him, but moved ahead to make his home a living museum, where the ambience of the wooden architecture with pillars and other props become the perfect setting for these works.

As a symbol, **Amruta Kalasha** embodies the ceremonial aspect of this exhibition that unfolds mythological narratives, distinctive pictorial aesthetic and drawn temple and city architecture that frames the setting where rituals, art and people converge. The rich traditions of Thanjavur, Mysore and Andhra paintings, visually

offer a repertoire of techniques and iconography, usage of colour pigments and materials often designed and dictated by the performativity of the rituals. The elaborate temple plans and circumambulatory paths act as abstract navigational maps both for the devotee and the donor. The use of emotional scaling defies naturalistic rendering discounting the laws of the optics to allow for the most improbable and awkward but equally fascinating compositions, for instance the huge Krishna that covers three-fourth of the picture-space on a dwarfed cow. Largely recognized as votive paintings, that represents divine icons for temples and domestic shrines for those sections of Indian society that strove to preserve religious identity against extraneous influences.

On this occasion Kiran Nadar, Founder and Chairperson, KNMA says, “A introvert man, Singh’s Collection is being shown for the first time at KNMA, India, and as a museum we are delighted to bring into public viewing his persistent and quiet efforts of putting together an array of Thanjavur and other south Indian paintings of India.”

According to Roobina Karode, Director & Chief-Curator, KNMA, “Curatorially, this has been challenging at the conceptual level, because of the nature of the material and its relatively unfamiliar content. How does a collection lend itself to be conceived as an exhibition? The collaboration with the owner/architect has been a rewarding one, as the visual, textual and spatial have been configured to enhance the viewer’s experience and create a contemplative space/ambience.”

A modernist with interest in a vernacular painting tradition, Kuldip Singh is well known for his active participation in the preparation of Delhi’s Perspective Plan – 2000 for the Delhi Urban Arts Commission and designing several public structures such as the District Centre in Saket and the NCDC building. About the journey of collecting this ambitious and rare repository he says, “About 50 years ago, I was travelling in Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi. I was interested in architectural artefacts — doors, furniture and wooden sculpture. A friend asked me to get him two Tanjore paintings, but later didn’t like them. So they lay in front of me for two months. I was to return them to the dealer on my next trip South, but I forgot them. When I went to the dealer, I don’t know what overcame me but I asked to be shown more and here I am — the curiosity became a hobby and now it is an obsession.”