

PRESS RELEASE

National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai
Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India

in association with

Sakshi Gallery
presents

S U B - P L O T S

Laughing in the Vernacular

Curated by Meena Vari

9 December 2017 - 14 January 2018

'Laughter has more power to bring down a palace than an earthquake.'

Historically artists have used wit, satire and humor while reflecting on popular culture. They have used subversive playfulness as a critical tool to explore complex social themes and incongruent situations. In his book, "Laughing Matters: Comic Tradition in India," Siegel Lee makes a distinction between laughing at others and laughing at oneself. While satire accuses folly and accepts it as a form of aggression, humor celebrates folly and accepts it as a form of regression.

'Sub-Plots: Laughing in the Vernacular' is a comprehensive exhibition with works of 24 artists spanning over 6 decades. The exhibits range from multimedia installations to photography, paintings and graphics. Participating artists are Amit Ambalal, Anirban Mitra, Anup Mathew Thomas, Atul Dodiya, Bharti Kher, Bhupen Khakhar, C.K. Rajan, Dhruvi Acharya, K.P. Reji, K.G. Subramanyan, L.N. Tallur, Manjunath Kamath, Mithu Sen, N. Pushpamala, N.S. Harsha, Paritosh Sen, Ravinder Reddy, Sarnath Banerjee, Siddhartha Kararwal, Subodh Gupta, Surendran Nair, Thukral & Tagra, Vivek Vilasini, and Waswo X Waswo.

The art-works investigate the delicate gradations of culture in a subtle and subversive way that goes beyond just being a footnote, a document or a punch line. Every work derails the dominant narrative and challenges the recognized perception of the everyday.

In the words of Mr Shivaprasad Khened, director of NGMA, "The impactful power of an artist's use of humour and satire to evoke laughter instantaneously, yet effectively, communicate the follies and imperfections that exist in society, can best be appreciated in R. K. Laxman's brilliant political cartoons, which most of us grew up seeing / reading in the "You Said It" corner of the Times of India. Artistic humour and satire offer an astute, cathartic and even a magical way to deal with gigantic social, political and other contemporary issues. Humour can actually help in the germination of serious debates on a whole range of issues. Artists are increasingly using humour and satire in their work to parody human foibles and socio-political situations in an insightful manner. We are pleased to hold the current exhibition 'Sub-Plots: Laughing in the Vernacular', thoughtfully curated by Ms. Meena Vari and supported by Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai.

'Sub-Plots: Laughing in the Vernacular' previews on 8 December 2017 and will run through 14 January 2018. Several outreach programs have been planned throughout the duration of exhibition including walks with the curator, lectures and workshops.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Meena Vari is Dean, Contemporary art and Curatorial practice and School of Media, Arts and Sciences, at Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology. She coordinates activities of the Center for Experimental Media & Arts (CEMA) and works closely with artists to develop the practice of Experimental Media and Arts in Srishti and outside. Since 2004, she has been curating an annual project called 'Srishti Interim' wherein she invites contemporary artists from around the world. She has also collaborated with arts organizations such as TATE UK, Kochi Biennale Foundation, Centre for Research in Sound Art Practice London, Transmediale Berlin and more.

Vari has a degree in Political Science and Education from New Delhi. She is a Chevening scholar on the Clore Leadership in the Arts Programme, UK (2013-2014). She also received the Fulbright Scholarship for a course in Arts and Culture Management from the University of New Orleans, USA. As part of the India team, Vari was invited by 'Visiting Arts', UK, to a gathering of cultural directors from India in 2000 to understand the art scene during the Edinburgh Festival. She has also been a UNSW grantee, an Australia exchange fellow for three years, and a Dutch DFA in 2011 in the European Union, amongst others.

Vari is currently interested in curatorial practice as a form of experience, cognition and knowledge making.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART, MUMBAI

The genesis for the starting of the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) was mooted immediately post the Indian Independence and the first NGMA was opened in the National Capital New Delhi at the historic Jaipur House, one of the premier architectural edifices of Lutyens' Delhi, by the Vice-president, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, in the presence of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and artists and art lovers of the city on March 29, 1954. The NGMA is a repository of the cultural ethos of the country and showcases the changing art forms through the passage of the last 160 years starting from about 1857 in the field of Visual and Plastic arts. This is run and administered as a subordinate office to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India which has two branches one at Mumbai and the other in Bengaluru.

The National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai was opened to the public in the year 1996. It is located in the precinct of the former auditorium the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Public Hall and the Institute of Science. This architecturally marvellous building was designed and built by the famous British architect George Wittet which has been completely redesigned keeping only the facade edifice that was the Public Hall. It hosts various national and international exhibitions and also has its own art collections comprising paintings, sculptures and graphics with a focus on Indian and International artists mainly from the progressive art group like K.H. Ara, F. N. Souza, V.S. Gaitonde, S.H. Raza and M.F. Hussain. NGMA, Mumbai has a great history and has also been able to host several spectacular exhibitions in the past, which we are continuing today. Some of the recent exhibitions include the highly successful the Bombay Art Society exhibition, which covered the landscape of the historic Bombay Art Society's existence over 125 years. NGMA, Mumbai has also hosted other notable exhibitions which among others, include Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil and Jamini Roy, Nicholas Roerich, the Parsi exhibition and a major exhibition on A. A. Almelkar from the collection of NGMA Mumbai.

ABOUT SAKSHI GALLERY

Sakshi Gallery is one of the premier galleries of India. It has over the last 30 years, endeavored to develop a strong program, working closely with important Indian and international artists as well as introducing many emerging ones. It has held exhibitions of Indian art all over the world and has introduced to the Indian audience work of illustrious international artists such as El Anatsui, Gregory Crewdson and Julian Opie.

There is much art in humour as there is much humour in art

RSVP

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