

# Celebrating the moment

There are artists. There are tantriks. And then there are tantrik artists. Get mesmerised at this art exhibition

By THE MID DAY TEAM [featuresdelhi@mid-day.com](mailto:featuresdelhi@mid-day.com)

**A**RISTOTLE had famously said that the aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance. And 'The Moment' — an exhibition of select works in inks and dyes and incisions on paper by Copenhagen-based master-abstractivist Sohan Qadri presented by Kumar Gallery, proves a testimony to this.

Among the early abstractionists introduced by Kumar Gallery were VS Gaitonde, Biren De, Ram Kumar and G R Santosh. Sohan Qadri who joined this group in 1963 has remained ever true to his direction, ever evolving and further revealing his spirit and soul in his works. Throughout his oeuvre, Qadri reflects an intense personal journey, enhanced and inspired by the depths of his own painterly inner realm.

An artist, poet and vajrayan tantrik teacher, 76-year-old Qadri loves to create symbols, which for him mean 'energy'. The essence of his paintings is energy or shakti, which moves. He dislikes creating figurative visuals for he thinks 'they destroy the painting'.

With no formal training in art, he makes his own colours and prefers to work on paper.

"Among Indian abstractionists, Sohan Qadri has an important place. He not only uses signs reminiscent of tantrik and ritual symbolism, but his colours

appear to resonate with the theories of colours and their psychological effect based on the principles of an aesthetic of moods or rasas. Moreover, the visual flowering of his works in this genre is connected with years of practicing the physical and mental discipline of Sufis and tantriks, two of whom he came into contact with in his home village of Chachoki near

Phagwara in Punjab. His stay in Africa, Europe and the USA over the years has added its own richness to his work. This gives him the capacity to blend the various forms of mystic ritual with an original visual expression of an artist who is today very much a 'citizen of the world' as well," says Sunit Kumar Jain of Kumar Gallery.

"There are artists. There are tantriks. There are tantrik artists. As far as I know there are no tantrik yogis who are artists as well. Sohan Qadri is an exception. He is an exceptional artist," says eminent painter FN Souza.

The most challenging thing in Qadri's art is its technique. His works are to be seen back to front. He allows the colour to percolate through the thick hand-made paper he paints on, allowing forms to develop on the other side that he then textures by tearing and blending the surface. Call them bindus or yonis, but to us they represent an alternative harmony of form and texture. Over the years his work has gone through a form of distillation. In his work, colour has become light while line has become the residue of textures. And the interplay of these reflects the complex compositional structure of his art. It is non-figurative and most importantly different. It has maturity and something deeply within us to say. One cannot ask for more than that from abstract art.



From October 26 to November 3  
WHERE: Kumar Gallery, II, Sunder Nagar