

# Monumental mix of classics

UMA NAIR

**K**umar Gallery, that opened its year with "Celebrations" on January 25, can put some fairly magnificent obsessions on display, where they function like traps of history seeped in nostalgia. Step into its portals, and an unfamiliar area of visual culture suddenly exerts an irresistible force, charging your life.

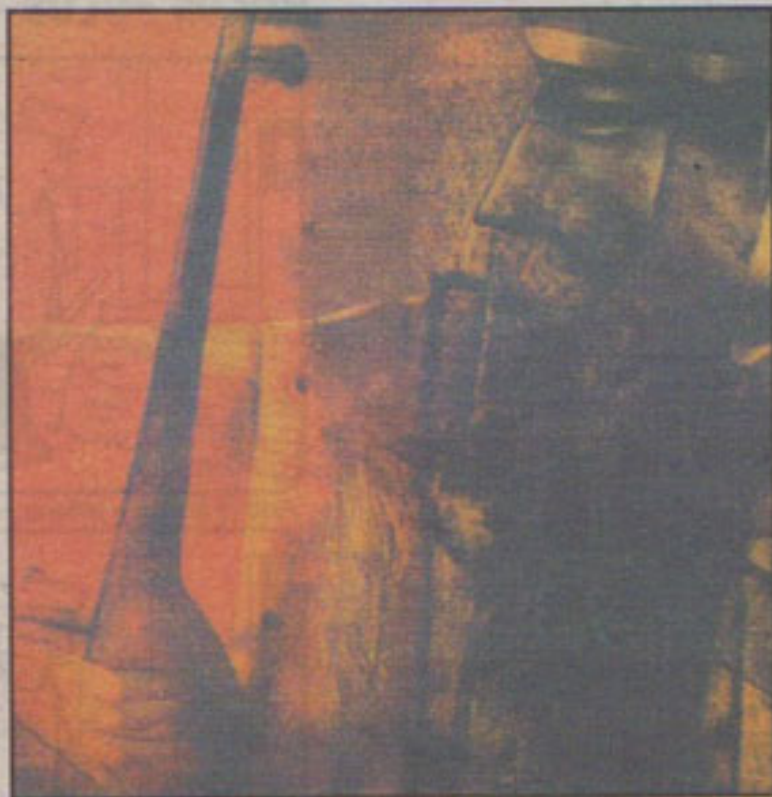
Here is a show that is relatively precise in focus. Nearly everything on view is worth looking at, with the prevalence of works made by the artists

that go back in time as well as come forth to 2005 with plain-spoken modesty and simple handling that gives it a very satisfying coherence.

Souza's *St Peter*, a work done as far back as 1988, can gain an in-depth exposure to widely practised Catholic faith and traditions and yet be regularly jolted by eccentric one-of-a-kind demeanour which was so intrinsically Souza. Husain's *Mithun*, done in 1964, is a brilliant evocation of magical meandering. Husain's early works had music within. It is like listening to a large chorus singing



M.F. Husain's *Mithun*



Paresh Maity's *The Song* (2006)

classic Indian folk tunes while enjoying interruptions from solitary narrators with unusual voices and a penchant for improvisation.

Colour-wise, a great time can be had ferreting out painted notions in Paresh Maity's *The Song*, which blends mystic fervour and savours the way that artists of this century riffed on the idea of moody grains or peasant motifs.

At this show, a pale paper drawing of A. Ramachandran is festooned with hallucinatory

loops in floral splendour and sensuality. You could also have the taut torso and tenuous face of B. Prabha's loosely bronzed woman who stands and looks with intensity that is as brushy as fly whisks.

The show, which runs for a fortnight, celebrates monumentality, as if mimicking the more demure stencilled idea of mixing the classic, archival and the mundane, from later years in modern artistic history.

*The show is on till February 7*