

KUMAR GALLERY



Painted Seasons

An exhibition reveals artist Gopal Ghose's fascination for the Indian landscape and its rustic settings.



Imagine an artist and teacher, travelling to different parts of India, sitting down and sketching every landscape he sets his eyes upon - be it the Himalayas in the north or the Marina Beach down south. By the end, the sketchbook of 20th century master painter, Gopal Ghose, has it all; the desert sun of Rajasthan, migratory birds flying in formation, village scenes with trees and fields, and many seasons. His ongoing solo exhibition in the Capital, titled 'Rustic Resonance', recalls some of these travels.

As little thatched huts in villages, and sunrises and sunsets become protagonists in many of Kolkata-born artist's canvases, the 58 paintings on display span across two decades starting in the early 50s, which was hailed as the period when Ghose's creativity was at its peak. Talking about the artist who founded the Calcutta Group and was known for his modernist approach to art, curator Uma Nair says, 'I have tried to show that here is a master who celebrated the Indian landscape and loved what he saw. In many of his works, he has drawn one, two or more rural labourers walking through the landscape. It reveals his sensitivity towards that section and how he felt the country's soul lies in its villages. This holds even more importance in today's times, with the technological invasion, insensitivity towards flora and fauna, depletion of forests and large-scale developments happening at the cost of farmers giving up their lands.'

Demonstrating that is Ghose's pastel Untitled painting from 1960, which depicts a vast field surrounded by water bodies at sunset, submerged in spring hues of yellow, tinted ochres and moss green. Hard to miss is the tiny figure of a worker walking in the warm yellow tone in the foreground, reminding about the sunset and the impending journey after a day of toil. A byproduct of his many travels is Marina Beach at Madras, 1936, his earliest work at the show. The dream-like painting offers a large view of the famed beach loved by writers, artists and filmmakers. Ghose's watercolour strokes are blurred here, leaving the viewer with a choice - to view it as a panoramic view of the sunset, or as a journey of looking inwards standing at the shore.