

KUMAR GALLERY



Gopal Ghose: The rustic explorer of contemporary Indian art

Gopal Ghose's landscapes - each of them given to his friends of the Kumar Gallery as early as the 1050s and the 1960s - reveals much more than just his fascination with the nuances of the landscape, but draws the viewer into the idea of creating a signature palette of chromatic intensities in colour and tonalities in the texture of nature's elements.



Each study of the landscape that stretches from the Himalayas in the North to the Marina Beach in the South is resplendent in strokes of feverish fervour.

Looking closely at these reflects an ongoing dialogue about the role of the translation in a work of art, rather than the exact representation of the visual world as seen before the human eye.



Marina Beach at Madras (1936)

In the past, Gopal Ghose has been termed as a classic artist, but his works exemplify the fact that indeed his very sensibility was one that was truly contemporary for his technique and grammar of colourative and prismatic intensities were full of little complex layers of an amalgam, that he created within his exploration of the resonance that grew both within and without.

From the little thatched huts in the villages to the sunrises and sunsets the realms of realism that he traversed seemed to be in the footsteps of quasi abstraction and the urge to move beyond the Impressionist Masters to invent his own lingua franca in an Indianesque setting.



Imagine an artist and a teacher - who travels different places in India and keeps sketching and capturing different seasons - the intensity of the desert sun in Rajasthan, the foliage of the trees in the Chota Nagpur Plateau, the little birds that stay and linger or the migratory birds that fly in formation, landscapes that signify lush planes and humble people on his small sheets of paper.



Untitled (1960)

Pastels and oils and a few watercolours became his friends for life. Could we put art movement terms to a suite of works that spell a modernist mood as far back as the 50s and 60s?

Impressionist art lovers can discern the powerful yet feverish strokes of Alfred Sisley's genius, when you see Ghose's trees then at times dulcet notations and

hues of the Chinese artists of the past, in the vast paddy fields and amidst all this is his inevitable Indianesque insignia of rural habitat of forests and pathways and bushes with a few people or birds added as a lone element of animated habitation.



Village Huts (1956)



Colours were his vehicle of thought, his pastels done in brisk and thoughtful strokes reflect absorption and deep concentration in thickly painted moody tones, a moss green and puissant blue strokes, a flurry of shapes in dazzling colours seem to emerge. Whatever the subject When he used oils on board or paper Ghose's shapes were carefully moulded in heavy impasto paint with a palette knife, sometimes you would see a bas-relief in colour that pops off the paper sheets.

It is clear he loved doing landscapes and studies of birds and flowers and trees, the pictorial plane unfolds horizontally, extending and transforming into a broad, unbounded expanse. The essence of the epoch here lies in the creation of the perspective beyond the three types defined by the earlier Chinese painters, which are "high distance", "horizontal distance", and "deep distance".

Here was a master who blended western understanding of the landscape with eastern grammar and techniques.