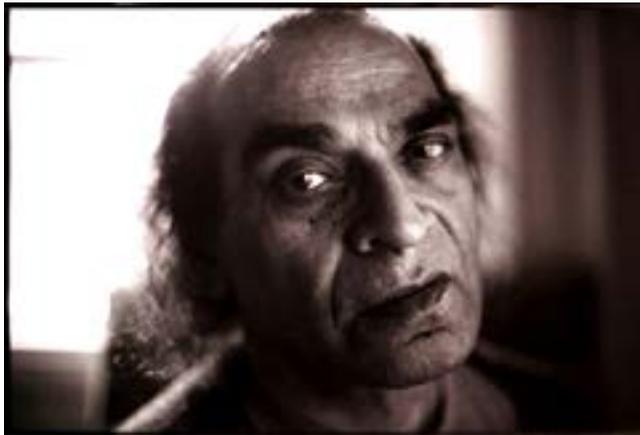


KUMAR GALLERY



[Timeless symphony | Must-see display of exquisite paintings by Sohan Qadri, a yogi who stirs memories](#)

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Move from frame to frame and there is exultation awaiting the viewer with the spectacle of colour, dexterity of the craft and calm of the composition. It will indeed be a show to remember and congratulations to the Punjab Lalit Kala Akademi and Kumar Art Gallery, New Delhi, for putting it together.

Born to a family of farmers at Chachoki village near Phagwara, Qadri graduated from the College of Art in 1955 when it was still housed in Shimla. A friend to sculptor Shiv Singh, journalist Ramesh Kapila and intellectual Narendra Joshi, his works find pride of place in several homes in the city.

The first time one came across Qadri sometimes in the early '80s as a scribe, he was already a yoga expert in Copenhagen and more interested in talking about tantra-mantra than his own paintings. He even showed me some of his monochrome pictures in erotic yogic poses with Danish beauties.

This apart, Qadri chose to give himself exposure in the country and abroad and evolved his own style which he perfected over years and the art spoke for itself but he never gave up explaining it with mumbo-jumbo, which had probably worked in the West, where viewers were just not interested in contemporary Indian art unless it had yogic or tantric trappings.

In the nineties, Qadri was at his most creative and prolific and most of the paintings on display belong to the late 90s and early 2000. However, once while he was showing at Delhi, my critique was that he should not explain his art thus but leave it to the viewer to interpret it. Oddly, one missed him at the show in his flowing robes, witch-doctor looks and constant gibberish.

Noted painter FN Souza summed up the genius of Qadri aptly saying: "There are artists. There are tantrics. As far as I know, there are no tantric yogis who are artists as well. Sohan Qadri is an exceptional artist."

The exhibition is a must see for students of art and lay persons.

It is also a matter of joy that Qadri's daughter has instituted fellowships in her father's name for young artists in Chandigarh and Punjab.