

GEORGE . K

APPARAO  
GALLERIES

ARTIST  
SCRAPBOOK  
SERIES

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GALLERIES



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POETRY  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
PAINTING  
SCULPTURE







# GEORGE . K

George.K is a-business professional-turned-artist who works with sculpture, paintings and photography. He has a multi disciplinary approach that encompasses, creative writing and the plastic arts. Initially turning to art to relieve the tension of work, he has now converted a hobby of photography into a full time art practitioner.

His photographic compositions were the starting point of his career as a painter His paintings depict reality as seen by him. It is his means of introspecting on and confronting the visual reality of human existence, the emotions and sentiments which abstraction cannot fully portray. The subject matter for his art often rooted in the local environment and is human centered. Images of people at a time and place dominate the canvas.

Vendors selling fruits and flowers, priests and ordinary people in their daily lives, live through canvas further defined with text or verse. His paintings are a representation of the vibrancy of life with verse or words forming either an underlay for the graphics or the graffiti an overlay. The spontaneity of the photograph is translated through the painting and the content further enhanced in a contextual mode. He captures the split second emotion and uses the imagery in his own context. To the images he adds text and graphics. On the canvas is interplay of images, and thoughts represented in words or verse, and graphics. The graffiti, and overlay of letters, his signature, is layered over the realistic imagery.

George K's technique of working involves his paintings through the three fold process of 'Framing and selection', 'Transference or execution' and 'creation'. Framing involves digitally photographing an image while the next process was translating this digital image into an oil painting by hoarding painters with suitably altered colours. The final process or 'creation' is the completion of the painting by adding the painting surface with verses and words written across. The visual language that he uses is drawn from the world around him such as popular culture, kitsch and graffiti. Mostly his paintings have a central dominant figure with relevant verses or a single word repeated across the entire canvas like a mantra.

George.K has worked on a series of paintings in a super-realistic style layered with a postmodern language of graffiti. The paintings are inspired from his travelogue. He philosophizes his images in his own mind space creating a labyrinth of ideas & contextualising them.

His photographic compositions have become the starting point in his artistic career. These dramatic depictions reflect his keen sense of observation using bill-board artists as an aid.

- Dr. Ashrafi Bhagat

Ms. Ashrafi S. Bhagat M.A., M.Phil, Ph. D. is an Art Historian. She heads the Department of Fine Arts at Stella Maris College, Chennai. She writes artists catalogues and on subject of modern and contemporary art in newspapers, magazines and journals.





"Head VI" 56"x11"x8" Fibre glass & Iron





# MY APPROACH

My life has been a journey, bridging different disciplines, a chartered accountant to a merchant banker, a photographer to an artist, sculptor. The traumas, and experiences several, both in work and private life. My artistic work is a part of that journey in the discovery of the self from the form to the formless.

I see form in the line, colour, plane, sound and the sensual spectacles of daily life.

The journey from the outer world of forms to the inner realm of the formless is a journey from the sensual to the spiritual.

I present form and bridge it with the formless, through graffiti, words, line, plane, a point or a circle to balance or contrast it with the sound of inner silence.

This bridge serves to mute or amplify inner tensions between the elements, through construction or composition. In construction the elements used maybe devoid of tension or may have tension alive within the form.

The presence of the seesaw of tension, key to the composition is through the subordination of one or more of the elements in the form, and the build up of tension through the construction, in the painting or sculpture.

The graffiti, words, line, plane, line or circle, changes the balance of tension in the process of construction and transforms the form in the painting or sculpture from the absolute to the relative. Often this is repetitively used, to enhance and or alter the intrinsic rhythm and harmony to develop, spread out, and produce tension of magnifying intensity.

My cosmos of expanding, balanced, or contracting tension, juxtaposed with the inner silence is the spiritual formlessness of the indivisible soul, the collective consciousness.

My work has so far been theme based allowing scope for an intellectual interface.

Thereafter I need to be inspired and moved by the subject be it "Aravaani"... "The Human Animal", or the "Street Vendors". The subject must freeze my mind so that I can relate to it.

I emotionally need to react to the imagery through verse or conversation.

Then a body of work is born.

I decide on the visual and the verbal and merge it into an image which is painted onto canvas using oil paint ...and occasionally acrylic. I use graffiti to bridge the image with the verse or conversation and diffuse the hyper realism

I work the image on the computer and finalise the form. This is then modelled in clay and cast in plaster to prepare non reusable moulds for the glass fibre.

The components cast in fibre glass are then worked on to



prepare a rough outline of the structure of the image. The outline is filed and ground to produce skeleton image.

The artisans are studio help - welders, grinders, potters ,fibre glass technicians , bill board painters etc, who execute jobs where required, and for different process requirements and have assigned work load as required for the sculpture or painting, and work under my visual supervision and intervention. I have a studio team that works on various aspects of the work. Their work is not turn key.

This skeleton is then painted with oil paint to complete the construction of the image.

Graffiti, words or line is added to complete the composition of the form.

A lot of my work springs from the world around me and my interface either intellectually or visually with it. Photography as a starter helped to draw me in to closer observation and thereon to visual and verbal interpretation, in paintings, sculpture or verse.

My neighbour's gardener Munuswamy is a transgender and I have seen this effeminate man with swaying hips and a unusual voice all my life ...he was an oddity in the neighbourhood. I soon realised that and a transgender response to insults was to raise their sari or lungi over their head and shock by obscenity, the taunts into silence. A very violent yet passive action. This was to lie at the back of my mind, till one day a few years back I wanted to get Munuswamy's nephew, a painter to repair a messed up job he had earlier done for me, and asked my driver to get him through Munuswamy, and my driver told me that Munuswamy was not contactable as he had gone to a temple festival for the transgender near Villupuram, where sexual, social and religious customs interfaced with each other for thousands of years in accordance to mythology.....my curiosity got the better of me and thus my first trip to observe them. There I saw the amalgam of history, mythology, social customs and religious functions that helped define their distinct identity.

In democratic westernization of Indian culture, Aravaanis are a disappearing lot, and social isolation and sexual abuse that makes their daily lives a living nightmare. Their fear of society is mirrored on the faces of the public who fear them. Homosexuality was a criminal offence in India till recently, and although the Aravaani play both sexual roles, they used to get locked up in police stations under archaic laws on homosexuality without civil or human rights observed. Their actions of lifting their sari or lungi etc to display, shows their limited options of retaliation to abuse and to the insensitivity of a society that has made them one of the highest carriers of aids in south India. My initial work was to portray them in form and



bridge the inner message through graffiti. My attempt in the composition and construction was to show their sensuality through the fragility of the human psyche.

Transgenders were marginalised till a few years back. My work was supported by the press reviews which further attracted topical coverage by newspapers and television on their plight.

The transgender series is on the fragility of the human psyche with the flowers conveying the fragility. As flowers and humans are super realistic, the representation and composition are stronger and more dramatic as they are life size. The recognition and link to the theme is because one encounters "the self" in the realism and size.

"The Human Animal" series is of the animal in the human, and combinations animal and man are found in Indian, and Greek mythology. Indian mythology postulates that cycles of birth are discriminatory, based on karma and deeds, good or bad, in each life cycle.

The transition from human to animal form is therefore a part of the eternal cycle of life.

Mythology is a part of life in India, and visual representation from gods to demons adorn temples, calendars, and cinema posters. India has several gods in the "avatar" (form) of half human, half animal with human and animal qualities are present in god and men. This is further reinforced by sociologists /anthropologists like Desmond Morris who have researched and shown that human nature is another kind of animal nature. "All animals perform actions, most do little else as compared to the human animal, in whom artification and abstraction have developed beyond compare, and that is the human success story. This thinking animal is a creature of action, a gesticulating, posturing, mobile, and communicative primate. Philosophy, science, or engineering have not replaced the animal activity of eating, sleeping, mating etc but only added to it. Hunger for action primeval or modern is as strong as it ever was; only the forms of action vary." My sculptures portray the human animal posturing, with the animal ancestry evident. This brings to the fore the animal in the human and the human in the animal, all primates. The sculptures show the outer world of form and human endeavour to transcend it. All a part of existence, a point of contemplation in the attempt to bridge form with the formless.

In the Human Animal series distortions of the animal or human is used to skew the image & build the conflicting tensions. I have used nudes in the series as nudity has the ability to display vulnerability of the psyche and I have used smaller size sculptures to accentuate the fragility. In "terror", the result of terrorist action, the form is more symbolic, the

figure of the human animal in prostration with head bent inward denoting desire for survival, with hands covering the ears in the classical shock absorption pose to minimise damage from a blast. The form was determined by the overall compositional requirements of inbuilt tension, relative to the theme.

My experiences in risk mitigation has exposed me to the limitations of risk containment theories, social or political strategies and the fragility of human interdependence. Globalisation has interlinked and ensnared all of us in a risk society, where we are all globally ensnared in each other's risks whether we like it or not, irrespective of geography, income or class. As the world gets more interconnected it becomes more risky for all, and offers less possibility of individual protection for any one, as is seen in upheavals in the financial markets, terrorism and cyber viruses.

"Terror" symbolises the globalisation of social realities. In India religions, social and cultural events are an integral part of the way of life and I by nature am inward looking and my awareness to social conditions is inbuilt. The inspiration, reaction and motivation to create art arise from impulses around me, and while there are effects of western influence in my work, the driving force has been my life and circumstances that have moulded me and continue to do so.

The current body of work (summer of '09) is on "The Adoration of Beauty". I have used Shringar or beautification as the visual theme along with Adi Sankaracharya's "Saundarya Lahari" as the verbal interface. Beauty is attributed to whatever pleases or satisfies the senses or mind, as by line, colour, and form, in the material world and in the spiritual world by Eternal Truth which leads to tranquillity. "Truth is Beauty" and "Beauty is Truth" is expounded in the hundred verses of Saundarya-Lahari. Satyam or truth is multidimensional, unchanging in time and space.

Adi Sankaracharya's composition "Saundarya Lahari" (waves of beauty) in its first forty-one verses has inspirational mantras in adoration of "the abode of Siva-Sakti".

Sakti is the primordial energy in creation in Hindu mythology which along with Siva becomes siva-sakti.

The paintings, oil on canvas, depict beauty in form and non form, sensual to spiritual. The sensual aspect of beauty is seen in the adornment or Shringar by the Kathakali dancer in his elaborate personal make up and costume that transforms him into characters he acts.

The spiritual aspect of beauty in the theme of Saundarya Lahari, the journey from the outer world of forms to the inner realm of energy and atman, the self.



It is that journey in the discovery of self, from the form to the form less and adoration of the divine.

Santam-sivam-advaitam the ultimate perfection of beauty and its adoration forms the basis of this body of work

Most of the work to date is focussed on art in the public space. I have also done a few which are more private, inward and abstract.

The hyper real, life size sculptures in folds of graffiti creates a space for dialogue with the viewer-spectator through encounters with "the self "in the realism and the life-size of the sculpture.

My work is not specific to any particular target audience, when I conceptualise, neither audience nor spectatorship are important, the subject must interest and challenge me intellectually. My imagination must be able to run riot to balance form and tension.

That is important to the construction and composition of the painting or sculpture.

The spectators at the galleries and the exhibition sites vary as the subjects themselves. I try to show in the locations which have inspired me to produce the work....an example is the Mylapore market vendors around the age old temple, in Chennai, India, who were the inspiration for the market vendor series. The show was held as a party of the 1st Tamil Sammelan at the temple premises and the crowds that flocked to see it included the temple goers, the street vendors and their communities from as far as Kancheepuram....please refer to the press article on the show....most of my exhibitions in Delhi, Bombay and Paris has been at main frame galleries. Exhibiting at a variety of locations has given me an opportunity to interface consuming, collecting, the written word, interpretation and feedback sieved by memory.

- George. K

Aug 2009/ Chennai

## RHETORIC OF THE IMAGE - GEORGE. K

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DR. ASHRAFI S. BHAGAT

George clarifies "The artisans employed by me for my paintings and more so for my sculptures are like studio help - welders, grinders, potters, fibre glass technicians, bill board painters etc., who execute the job assigned to each of them under my visual supervision, have a studio team that works on various aspects of the work"

Approach to art making today has undergone cataclysmic changes. If the changes have happened the process was neither sudden nor in fits and starts. Retrospecting over the last four decades, one way to understand some of the shifts in materials and methods of conceptualizing art, particularly in the West, is to see them as a sequence of investigations understood as a set of transformations involving the site of art namely from the surface of painting and the armature of sculpture to the structure of the studio, gallery or museum, as well as to the alternative spaces of site-specific artworks. The sequence of investigation initially was into the constituent elements of a traditional medium like painting, as in the self critical modernist paintings advocated by Clement Greenberg [1960]; then into the perceptual conditions of an art object defined in terms less of a given medium than of a given space as in minimalist art [1965]; then into the material basis of such art making and perceiving as explored variously by Art Povera, Process art and Body art [1967-74] in the West. Along the way conceptual art also shifted attention away from the specific conventions of painting and sculpture to the general questions of 'art as art' and art as an 'art institution'.

At first the institution of art was understood mostly in physical terms, as the actual spaces of art studio, gallery and museum, and artists that worked to underscore these parameters and/ or to expand them. One thinks of the systematic exposes of these art spaces by such 'institutions critique' revealing that art was not only a physical space but also a network of discourses including criticism, journalism and publicity that intersected with other discourses, indeed with other institutions that is the media and the corporation.

Within this context of radical changes that have consistently taken place in the use of medium, materials, techniques, discourses and perceptions concerning lived realities within the artist's context, it is possible to make out a case of radical conceptualization in the art of Chennai based artist George K, who has ventured to represent the social realm of a class referred to as 'third gender'. His entry



into art arena has been as recent as early 2000's. Yet he has not confined himself to one dimension of art as only painting but his interest started with photography, and moved on to painting and sculpture including poetry writing and playing the stock market. With interests centered on the intricacies and vagaries of life, it is not surprising that this artist with his sharp sensibility, acute perception and social sensitivity offers scrutiny of life's complexities.

This essay deals with his latest series of works involving the subject of transgender in his sculptures, made life size in attitudes of typical gestures and postures. Poignant in their hyper realism, George empathetically interfaces with this subject not only as a form privileging his artistic concerns but as a human being, it has caught his curiosity to investigate this class of people marginalized and ostracized by society. His intervention through art simultaneously fulfills his philosophic concerns and highlights the plight of transgender community by placing them within the public domain for heightened scrutiny. According to the artist, "Life has been a journey, bridging different disciplines and experiences. My work is a part of that journey in the discovery of the self from form to the formless. I see form in line, colour, plane, sound and the sensual spectacles of daily life".

Journey for George is metaphorical, linked directly to the process of sculpture making and its heightened finish with graffiti scribbled on its surface. The methodology involves photographing transgender as they strike their typical poses whether in groups or individually. He digitally works the image on the computer to finalize the form he desires. The process is carried forward by modeling the form in clay and later cast in plaster for non reusable glass fiber moulds. After it is cast, the image is filed, polished and painted with oil paint in verisimilitude. Finally it is prepared for intervention by the artist to inscribe it with graffiti on its surface. It should be stressed however that the physical process in the construction of his sculptures is carried out by a 'studio team' under his direct supervision. The 'studio team' as he refers to his group of technical workers, George clarifies, "The artisans employed by me for my paintings and more so for my sculptures are like studio help - welders, grinders, potters, fibre glass technicians, bill board painters etc., who execute the job assigned to each of them under my visual supervision. I have a studio team that works on various aspects of the work". An act of this nature establishes multiple cross-overs between art, techniques and mass images. Through deconstruction by spectators / viewers / critics / connoisseurs, it translates to be represented back in high art or art world context.

The inscribed graffiti takes the form of prose, poetry, aimless scribbles and squiggles. These surface graffiti morphs the collective team work into a dialogic interplay of high [sculpture] and low [kitsch and popular] cultural forms through artisanal interventions. Says George, "The graffiti, words, line, plane, or circle, changes the balance of tension in the process of construction [sculpture making] and transforms the form in the sculpture from the absolute to the relative. Often this [graffiti] is repetitively used to enhance and or alter the intrinsic rhythm and harmony to develop, spread out, and produce tension of magnifying intensity".

In the analyses of George's works it would be useful to critique his concepts and process in the making of art. Whether painting or sculpture his works, references a notion of 'deskilling', a concept that has gained valence in contemporary artistic milieu having its origins in varied artistic endeavours of the 20th century. Deskilling first climaxed with cubist collage derived from found cut paper elements; displacing both painterly execution and the function of drawing. At the heart of this concept is persistent effort to eliminate artisinal competence and other forms of manual virtuosity from the horizon of both artistic production and aesthetic evaluation. In the case of George, the application of deskilling could be explained as production, not directly from the hands of the artist, rather indirectly through artisans as bill board painters or local sculptors involved in making sculptures of deities for mass consumption. For George the deskilling process serves his conceptual ends. Not having to realize the artistic productions through his efforts, it makes him into a conceptual flaneure. This remains central to his artistic persona whether it is painting or sculpture.

His conceptual scaffolding in the visualization of the theme of transgender is informed by epic narratives. According to George, "In the epic Mahabharata, Krishna, the chief strategist for the Pandavas, in the battle between cousins, wanted to sacrifice a person from the Pandava clan; in order to satiate the god, prolong the war and wear down the opposition. He selected a young unmarried man whose name was Aravan. He asked for one wish of getting married before his sacrifice. As none wished widowhood, Krishna took the form of a transgender and married the boy Aravan who later was sacrificed. Pandavas eventually won the war. Perpetuating this myth, every year in midsummer on a particular day in the lunar calendar, transgenders from all over India congregate at the Aravan temple close to Villipuram near Chennai in South India, as they have been doing for a millennium or more. The wedding is reenacted



each year with a large congregation of transgender adorning themselves as brides and going through the ritual of celebration, marriage, death and mourning. And the circle of life continues." By looping back to tradition, George is revalidating the awareness and the existence 'third gender' in society as not unexceptional rather lived reality from time immemorial. Interestingly George also conflates with this myth, the concept of Ardhanareeshwara that modern psychology explains as integral dimension of human personality.

With philosophy under girding his concepts, George incidentally through these forms of transgenders is also talking of transcending form into formlessness and hence from material to the spiritual plane. He particularly takes on the journey interfaced with transgender to establish the fact of eternal circle namely life, death and renewal. Besides serving philosophical food for his soul, he is also highlighting and drawing attention to the plight of a section of society that is ostracized and treated with contempt.

George's sculptures opens space for positioning the viewer-spectator. Visual works of this nature construct certain kind of spectators; carry information about the implied viewer. The implied viewer is situated in the public domain. Within the white cube of the museum, sculptural images as these will rarely find a place. The conceptual strength and the social message it carries explores the relationship between viewers as spectators and art as a desirable object. This genre of art works brings into focus innovative strategies to investigate the complex relationships between consuming, collecting, memory, language, and interpretation, reinforcing that a work of art that one admires or dislikes is as much a construction of memory and desire as it is a response to the direct encounter between the viewer and the art object.

George philosophically explains, "My cosmos of expanding, balanced, or contracting tension, juxtaposed with the inner silence, is the spiritual formlessness of the indivisible soul, the collective consciousness".

## OF HIJRAS, ANIMALS AND BEAUTY

Indulge, The New Indian Express, Chennai. Fri, July 31, 2009

Artist George Kuruvilla on his expeditions, verses and people watching

SINNDHUJARAMPRASAD

George Kuruvilla's residence sings a tale of its own. From the little sculptures on the coffee tables to the vibrant paintings that adorn the wall and the strategically placed hijra in the drawing room, the house is a canvas in itself and looks more like an art installation to me, rather than a place of dwelling.

As soon as I step in, my eye roves for a glimpse of Kuruvilla's famed hijras (recall the ones at Apparao Galleries?) and I spot one perched at an angle on the windowsill. The life-size sculpture looks defiant. Dressed in bridal robes, with strings of jasmine flowers in the hair, it is as if she waits almost expectantly, with a sneer nonetheless, for her groom to show up. Fascinated, I turn to Kuruvilla. "My neighbour's gardener, Munuswamy was a transgender, his unusual demeanour, his light gait and swaying hips intrigued me. And later I attended the 'ara-vaani' festival in Koovagam. I was bowled over," explains Kuruvilla. "Only then I got to know what they actually go through. They retaliate to taunts by lifting their skirts. I realised they must have been driven over the brink to do such an act".

Kuruvilla tells me about an encounter at the festival that inspired his series "I met a hijra, who was dressed as a bride, just like any other woman, waiting to be wed. It affected me." Another sculpture of a hijra has a butterfly drawn over it, hair brimming with jasmine flower strings. "I wanted to show their sensuality through the fragility of the human psyche. Flowers and the butterfly represent fragility. The representation is stronger and dramatic as they are life-size," he says.

Kuruvilla is not a born artist. From a chartered accountant to a merchant banker and an amateur photographer, he discovered his "affinity for colours" only after a near death experience, during the 2004 tsunami. "Sometimes you need a kick in the back to get you started." he guffaws. "That's when I found colours as intoxicating as life. I had an eye for composition as well and started playing with it"

The artist says 'people watching' is his favourite pastime. And he reminisces about the days when he used to go to the Mylapore temple, armed with a high-powered lens to shoot the temple folk. "I used to click some pictures, come home and decipher what would have been going through the person's mind at that moment Then if it moves me, I will make it my subject"

For Kuruvilla, two factors decide his subject. "I must be able



to relate to it. I usually place myself in the eye of the subject and hold an imaginary conversation."

When you carefully observe his work, you notice verses running across them. The lines mostly convey the artist's emotion, and also his reason for choosing the subject. The tsunami-inspired painting, for example, has a dishevelled man crouched on the road, a wall of water behind him, with "Share my sorrow," and other similar lines scrawled across the canvas.

"I have some scribbles on my work to create a tension between the subject and the audience," he explains.

Talking about his other series 'Human Animals', Kuruvilla says, "It was born due to the combined influence of people watching and reading social anthropologist Desmond Morris. The author says that articulation and abstraction are done by both humans and animals. But it's the degree that differs. Then I wondered what it would be like to fix a human body with an animal head and vice versa."

His latest work is titled 'Adoration of Beauty', where he has portrayed several Kathakali dancers dressing up before a performance. "I'm trying to strike a balance between the internal spiritual beauty and the external, visual one," Kuruvilla explains. "I have infused the paintings with lines from Adi Sankaracharya's 'Soundarya Lahari'."

My motive to paint,  
Is a passion to taint,  
A canvas with hues,  
Life's emotions and blues.

A tapestry of memories,  
Failures and victories,  
An outpouring of pain,  
Into an emotional drain.

A mental agony,  
A visual ecstasy.

"You balance your life" 72"x48" Oil on canvas





Born of the street,  
Of parentage unknown,  
A verbal, visual treat,  
Emotions torn,  
A vandal on the run,  
An artist with a paint gun,  
Outpouring of letters,  
Colours, shapes without fetters,  
No rules to be kept,  
Except stay to the left.

His graffiti communicates the essence of a moment recorded in his camera's lens or mind's eye. A lot of the creative process is the conceptualisation and interpretation of the reality around. The altered reality supplemented with a textual interface is often seen in the paintings and sculptures.



"Soul mate" 36" x 24" Mixed media on canvas







"Bindaas" 59" x 36" Mixed media on canvas



# THE ARAVAANIS



THE ARAVAANIS

### “Aravaani...the Morphosis”

The word “metamorphosis” means a “change in form or transformation” and the verb “morph” is defined in the oxford dictionary as “to change smoothly and gradually from one image to another”. I have coined the word “morphosis” to denote the process of the transformation both in form and non form.

“Aravaani...the Morphosis” portrays the view within, of the socially marginalized third gender. The work was intended to force a review of values, highlight contradictions and the existing conflicts in Indian society.

I use “the meta morphosis” of the larva to a butterfly “The inherent beauty within” as the main theme for the form.

The Aravaani neglected and abused by society has evolved in my mind’s eye into a colourful, sensitive creature, as fragile as the flowers that adorn the dress. The flower on the face is a visual metaphor on the fragility of the psyche. The butterfly on the back to draw the viewer to the morph, of the external image to the beauty within.

I use text in blank verse to bind the sensual visual with the image. This is to increase the dimensions of representing “the real unreal”, mixing the visual and the text in a way that can convey my interpretation, integrating culture, history, philosophy, social structure with reality, from which the work has evolved.

The work has a layered visual through a multitude of images, interconnected through text as graffiti, and blank verse. The form is hyper real and life sized to force one to encounter “the self”, through realism and size, within the context of the social landscape.

In the great Indian Epic Mahabharatha war, Krishna, the chief orchestrator of strategy, wanted to sacrifice one person from their empire to prolong the war and wear down the opposition.

In the legend he selected to sacrifice a young single lad without a wife or a family. This young man's name was “Aravaan”.

Aravaan was given one last wish before he died. His last desire was to be “married”.

However none of the women of the court wished to marry him. They shunned widowhood. The only one who came forward to marry Aravaan was Krishna in the form of a “trans gender”.

Every year in the middle of summer on a selected day several trans genders congregate at the Aravaan temple near Villupuram in Tamilnadu, India. The temple turns into a fair ground, it becomes a carnival with riot of colours and thousands of trans genders who frolick for 3 days preceding the ceremonial marriage to the Boy God Aravaan. They adorn themselves as brides and await their turn to marry Aravaan. Each year the congregation grows larger.



"Let's have tea" 71" x 34" x 15" Handmade fibre glass



To be a woman,  
Was an omen,  
To declare, a joy,  
I am not a boy.

We cross dress and walk,  
On streets we stalk,  
People abuse,  
Our reality, we cant refuse.

Blood lines of our fathers,  
Speak to us,  
We are sisters not brothers,  
Did we miss the bus?

I am from Shiv, am I?  
We children of God, and I,  
Dance to cosmic joy divine,  
More ecstasy than food or wine.

To live to dance ,  
And daily prance,  
To express my joy,  
I am nobody's toy.

In my glance,  
You see my chance ,  
To hide my shame,  
Is my feminism to blame?



"Surya Kanthi"  
37"x25"x34" Handmade fibre glass

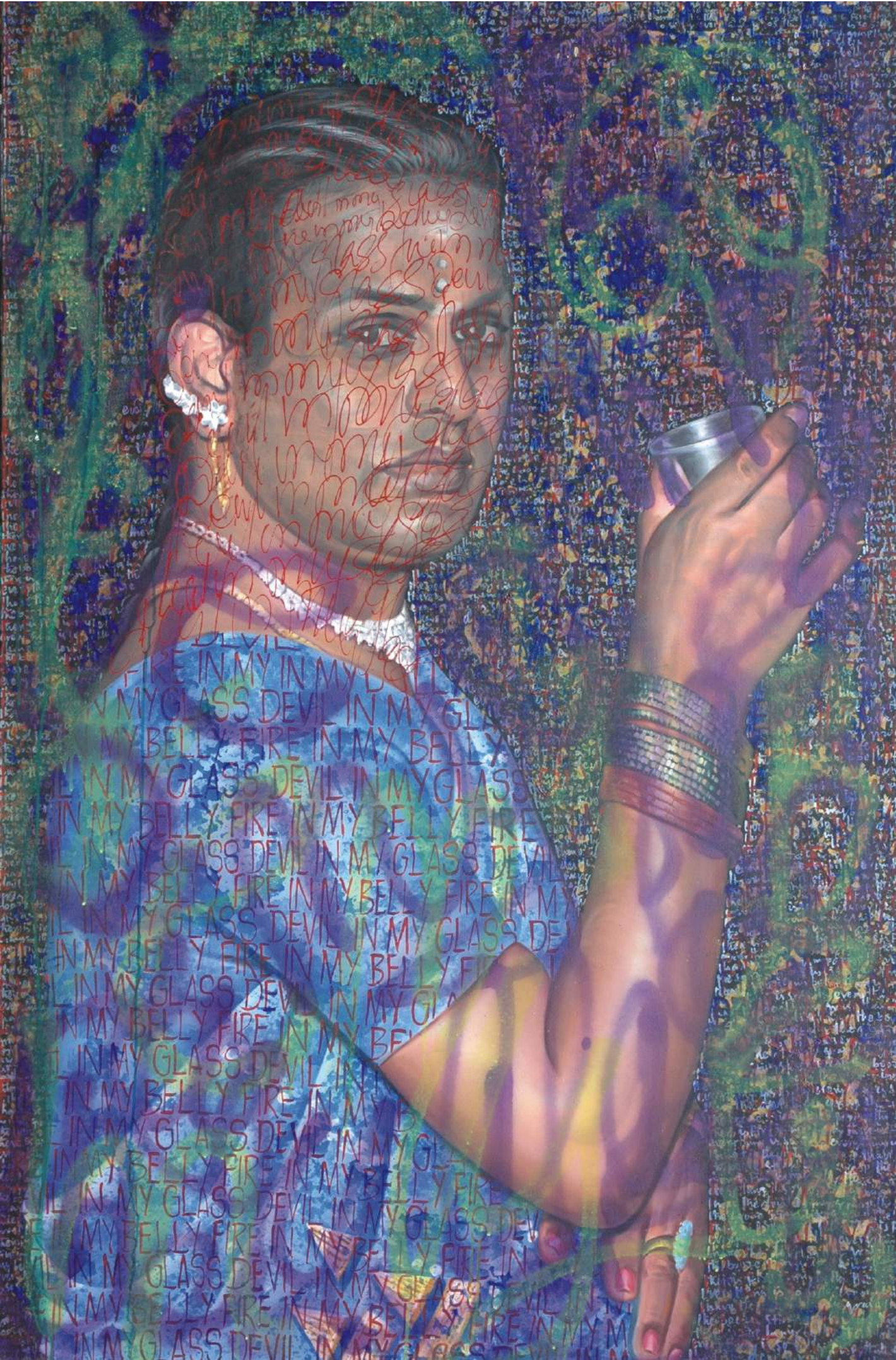


"Bride in green"  
App. 61"x32"x15" Handmade fibre glass



"Malika"  
40"x23"x28" Handmade fibre glass





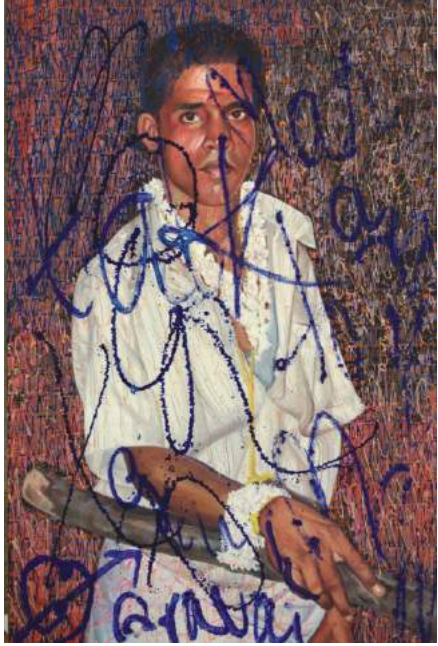
"Devil in my grasp" 72"x48" Oil on canvas



"Flame of the forest" 48"x36" Mixed media on canvas



"Man talk man walk" 36"x24" Oil on canvas



"Hung like a doughnut" 36"x28" Oil on canvas



"Just another love affair" 36"x24" Oil on canvas





Handmade fibre glass

"I am a bride" App. 37"x24"x24"

In the eye of the flame,  
The heat is hot,  
The heat is searing,  
I am in a spot.

The white is radiant,  
All around,  
Life is scorching,  
I am bound.

Around the white,  
The colours dance,  
Emotions are tearing,  
I am in a trance.

The vibrant blue,  
Around the flame,  
Chokes me as I,  
Absorb the blame.

Blue around the white  
Grows dark,  
Fumes merge, and  
I become a spark.

Yellow around the white  
They swirl,  
Burnt and inward,  
I do curl.

The red it flows,  
In and out,  
In the dying pain,  
I do shout.

My flame is white,  
Its light is bright,  
The cause is pure,  
The fight was right.

Will I flicker?  
Or will I fade?  
Will I be extinguished?  
And in obscurity laid?

What I flamed for,  
What I stood,  
Will you remember me?  
A tree in the wood.



"Kantimati" 61"x31"x14" Handmade fibre glass





“Seated lady - Kalaivani” 37”x24”x24” Handmade fibre glass





Is madness a blend of illusions  
Reality an illusion of substance ?  
Perception of reality,  
Varies from the point of reference.

Can illusions spawn delusions  
A disconnect from reality?  
Analyzing the illusory,  
Mind-playing duality.

What is real or unreal  
A philosopher's nightmare ?  
Delusions of a poet or artist,  
Are but his daily fare.

Are perceptions one's compass  
That delusions often snare ?  
An artist on his canvas,  
His perception creates the stare.

Does anchoring of a point  
Create a point of reference ?  
That a circle is in creation,  
Is in the creator's inference.

Is to see what is unseen  
Derided as delusion ?  
An artist or a poet,  
Sees his masterpiece in the illusion.

Delusion or illusion,  
Birth of one or the other,  
A creative process, requires  
The madness in each other.











The colour green  
Is in my gene,  
Its vibrant, live and fun.  
In love with it,  
It says be fit,  
And do a daily run.

The shade green  
Can be seen,  
In every single glance.  
Between blue and yellow,  
That prolific fellow,  
Does a lively dance.

He is, mother nature's pet,  
Verdant, lush all round.  
Converts waste to life,  
And back again,  
His friend sunshine,  
Hand bound.





"Poinsettia lady-Suganti" 64"x34"x24" Handmade fibre glass



"The Winged one"  
20"x14"x12" Handmade fibre glass



"Shakti"  
16"x13"x9" Handmade fibre glass



"Malar Vizhi"  
66"x34"x18" Handmade fibre glass



"Classical dancer"  
64"x36"x16" Handmade fibre glass



"Kannamma"  
App. 61"x32"x15" Handmade fibre glass



"Feel like a butterfly"  
69"x40"x20" Handmade fibre glass



"Think over pink"  
App. 61"x32"x15" Handmade fibre glass



"Gold's mine"  
App. 37"x24"x24" Handmade fibre glass





"Karpagavalli" App. 65" x 34" x 15" Handmade fibre glass



The Straits Times, Singapore, Saturday, April 5, 2008

Deepika Shetty

FIFTY-eight-year-old George Kuruvilla was a successful investment banker in India when the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004 shook up his life and set him on course to becoming an artist.

A keen angler, he was fishing near Fisherman's Cove in the southern Indian city of Chennai when the tsunami first dragged him underwater and then miraculously threw him back on land.

He recalls: "It was a clear day, no wind, no rain. I was fishing in waist-deep water together with 25 other people when the huge wall of water hit us. Only four of us survived. It made me realise I needed to reprioritise and relook my life." He says: "I took to art to relieve my stress, to comprehend what had happened. I was already a keen photographer and used to write poetry and soon I found an affinity in colour."

Just a few months later, he had traded a life behind the desk for one with paints and brushes. He says: "Like life, there are many layers to the story you see unfolding through the canvas."

"I actually went into painting initially because I needed something to take my stress away and in the process discovered that you can get into colour and get lost. I found it therapeutic," adds the artist solemnly as he talks about his near death experience.

George's current work portrays the often feared and frequently misunderstood eunuchs in the form of life size sculptures.

"My neighbor's gardener is a transgender. One evening I wanted something from him only to be told that he has gone to Koovagam (a much celebrated eunuch festival). So I went there, stayed there and photographed them." The photographs have now become intense sculptures that depict the emotions of these individuals complete with a unique set of body language and expressions.

George's understanding of art begins when he finds a connection or a clear defining moment with a person, a moment or a place. Besides sculptures, he uses mix media like canvas, photographs, paint, text in the form of the verses and poetry



Views of "Karpagavalli"









"You are coming my way" 48"x72" Oil & acrylic on canvas





"Whither now" 72"x48" Oil on canvas



The New Sunday Express April 8, 2007

ARTS ETC'

Representing Everyman, Chennai artist George K's colourful figures can be too realistic for comfort, says Ammu Chaterji

AT CLOSE QUARTERS: A Fiberglass Aravani

SOME TIME AGO, when travelling 2nd class on the Chennai-Mumbai Express, a transgender individual, an Aravani, did me the favour of ridding the compartment of an inebriated passenger sitting across from me. He/ she didn't do much really, just look purposefully in the drunk's direction.

I am reminded of this incident when, walking into Sharan Apparao's swank new gallery premises, I run smack into George K's life-size Aravani sculpture by the door.

Since these individuals who strut about our streets somehow appear vaguely intimidating, the figure's benign energy allows me to observe without being observed. George K's fiberglass Aravani is remarkably life like and in full garish colour. The artist seems to be going for the jugular with his brand of neo-realism Shock-value is an important value addition.

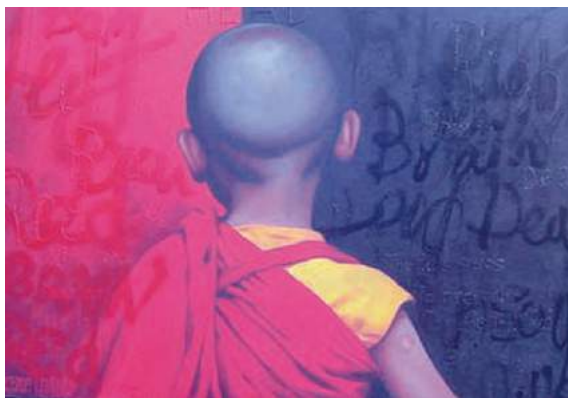
I, for one, am curiously moved by these provocative works, the subjects' unapologetic self-possession worn like a badge. The Bride, particularly, is a study in comic vulnerability, not exactly easy to achieve. Everything about this Aravani figure is both a silent protest and an entreaty.

George takes me through the complicated process of how he creates them from initial drawings. My head spins but I get the picture. There are several stages, some rewarding, but mostly exhilarating.





**RIPPLES  
IN A STILL POND**



**RIPPLES  
IN A STILL POND**



The inmates of a Buddhist orphanage,  
pranks of children dedicated to become monks in a monastery,  
the serenity of wise and enlightened teachers,  
their reflections and contemplation are the themes in this series.

The inner calm and outer stillness pours from the canvas  
like a torrent from a Himalayan stream in early spring.  
The water cold, clear and virgin,  
Unfathomable inner stillness but yet speaks.

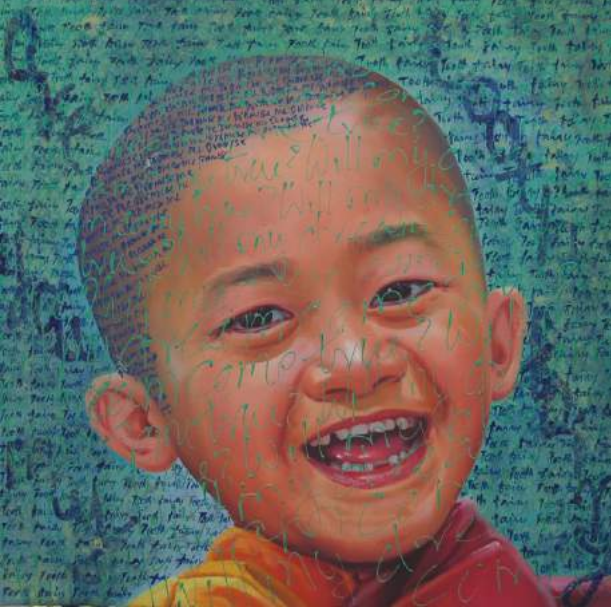
Their inner calm radiates, the inner stillness speaks  
from a silent pond of an aware soul.  
That awareness together with the joy of life is portrayed  
in the childish actions and pranks of the orphans.  
Their inner stillness speaks,  
Ripples in the still pond of innocent childhood.



"Yesterday how I long for" 36"x24" Oil on canvas

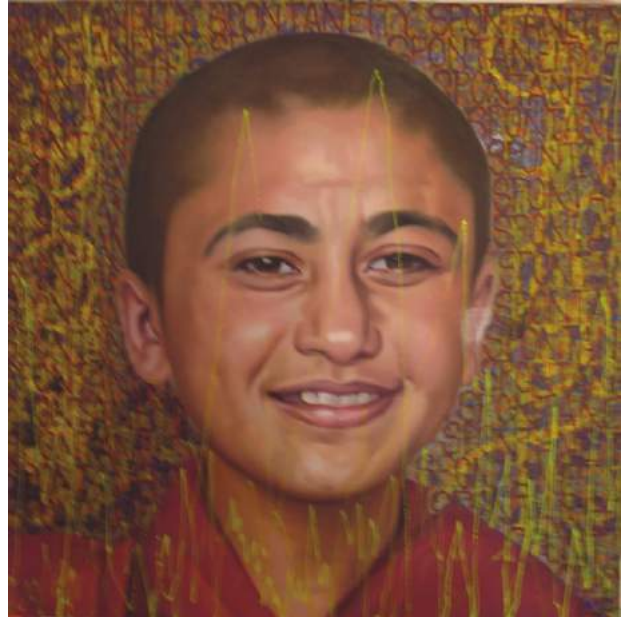


"Will my dream come true" 24"x24" Oil on canvas



"When in doubt" 24"x24" Oil on canvas

"Joy" 24.5"x24.5" Oil on canvas



"Spontaneity" 24.5"x24.5" Oil on canvas





LIVE

SWIGGERS

Swigging booze we

Searching for the

Gin and Tonic  
on the  
Rocks

A piece of M...

Rum and  
Coca Cola  
Leading

- 1. 2 pgs gin
- 2. 1 bottle tonic
- 3. dash of bitters

Good for

1/2 bottle of an Old Monk  
1/4 piece of an ice berg  
3/4 dash of Cola  
4/5 Plenty of LOVE

Shake and  
Stir

Gulp & Sniff

Leading

US

Sniff







Where do I come from?  
Where do I go?  
Past was humdrum,  
The future so slow.

Haze in my vision,  
Ash on my face,  
Mind has no reason,  
To win this race.

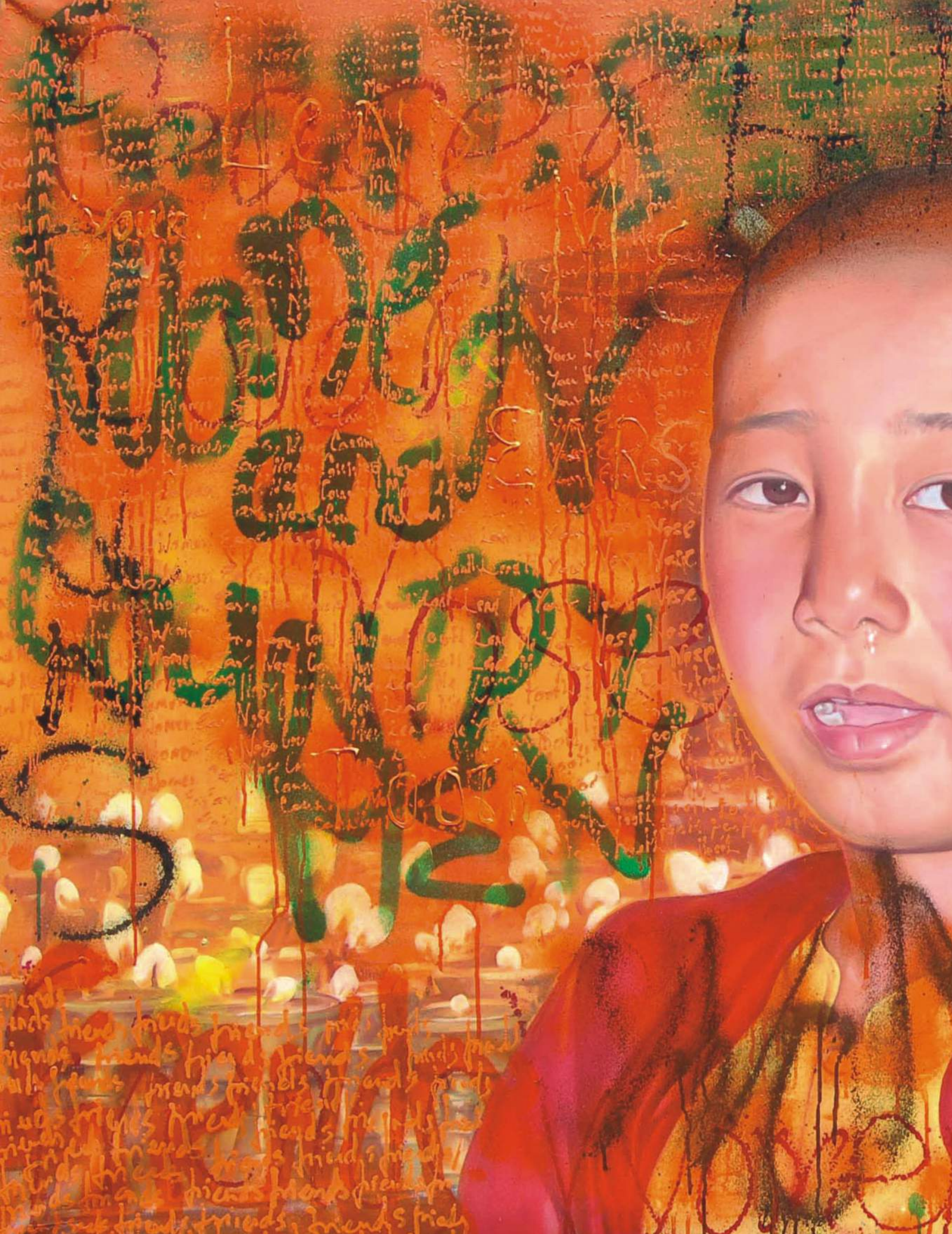
I fear in solitude,  
What lies ahead,  
Faith is my fortitude,  
Before I bed.





"Do you have question Can I have answers" 48"x36" Oil on canvas











O creator, my master,  
Your smile is in every laughter.  
Each day all around,  
Your voice is in every sound.

You did make this world your stage,  
With different shows by every sage.  
Each their views they did preach,  
For the heavens they tried to reach.

In every stage of history,  
Intellect strove to solve the mystery,  
Grand design of a stage so vast,  
Spawned philosophies in the past.

To each of us you gave a page,  
An open role on an open stage.  
What we do in joy or rage,  
You said will only fill our page.

On the stage of life we swing,  
What joy or sorrow do we bring?  
The world an audience all around,  
Is watching, hearing, every sound.

We are puppets in a show,  
The plot of which we do not know.  
With freedom to act while on stage,  
Each action recorded in our page.

On that string of life we hang,  
Dropped or yanked with a bang.  
The master watches as we act,  
Reminding us of our eternal pact.

Puppets on a string are we,  
Puppets who can think and see.  
The string of life that hangs is fine,  
Only a few moments to shine.

Your puppet on a string am I,  
No time to question why.  
To sit in sorrow or to sigh,  
The show is on, action running by.

As a broken puppet on your string,  
I ask what joy or happiness can I bring.  
What can a puppet do on a string?  
As only within the story he can sing.

My time is short on this stage,  
What will be recorded on my page.  
Will I to the table bring,  
Contribution before the curtains ring.



"Human catcher" 72"x48" Oil on canvas







LANGOTI

ON

LOIN

CLOTH

IS

STARRING

HEAD

Produced By

HARDY ONY LA

G K Y





MY HEAD

MOVIE

ie

MOVIE

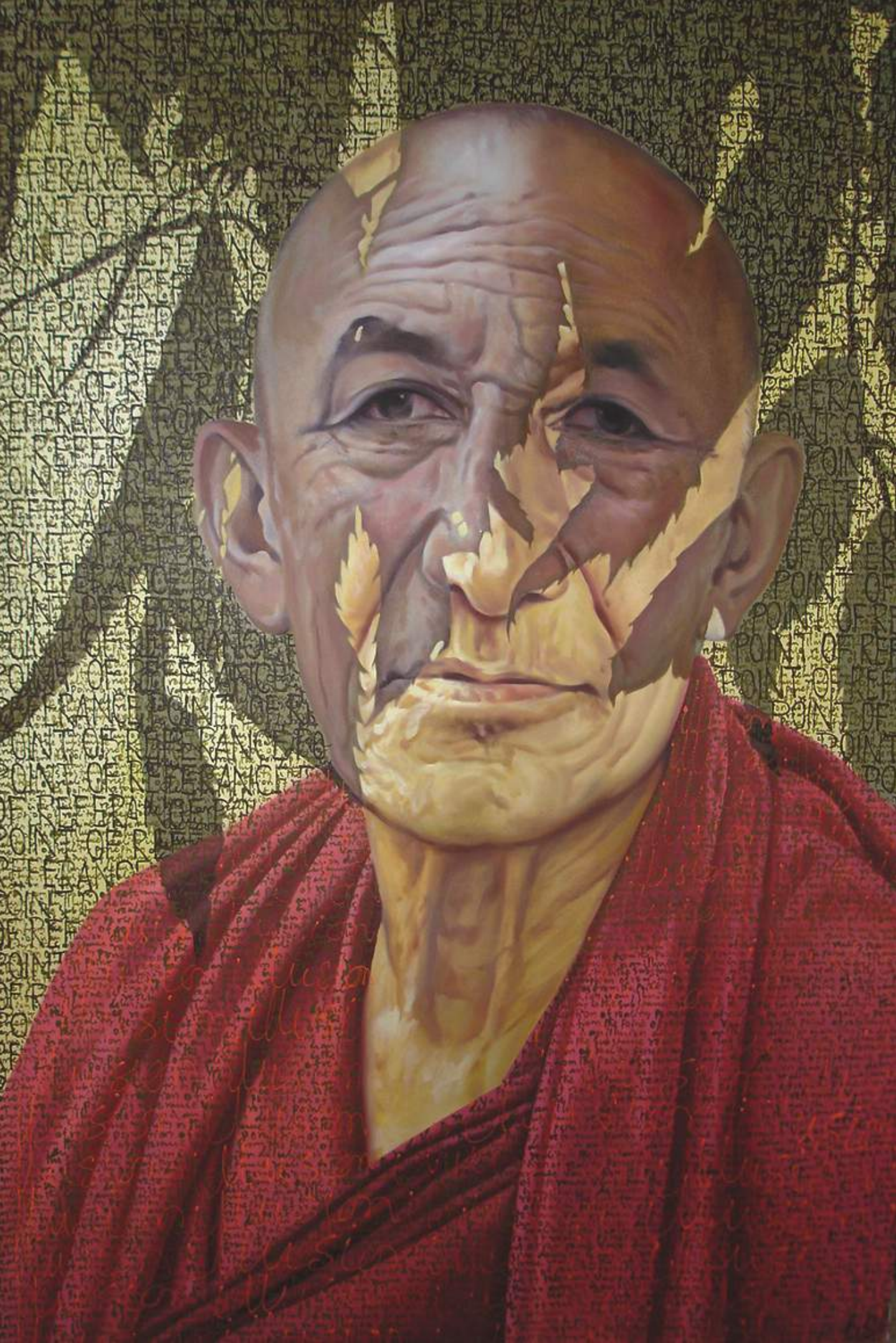
"Movie" 48"x72" Oil on canvas

DIRECTED BY

UREN

CHAPLIN





"Delusion is an illusion" 72"x48" Oil on canvas



# THE STREET SONG



## THE STREET SONG



## THE CANVAS OF LIFE

THE HINDU. Monday, February 26, 2007

ART Fruit sellers, garland makers and astrologers

from the subjects of George .K works

REALISTIC PORTRAYAL Some of George K's works

PHOTOS: K. V. SRINIVASAN

George. K sees the camera and the paintbrush as weapons of war. The lens captures moments and the brush reproduces the images that have been frozen. Through layers of text, he wages war on these painted images. He removes them from their immediate contexts and connects them with larger ideas or concepts.

George's camera doggedly follows life in places that are hidden simply because we accord little value to them. Nine months ago, he began to photograph people found around the Kapaleshwarar temple in his digital box. His subjects were ignorant about his intentions. Those who sensed that a photographer was interested in them, debated with themselves if they should pose or simply pretend to be natural. But in their confusion, they did neither.

A surprise in store

On February 22, a few of them wished they had smiled, because they were surprised to find their poker faces on huge canvases. These images were displayed at their rightful place, the Mandapam of Kapaleeshwarar Koil. Called "The Colours of The Street Song", this exhibition continues at Apparao Galleries till March 1.

All these men, women and children work in shops around the temple. They are fruit-sellers, garland-makers, dealers in temple items and astrologers. As they go about their mundane chores, they reveal a bit about themselves and their aspirations. The layers of graffiti that surround the images or are superimposed on them reveal their reality, as also George's perception of it. In the maze of text, You can sense a thoranam-maker almost warning passers-by against stepping on his leaves. A woman strings flowers into garlands, with a black umbrella shielding her from the hot sunshine runs amok and among the other lines, the game-like 'he loves me, he loves me not' is clearly visible.

On a painting titled 'siesta', a fruit-seller is recumbent. Layers of text run all around him "siesta & the DNA of money, raja of Vvyur, Banginapally, Rasalu Money grows on trees, Siesta & the DNA of money".

Interestingly, the people who had been painted were just round the corner and there were many questions for them. Some of them were all smiles and wordless, trying to hide their self-consciousness.

For those who have been following George's works, this effort did not come as a surprise. His previous paintings are all set in the same mould and even a recurrent theme could be noticed in them. People associated with religious practices make up a huge chunk of his collection. He goes back to this theme, because he is struck by "their acceptance of things as they are."

He had adopted a unique method of creating these images. After taking the photos, he works out the concepts and allows billboard artists to add their creative inputs to the canvases. He then finishes the work, adding layers and meanings to them.

Prince Frederick





"A new beginning" 72"x48" Oil & acrylic on canvas



"Siesta"  
48"x72" Oil & acrylic on canvas



"Be Indian and buy Indian"  
48"x72" Oil on canvas



"Roses my love are red"  
48"x72" Oil on canvas



"Sun shine"  
48"x72" Oil on canvas









"Greens with smile" 48"x72" Oil on canvas



Vibrant energy  
All around,  
In that shower  
Grace is found.

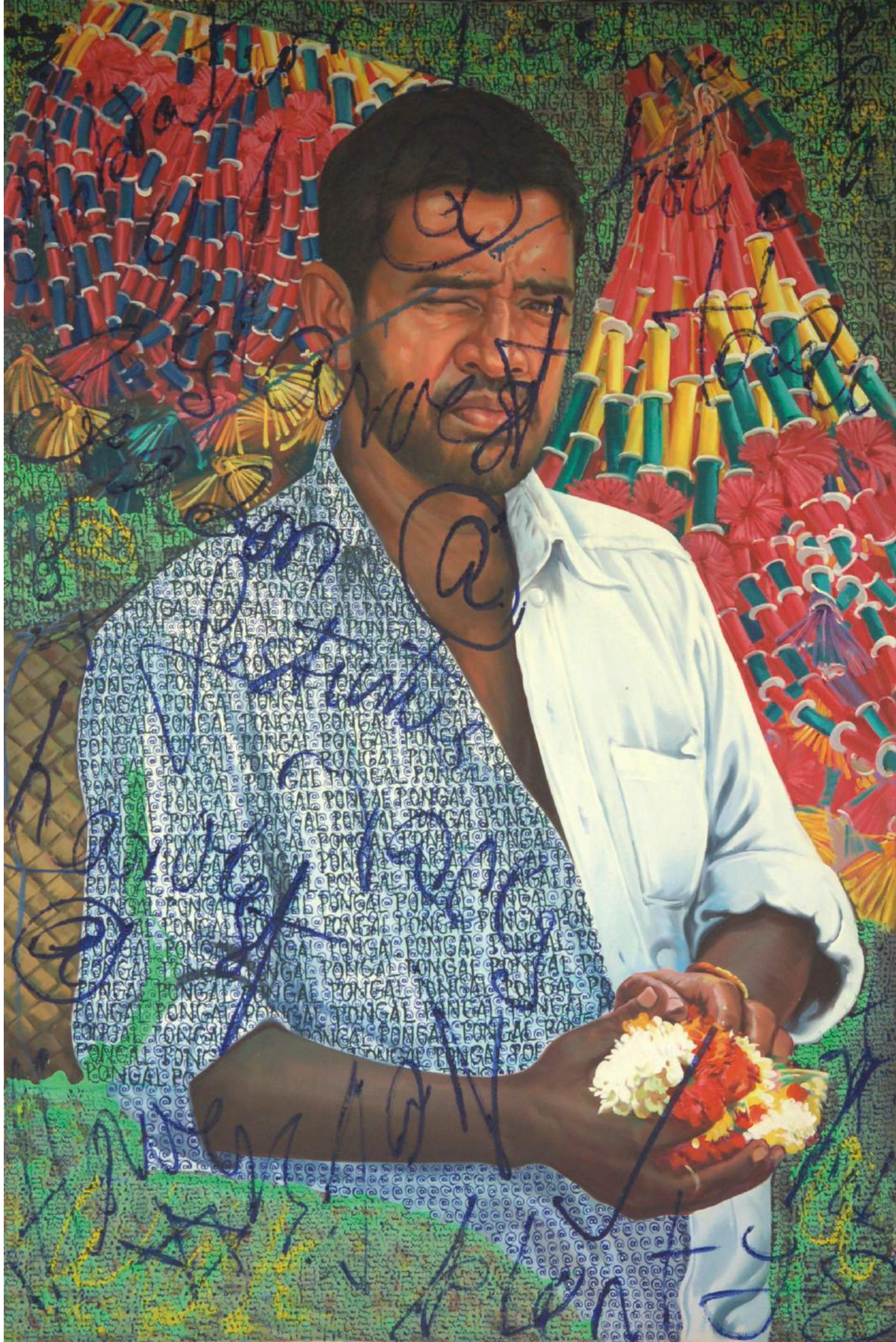
Energy to live  
Each day,  
In a joyful state  
On my way.

That boundless force  
In every living thing,  
That makes them love  
Laugh and daily sing.

A living force  
That never dies,  
Changes face  
As each form flies.



"Festival @Pongal 2007" 72"x48" Oil on canvas











"Flowers for sale" 48"x72" Oil on canvas

J. G. G.





"Indian rope trick" 70"x47" Oil on canvas



The steel is sharp,  
The point is fine,  
I live on that,  
Razor line.

Achievement is good,  
Failure is bad,  
Fate decides,  
What's to be had.

Work as they will,  
Work through the night,  
Shed your health,  
With all your might.

Demands are made,  
Demands are met,  
On blood and sweat,  
Others targets are set.

A balancing act,  
That can't go long,  
Pivoted I sit,  
Waiting that gong.

A breeze from the left,  
A wind from the right,  
I sway my life,  
A broken kite.

As the day ebbs,  
And another flows,  
I come to terms,  
With daily blows.

An ocean of issues,  
They daily cut,  
The resolve to fight,  
Exits my gut.

An intense fear,  
Of the razors glow,  
Sweeps my mind,  
I see it blow.

Whether you live,  
Or whether I die,  
A razors steel,  
Will never cry.









"Celebration" 48"x72" Oil on canvas



The market is up,  
Market is down,  
It's either a grin,  
Or a downcast frown.

Lakshmi is with you,  
Lakshmi is not,  
Are you undersold,  
Or over-bought.

The pricing is right,  
Pricing was wrong,  
Bears have run,  
Bulls are strong.

Settlement is today,  
Settlement is naught,  
Without a hedge, on an  
arbitrage you're caught.

Speculators win,  
Speculators lose,  
India is shining,  
As Bourses close.

Newspapers announce,  
That monsoon has broken,  
Farmers rejoice,  
Central bank has spoken.

Growth projections are up,  
Negativism is out,  
All sectors hustle,  
In unison they shout.

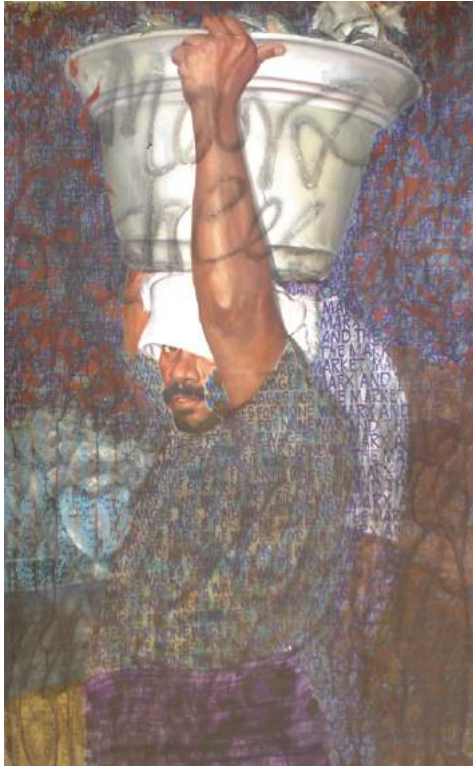
Year's prospects are good,  
The market has woken,  
Prices will soar,  
All buy as a token.

Buy land or gold,  
Buy shares or stock,  
To speculate en mass,  
The public, they flock.

The rain gods above,  
Look down in glee,  
As they speculate, whether  
The rains should hold or flee.



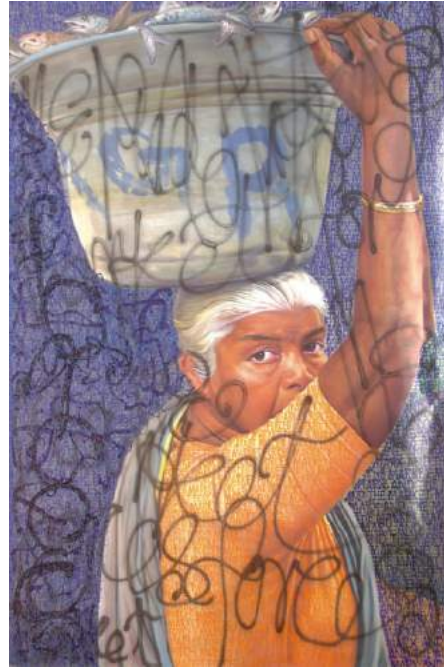
"Marx and the market" 72"x36" Mixed media on canvas



"Marx and the market" 60"x36" Mixed media on canvas



"Fish woman" 72"x48" Mixed media on canvas



"Marx and the market" 72"x36" Mixed media on canvas











"Old man Murthi" 46"x72" Oil on canvas



As the street wakes up to a crowing fowl,  
There is a chanting vendor on the prowl,  
Seeking households where husbands howl.

Where working wives find the need,  
Of ingredients required for the breakfast feed,  
Prays the vendor to them me lead.

The morning chill is in the air,  
The clouds are few on a day so fair,  
Sunlight dances through the fresh crisp air.

I sit on the porch and watch the street,  
See the dogs on their daily beat,  
To hear the morning sounds, is a treat.

The singing breeze through the trees,  
A hum and a buzz from the bees,  
The click and clang of the watchman's keys.

A sudden thud of the morning newspaper,  
The whistling teapot with steaming vapour,  
A rejoicing bird as it feels safer.

There are buxom ladies on a walk,  
Chatter non stop but never talk,  
Follows the lonely stalker on his walk.

Soon the sounds of children heard,  
Books and bags and rice and curd,  
They rush to school as a herd.

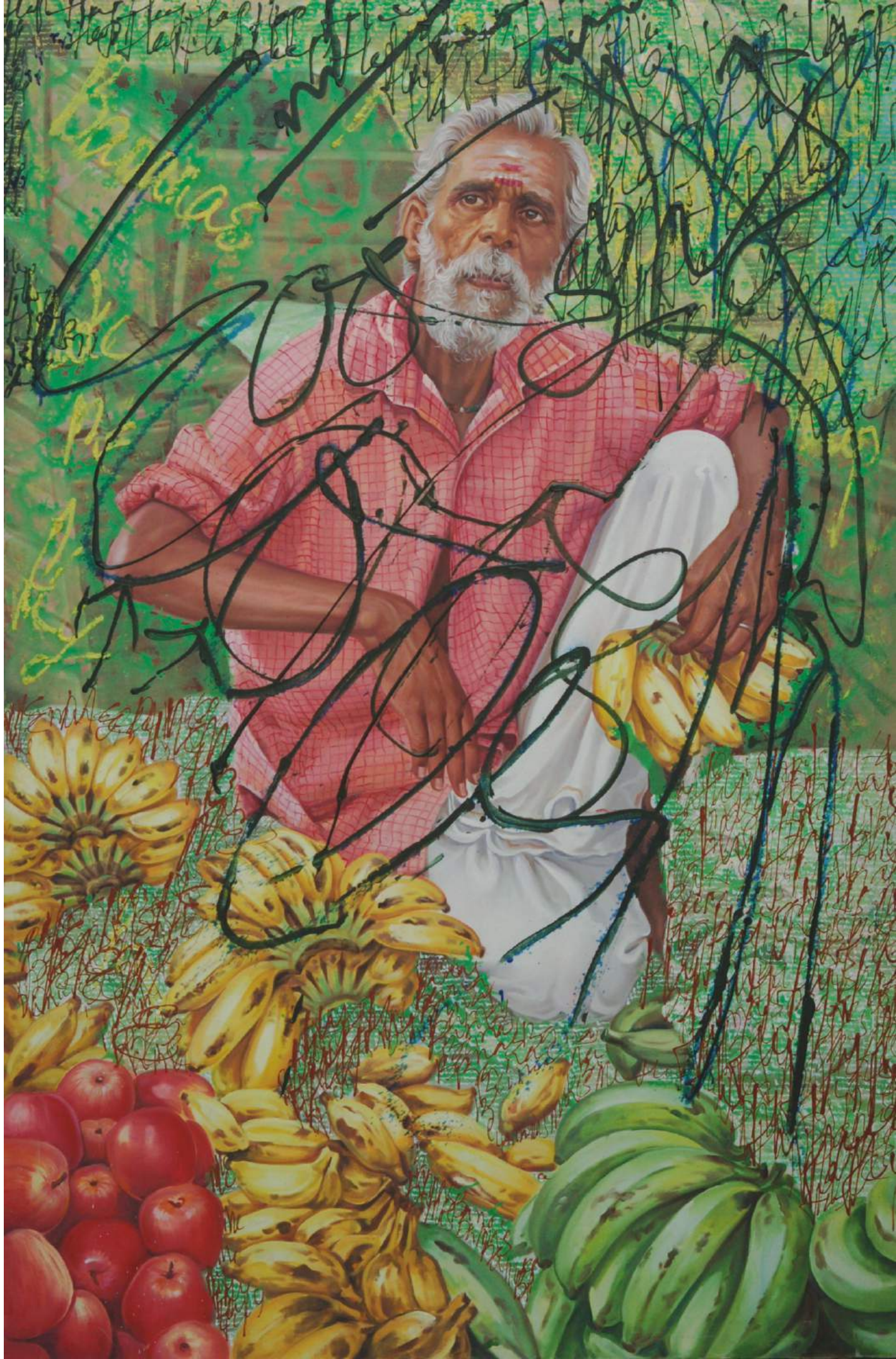
On the street the rumble starts,  
A motor cycle engine farts,  
Add the grumble bumble of motor carts.

Soon joins the cars as their engines whine,  
On gas and fumes their stomachs dine,  
The drivers proclaim their cars are fine.

The sun is up and streaming now,  
The noise bothers even a loitering cow,  
Early morning raga of the street I love.



"Bananas make me fly flap flap flap" 70"x47" Oil on canvas









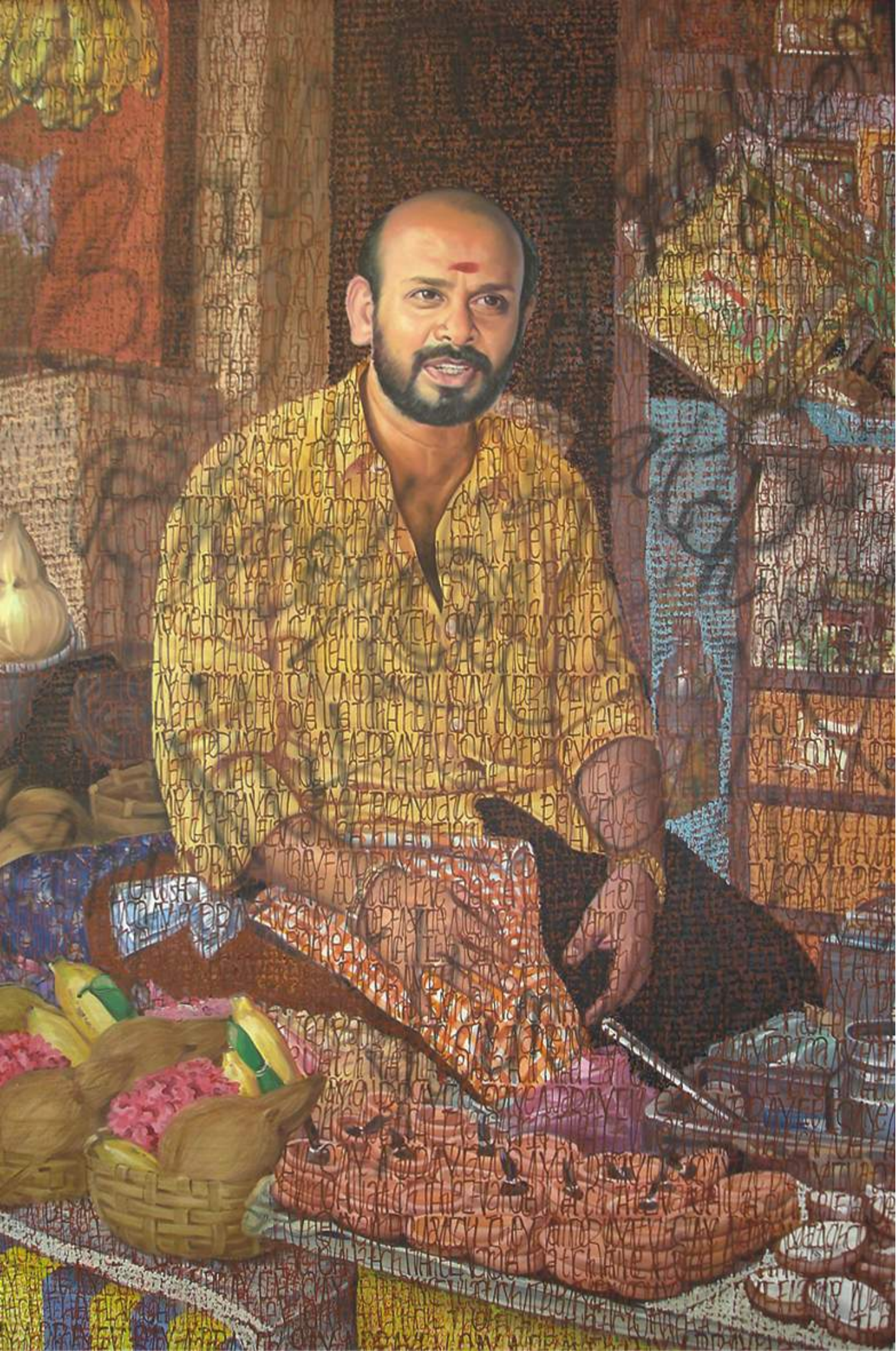


FLOWERS

FLOWERS

"Sweet memories" 48"x72" Oil on canvas





"My offering" 72"x48" Oil on canvas



**SONG SUNG BLUE**





**SONG SUNG BLUE**



In these works he has explored the poignancy of the Kashmiri architecture ravaged by destruction. Solid, spectacular, silent sentinels stand as a statement of the recent history of the region. Almost monochromatic in the summer sun these architectural statements are dramatic and eloquent in their silence.

“Song Sung Blue” in an exhibition of photographs enhanced by the music of the Beatles & Bob Dylan. Kashmir, with the idyllic landscape sets one's heart singing. Old lyrics waft into one's mind while the beautiful local women fit perfectly into the picture. The peaceful dream is of course, punctuated, with the presence of the barbed wire fences to remind one of the senseless terror in this tranquil Shangri-la.

If Gerhard Richter, the German artist was inspired by Steve Reich, the composer, then it was certainly the music of Bob Dylan & the Beatles for George.K.

From the pages of his travelogue he produced a series of photographs of ravaged, destroyed, architectural gems of Kashmir still standing there.....

Using his trademark, post modern idea, of graffiti on super realistic paintings of Kashmiri girls over written with the inspired Beatles lyrics, he took the idea further to superimpose abstract reactions of colour to the tune of the music on the almost monochromatic photographs of the singing stone sentinels of Srinagar.

The abstract reactions were a pure simplified response to the music loving part of the imagery of the artist's vocabulary. The colouring is also monochromatic and the touches of red reflect the looming sadness in this page of history.



"Untitled I" 18"x12" Painted photograph on archival paper





Blue is the hue,  
God's overview,  
Blends clouds with air,  
In a magical flair.  
Flirts with the sun,  
Pale blue on the run,  
Hides behind yellow,  
That clever fellow.  
Then races ahead,  
As the sun goes to bed,  
Darkens the hue,  
Into a moonlight blue.  
Myths and dreams,  
Earthly screams,  
Blue and light receding,  
Stillness, sleep succeeding.



"Untitled II" 18"x12" Painted photograph on archival paper







“Untitled III” 18"x12" Painted photograph on archival paper



"Untitled IV" 18"x12" Painted photograph on archival paper



"Untitled V" 18"x12" Painted photograph on archival paper



"Untitled VII" 18"x12" Painted photograph on archival paper



"Untitled VI" 18"x12" Painted photograph on archival paper







"Untitled VIII" 18"x12" Painted photograph on archival paper





"Mera lizza mera pizza" 72"x48" Oil on canvas





"Revolution" 48"x72" Oil on canvas

I saw in her face  
 The pains of a race,  
 I saw in her eyes  
 Her witness to lies,  
 I saw in her dress  
 The reason for stress,  
 I saw in her look  
 Her life as a book.



"Behind the veil" 48"x72" Oil on canvas



"I saw her standing there" 48"x72" Oil on canvas



"The song" 72"x48" Oil on canvas



People in close spaces,  
Crowded faces.  
Rushed and pushed,  
Steaming and flushed,  
A narrowing circle.

Trapped inside a trap,  
Circle without a gap.  
A way without an exit,  
No way to fix it,  
A mindless fear.

Walk the plank,  
A stare all blank.  
Pressure all around,  
Noise but no sound,  
An eerie silence.

Everything slows,  
Strangulation grows.  
Panic on the face,  
An alarming pace,  
Time stands still.

The mind it blows,  
Its fear it shows.  
Voice shrill,  
Fears chill,  
A silent explosion.

Arms and legs,  
In panic beg.  
Flay and kick,  
Panic's wick,  
At the brink.

Body goes limp,  
Mind a wimp.  
Shouts, screams,  
Into a dream,  
Claustrophobia.

"When I'm" 64 72"x48" Oil on canvas



"Untitled" 72"x48" Oil on canvas





"The Identity" 72"x48" Oil on canvas











"Dare to stand" 48"x72" Oil on canvas





"Greater than love" 72"x48" Oil on canvas



# BENARAS

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE





# BENARAS

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE



## REVIEW Chitra Mahesh The Hindu

Tale of a river and a city:

The lens says it all

The mystical town Benaras or Varanasi has been the subject of several artists and thinkers, The town with its effulgent Ganga, attributed with qualities of the divine shows a different face each time it is photographed, painted or sketched. As it meanders through the multitudes on the banks, slender and slim in one place, turgid and slow in others and still sparkling and fascinating, the river remains a mysterious face of India with all its philosophy, mysticism and spirituality.

The river has also caught the attention and passion of a photographer based in Chennai- George. K, an artist who has taught himself the delights of what a photo can do to the mind's eye. Yet, he remains a man who shies away from facing the camera and prefers his work to speak for him. He combines writing and painting with his photographs that have led to some truly eye catching images of the ancient town of Varanasi and its presiding deity, the Ganga.

George. K describes what photography and the city of Varanasi means to him.

“Photography for me, is visual inspiration. I think the strongest realities come out in them, even as you see something that deals with colours, textures and images. Especially when they move away from your mind after a while. A photo helps you capture that moment. While I have been interested in photography for a long time, it is only recently that I have been thinking in terms of exhibitions. And even as this is happening, I am also trying my hand at paintings” he says. His interest in paintings seems to be a progression, as the photos help him imbibe the subject and emotions that he needs to focus and portray.

Besides, paintings have become a kind of therapy as he says. It all emerged with him having to go through hard times and paintings seemed to be like a huge relief and change from the stress I was going through.

George looked at Varanasi simply because of the tremendous spectrum that it has. “the beauty of it, is that while there have been so many photographs and films based on this town, every time someone does it, the images are different. And that I suppose depends on the ground. Each one of us goes with a different background



and experience. Visually everything is probably the same but each one manages to capture the spirit in their own way. It is such a fascinating place. I can keep going there again and again,' he adds.

He narrates an interesting episode, "I was trying to shoot the Ganges against the light from the shore, and when I was developing it, I found that the light around the river seemed like a big U. It seemed like the heavens had actually come down and touched the quiet Waters. Only later did I realize that the place where we shot is one of the sacred spots, of the *theerthas*. It was simply stunning"

The colours are what give the place its majestic quality, says George. "And this is a place where you can shoot at a time you choose, day or night and the vibrancy of life is paramount. Yet paradoxically, there is also a lot of death all around. People come here to die, for peace and salvation and so in that death, there is joy. And you look at each photo I have taken, it reflects these thoughts. There is something beyond the exuberance and process of life"

George does not have any formal background in photography. "I am completely self taught but still I don't think I am at any disadvantage. I guess a course would most certainly have been useful, but this way I come with no barriers or preconceived notions. I do what I feel like and see it the way my eyes show me."

Quite obviously George is very fascinated by the sheer variety of colours and emotions that dominate the cultural and social scene in India, in its interiors, the village and cities. In fact everything Indian seems like an adventure to be dived into and explored. Which is how he wound up taking some marvelous pictures of the festivals of the aravanais or (transsexuals or transgender people ) in Tamil Nadu. "I spent days there ...I am Looking at it not just as visual things but also as an attempt to absorb things that I like to store and reflect upon." And also because they form the fountains for his paintings..."When I take a picture and write something along with it I am narrowing down the understood element. And in another way you are opening yourself up."

" I have photographed in Srinagar with all its turmoil and disturbances, I saw the destruction, the terrorists, the army and these are images that I want to paint."

George has also got some shots of some of the older areas of Srinagar, especially the place where the pandits lived, torched old structures and houses, old temples used as latrines, the presence of the army, barbed wires everywhere. It is a photographers paradise but it makes you so sad."



And so the topics and places are endless so much to do and capture, but the purpose is all the same." To freeze some of the most spectacular images one can find in this vast and diverse country. for me there is a meaning in life which comes from the colours. They bring so much joy. Dark or white, this is what I seek to bring out."

George sees life, humour and colour on the Ghats of Banaras vitalised by the Ganga, The pictures are warm and bright, he doesn't care for the burning pyres.

The Ganga on the plains, and particularly in Benaras, is not the main subject. It's the life that revolves around her, the sins that are washed away in her waters, the prayers that are offered on her banks and the salvation that is earned different perspective.

In fact, Benaras and the thousands of images that are crammed in our subconscious will be of the riverbanks. Few photographers have escaped the overwhelming life of the ghats. What's different about this self- taught photographer, painter and poet's perspective is just that. He captures the saffron, the steps teeming with sadhus and devotees, the dogs. But somehow he spares you the clichés. It's not about matted hair, long beards and holy cows. Compositions and colours are just as important as the moment they capture. Even the dog sheltered under a huge umbrella is actually caught yawning, and isn't part of the picture just for composition's sake. There is humour in the way the barber holds up his customer's face, squashing his nose with one rough hand while he carefully slides the knife up the throat.

Where it might not be obvious, his titles add a new dimension. Like in the picture titled 'Rothkos on the bank' that captures coloured sarees drying next to each other in combinations that reflect the abstract expressionist works of the Russian master. Look at the picture titled 'Ramp' carefully, one person is cleaning his toes, while another is doing pranayama, a woman is bent over washing her clothes, while another dries her grey hair, young girls on a higher step are giggling.









“The pipe line to infinity” 12"x18" Photography on archival paper



"I dare to dream" 18"x12" Photography on archival paper





An exhibition at the Apparao Infinity explores the theatre of two great rivers of India through photography.

PADMINI NATARAJAN

“O my soul, let us go to the Holy banks of the river Ganges and Jamuna.”

These famous lines of a bhajan are the profound leitmotif in every Indian's heart. The two sacred rivers with the unseen Sarasvati, symbolise the union of the mind, body and soul and the yearning to be part of the eternal truth. Two artists, George. K and Olivia Arthur have captured the timeless images of these rivers.

The scenes are quite different and the presentation equally so. George. K says, “I wanted to capture the eternal message of the flowing river that is the source of inspiration for millions of Indians,”

What was a hobby for George has become a serious interest in the past ten years. “I have no formal training in photography but have an eye for interesting situations and colour. I am able to compose frames based on memories of sights and sounds from my multiple visits to Benaras. To capture that timeless city, you need to be drenched in the sensual impact of its sights and sounds. Death and life merge into one another in that city and that is the absolute reality.”

Four frames are hung together. The first one, Dare to Dream, shows an old man semi-reclined against a wall, his face peaceful and tranquil “He has come there to die. He is neither destitute nor does he beg. What is given to him he eats,” says George. Next to his portrait are men being shaved by barbers. These faces show a different kind of patience etched in the creases. “This ceremony is part of the rites that many come to perform for their ancestors.”

The spirit of Benares is captured by two frames shot in colour, but look like a black and white study of boats with sunlight diffused in the waves of the water and a man offering his prayers in silhouette. These are contrasted by the brilliant, ochre of a temple tower that is the background for vertical steps coloured alternatively in red and white, the depth and perspective coming from the people. Boats, umbrellas, priests and dhobis are presented in different surroundings in a blaze of colour.

Walking on a Rope features pigeons strutting on the rope that ties up the boat to the banks. Witness focuses on a dog - both are an integral part of life in Benaras. George captures beautifully the impact of this great river on a city and its people.







The bride was colourful  
A flower decked temple car,  
Fair and amply lustful  
With flaring hips that spar.

The wheels of time fly  
And forty years have past,  
Memories of our laughter cry  
As destinies fly fast.

Pilgrimages are many  
Some urgent, some for gain,  
Death wish is uncanny  
Can I see Kasi once again.

I journey to the thirtha  
Touchdown of the world,  
I end my role as kartha  
My life's canvas unfurled.

Nostalgically I remember  
Tala, rhythm and style,  
Blood pounding every member  
I dance for quite a while.

I remember an old song  
And a Tamil phrase that rings,  
Our past can't be that wrong  
If we can still laugh and sing.

Enanga vanga  
Tango vanga.

"Dancing days are here again  
Our life's evening glows,  
Parting ways are evident  
The way we are wearing our clothes,  
I have music  
Have rhythm  
Have a women who knows."

Tango wango  
Wango wango.



We all have spirits and shadows,  
That lives a life with us,  
What he shows is often,  
The cycle of life and death to us.  
We don't choose to see him,  
Mired in life's sea of dust,  
And when I see him I jump,  
In fear of dust to dust.

The quirkiest thing about him,  
Is the way he likes to show,  
That Samsara is something,  
That we all always know.  
Yet that fact of fiction,  
Intrigues us till we die,  
We choose to be live otherwise,  
And often even lie.

Living in an ocean,  
Of swirling mists that fade,  
I often see his finger,  
Wagging in the shade.  
Like all naughty children,  
We smirk when he is slow,  
But he is always watching,  
Some where in my tow.

While I am in greed and working,  
I live life as I choose,  
But he is there to jump up,  
And say that death's a cruise.  
Not to accept death now,  
While we are still alive,  
He warns that we will pay dearly,  
Through out our several lives.

One morning before we realise,  
Its time for us to go,  
The sun was up so early,  
The next cycle seemed so slow.  
I rose and found the freedom,  
Boundless as it seemed,  
And my guiding shadow,  
Disappeared as was deemed.







Dancing days are here again dancing days are here again  
As our life's evening glows as our life's evening glows as  
Crazy ways are evident Crazy ways are evident Crazy ways  
In the way we are wearing our clothes in the way we are  
I have my music have my Rhythm I have my music I  
Have a woman who knows have a woman who knows  
Tango Vango Tango Vango Tango Vango Tango Vango Var  
Vango Vango Vango Vango Vango Vango Vango Vango Var  
Dancing Days Are here Again dancing days are here  
As our life's evening glows as our life's evening glows  
Crazy ways are evident Crazy ways are evident  
In the way we are wearing our clothes in the way we are  
I have my music have my Rhythm I have my music  
Have a woman who knows have a woman who knows  
Tango Vango Tango Vango Tango Vango Tango Vango Vango  
Vango Vango Vango Vango Vango Vango Vango Vango Vango  
Dancing Days Are here Again dancing days are here  
As our life's evening glows as our life's evening glows  
Crazy ways are evident Crazy ways are evident  
In the way we are wearing our clothes in the way we are  
I have my music have my Rhythm I have my music  
Have a woman who knows have a woman who knows





"Steps 1 2 3 4" 48"x72" Oil on canvas





"Sadhu" Approx 48"x36" Oil on canvas



Do you have questions?  
Do I have answers?

Will my mind reply?  
Will my soul fly?

Who am I?  
When do I say goodbye

What am I?  
Emotions that cry?

What is to see?  
Is to be?

What is to hear?  
Joy or fear?

What is to feel?  
A sensory meal?

What is to touch?  
Abundant love so much?

Why am I here?  
To see the death I fear?

From where do I come?  
Is it from the genes of some?

Where do I go?  
Why is the process so slow?

What is before me?  
Can I see?

What do I say?  
On who made night or day?

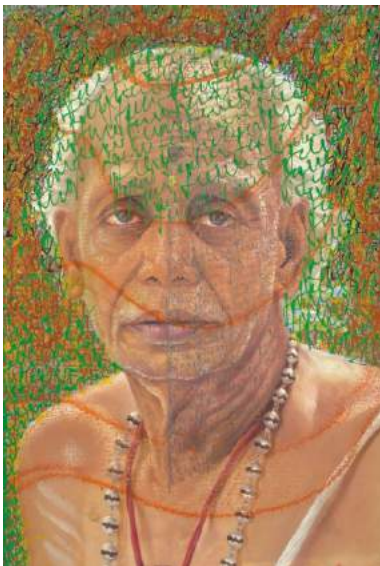
When does this end?  
Will eternity wisdom lend?

Will intellect answer?  
Or , will Maya be the dancer?

The scripts are interfaces he has with the subject and are from deep within. They were born out of desperation and deep compulsions and often questioning the meaning of existence.



“Sashtri”i  
36”x24” Mixed media on canvas



“You chai want me ? “  
48”x36” Mixed media on canvas



“Born in faith”  
36”x48” Mixed media on canvas



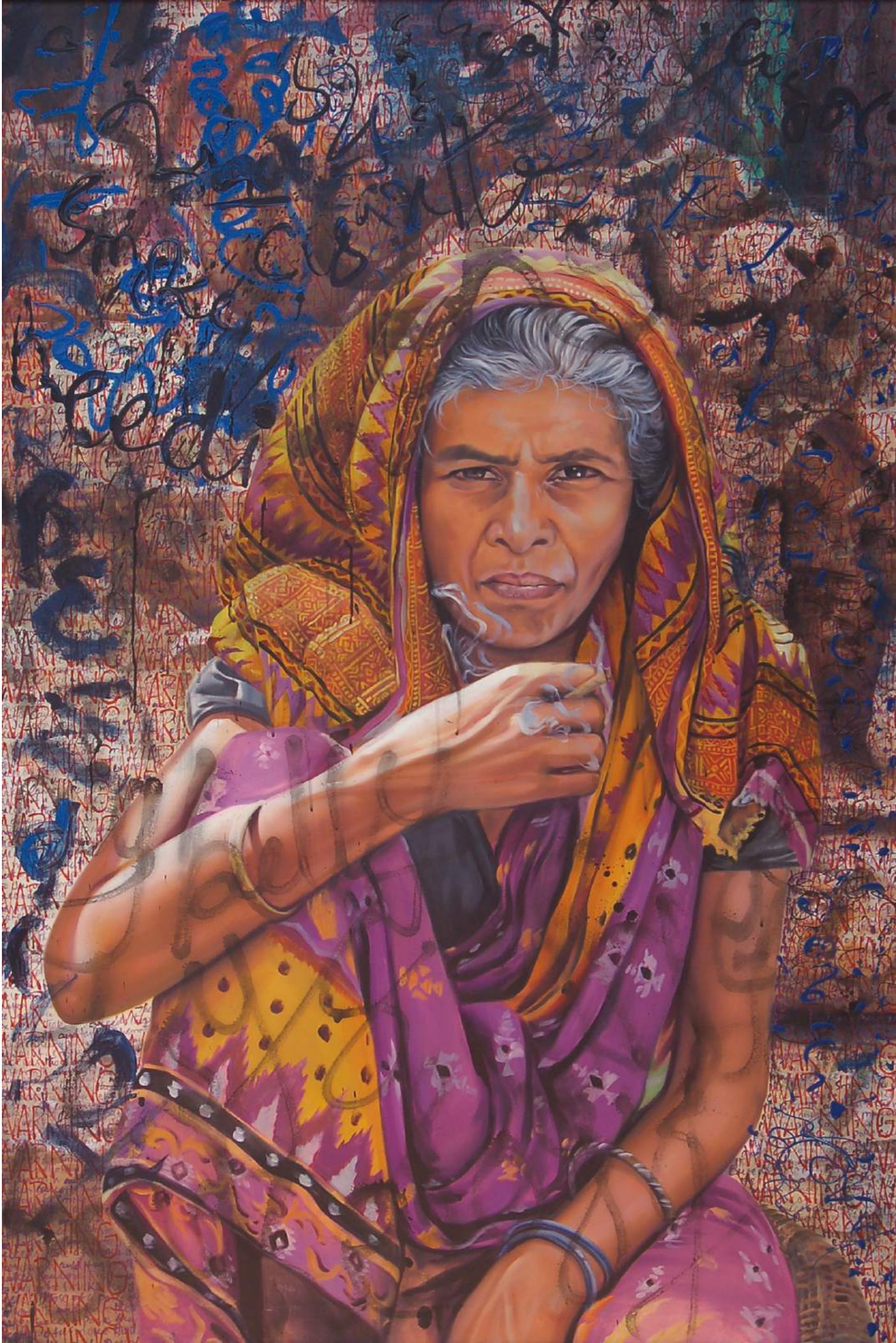
“Born with faith”  
29”x29” Mixed media on canvas



Early morning drizzle,  
A monsoon whistle.  
Dripping drops,  
Leaves and tree tops.  
Musty smell,  
Books and dry well.  
Subdued rays,  
Cloudy days.  
Clogged drains,  
Yesterday's rains.  
Wet socks,  
Shoe rocks.  
Clothes undried,  
Dhobi untried.  
Clothes smell,  
Maid unwell.  
A day in my life,  
A mundane strife.



"My world" 72"x48" Oil on canvas





"Refuge II" 29"x43"x14" Handmade fibreglass







Views of "Refuge II "



“Refuge I” 23”x46”x14” Handmade fibreglass





## “REFUGE”

The woman like a bee gives to her family. She takes little in return and toils away, a slave to life. In some cases this is not reciprocated, while in others the satisfaction is supreme.

A woman's braid is a metaphor that personifies her circle of tenacity into which she wraps herself sometimes seeking salvation & refuge and at times enjoying the sheer bliss of her over boundaries she sets herself.

“Refuge III”  
29”x43”x14”  
Handmade fibreglass









# THE HUMAN ANIMAL





# THE HUMAN ANIMAL



A species of primates, the Homo sapiens is a biological phenomena dominated by biological rules, like all other species. Human nature is another kind of animal nature. The human species is an extraordinary animal; but all other species are also extraordinary animals, each in their own way.

All animals perform actions and most do little else. Several animals make artefacts'-constructed or manufactured objects-' such as nests, webs, beds, and burrows and among the monkeys and apes there is some reported evidence of abstract thinking.

But it is only in man the human animal, that artification and abstraction has developed beyond compare and this is his success story. His massive brain has internalised his behaviour and actions through complex process of abstract thought- through language, philosophy and mathematics and art and his puny body has externalised his behaviour, scattering his surroundings with his artefacts- his implements, machines, and works of art, buildings and cities.

This thinking animal stutters about his surroundings with his creations, machines humming around him, and his complex thought process swirling inside his brain resulting in actions, artification and abstraction on a scale incomparable with any other of the animal species.

The human animal has remained a creature of action a gesticulating, posturing, mobile and communicative primate. Philosophy, science or engineering have not replaced animal activity, only added to it. His hunger for action primeval or modern is as strong as it ever was, only the forms of action vary.

The human animal's behaviour is not free flowing like the other primates and it is divided into a series of separate events, each event has its own special rules and rhythm, while some actions like eating, making love are performed unconsciously, spontaneously and without self analysis. Other actions seen in gestures, gaze, posture, body contact or body decoration show the effects of the influence of the larger and more developed brain, in the human animal.

The sculptures portray the human animal posturing, with animal ancestry evident.

This brings to the fore the animal in the human and the human in the animal, all primates.



**“Narcissus”**

15"x10"x4" Painted clay & fibre glass





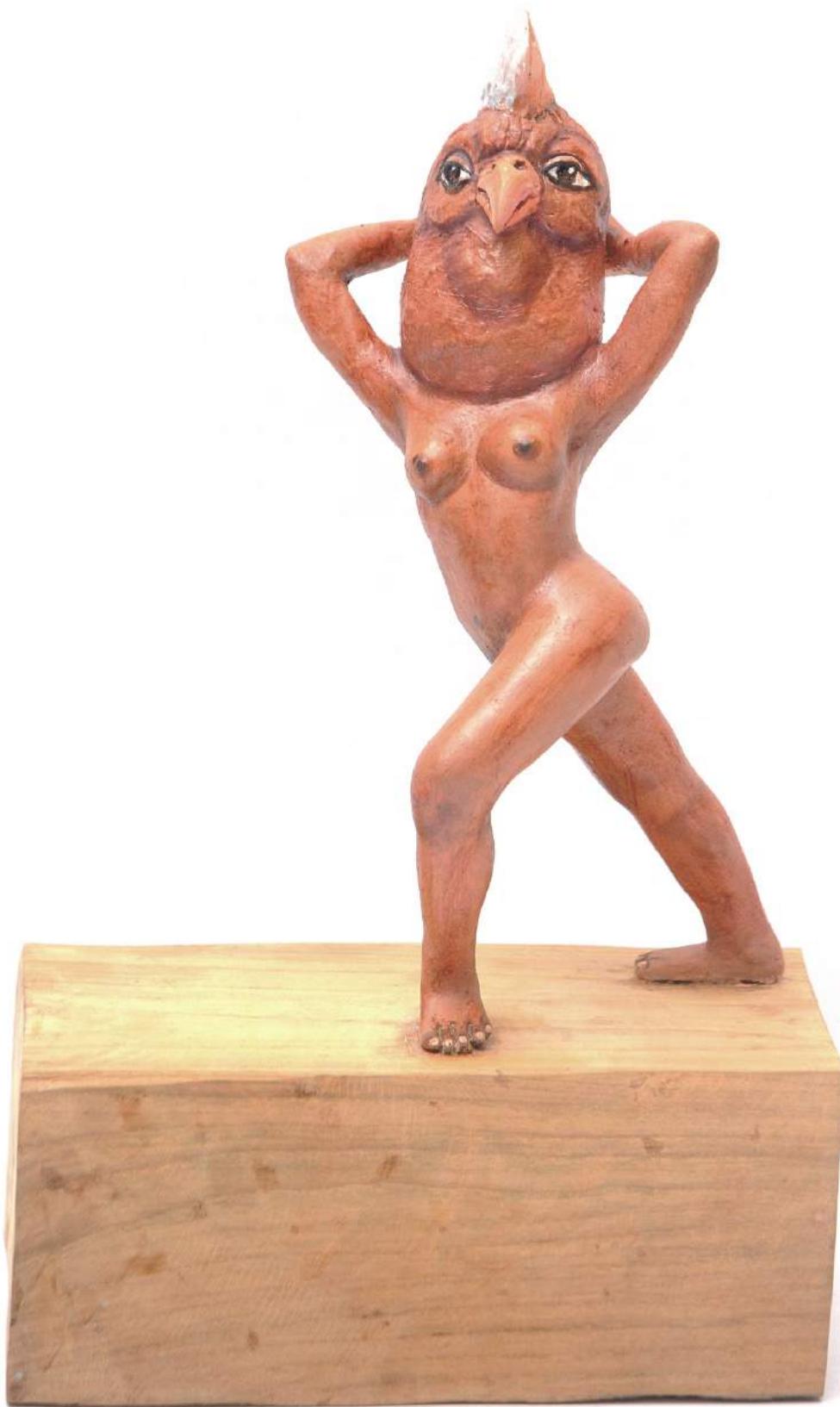




**“Terror with no name”**  
14”x10”x19” Painted clay & fibre glass

**“Empowerment”**  
15”x5”x9” Painted clay & fibre glass









**“Oil dance”**

15"x5"x10" Painted clay & fibre glass





**SHRINGARA**

MAN & MACHINE



# SHRINGARA

MAN & MACHINE



George. K explores "Shringara" in Kerala, India. Adornment is an extension of love, caring as well as the 'ego'. Adorning a child, or home is a continuation and a reflection of the success of the 'self'. This reflection is also applicable when man extends his own success to adoring his woman. In religious practices, adorning the deity is the manifestation of adoration and respect. In the Trucks of Kerala, the truck drivers merge ego & respect for their lifestyle provider, their truck, while the 'Classical Kathakali' dancer continues the adornment in his elaborate personal make up & costume that transforms him into the character he acts.

George has explored the love for the man & machine that contrasts and epitomises the self, the ego and respect for one's lively hood in a complex pattern. The dramatic decorative quality of the visuals with their complex, acceptable pattern is provocative in this series of photographs where the artist puts the man against the machine versus the machine against the man.

"Shringara I" Diptych 22.5"x16" Digital print on archival paper





## Capturing visual beauty

### Express Features

Colourful lines and intricate designs catch ones eye at the exhibition of photographs by George K. India is a country where flaunting one's riches is considered a common practice. Even truck-owner's truck isn't an exception, as George observes.

Fascinated by the way truck owners in Kerala adorn their vehicles, George has clicked some beautiful pictures. The truck chassis is fitted onto wooden platforms with brightly painted hand-carved images of foliage, animal and Gods. The colourful carved wooden panels are fashioned like the fringes of some 70s pop icons. The trucks are an extension of the family and have endearing names.

A man sitting on a chair wearing a mundu and looking into the distance - what connects him with the rest of the wick theme is his painted face. Yes, he is a Kathakali dancer, waiting for his costume.

The dancer although not ready for his show yet gives us a glimpse of the effort it takes to complete the show, Recording visual beauty, George's pictures reveal human attachment to possessions and culture.

The painted trucks denote attachment to possessions, and the dancer, his attachment to culture.

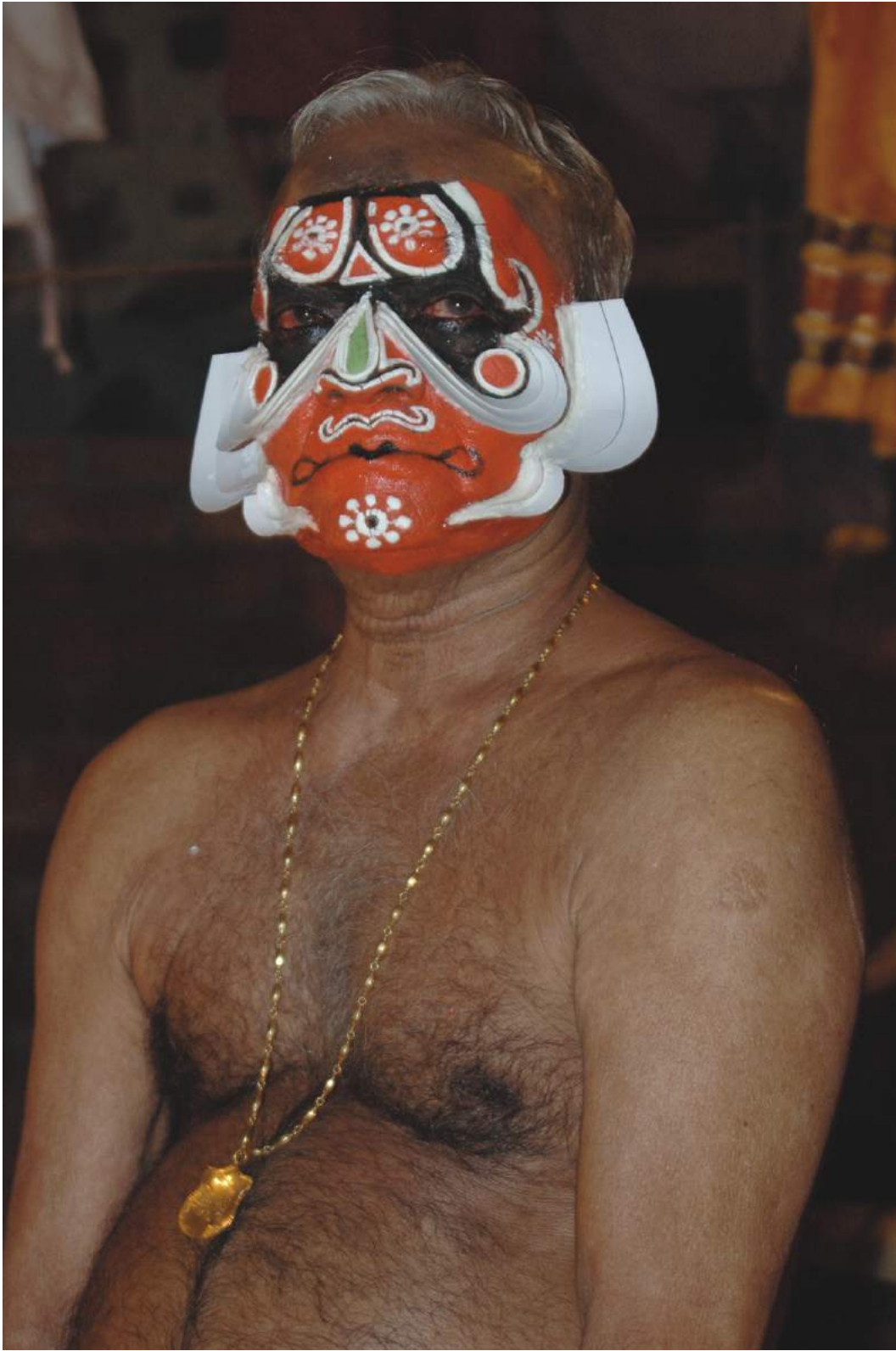
Capturing these moments, George K's new collection Shringar is worth a look.

City Express, The New Indian Express, Chennai

March 27, 2008







"Shringara II" Diptych 16"x22.5" Digital print on archival paper

"Shringara III" Diptych 22.5"x16" Digital print on archival paper



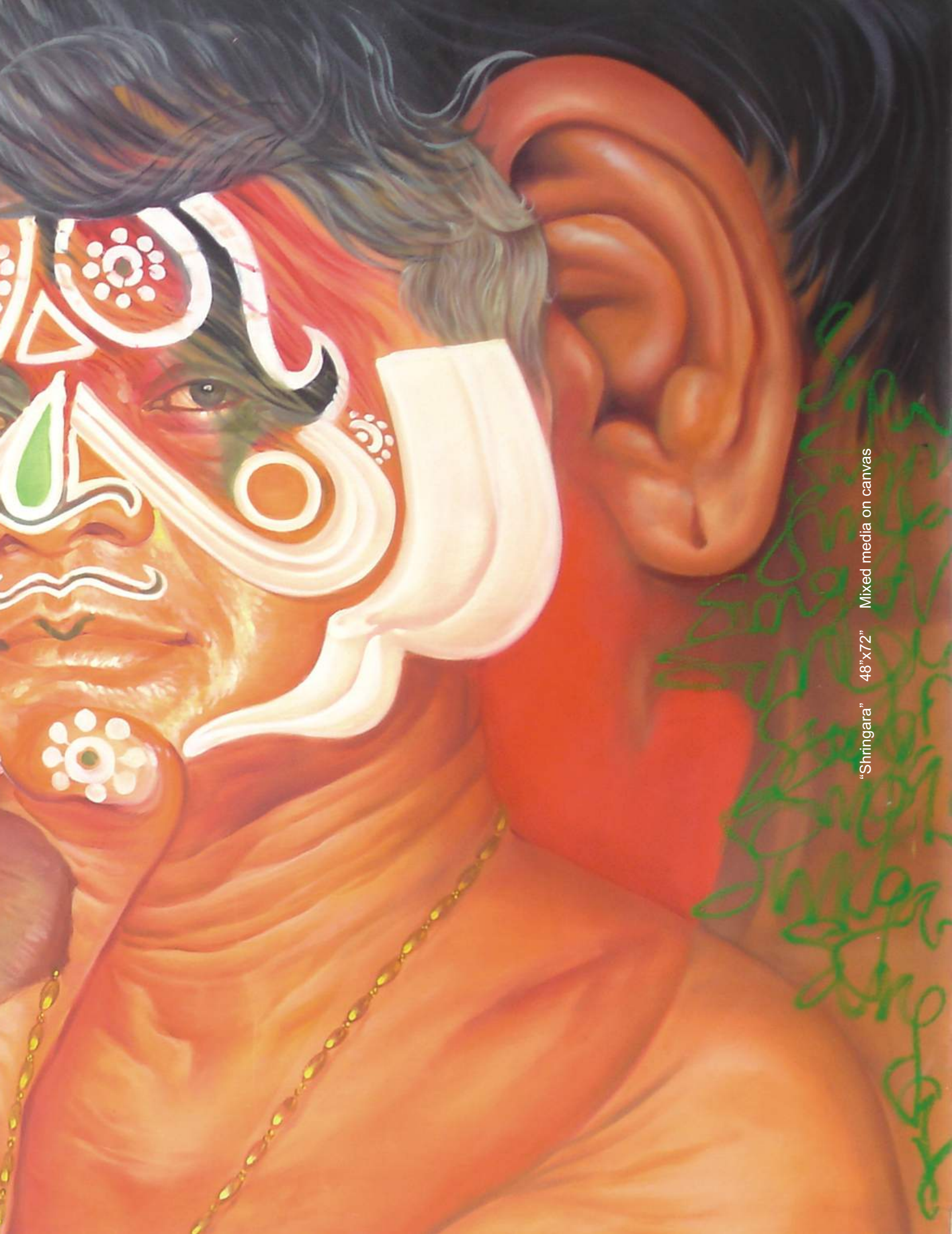




"Shringara IV" Diptych 22.5"x16" Digital print on archival paper







"Shringara" 48"x72" Mixed media on canvas

I write verse  
Interspersed  
With rhyme and line  
I give it a shine,  
Record sun and pain  
And daily rain,  
The colours at play  
That follow each day.

I write prose  
To sharpen my nose  
But my advancing age  
Enters my page,  
Into free verse I will  
When I can't pay my bill,  
I rhyme my verse  
For critics' to curse.

Form is steep, a hill  
I'd rather free my will  
And my verse  
So it hangs loose not so terse,  
No structure of meter  
What could be sweeter?  
Give me a ballad  
Make my rhyme a salad.

A lyrical line  
Is a magic divine  
A flock of words  
Like a flight of birds,  
With rhythm and in a line  
A zigzag line,  
With signature: mine  
I write, to write,  
Not caring if its poetry, right.





"Shringara V" Diptych 16"x22.5" Digital print on archival paper

"Shringara VI" Diptych 22.5"x16" Digital print on archival paper





'I am a chronicler!'

Passionate about his camera, George. K speaks about his new collection named Shringara. A painter, sculptor, poet and photographer, George has been working in Chennai for the last few years

Q. Why did you capture the trucks of Kerala?

A. My photographs are about personal adornment. I was very fascinated by the trucks I saw in Kerala. Though there are trucks elsewhere in the country, it is in Kerala that the truck owners take around six months to paint their trucks! Can you believe that?

Q. Tell us about your new collection, Shringara.

A. Shringar is all about beautification. Just as the word suggests, it's about personal adornment. It tries to capture the effort behind the art that forces others to pay attention.

Q. Your previous photographs also show a hint of modernity. Your view.

A. Here I am a chronicler! I do not pass a judgment on what's happening. I record visual reality and present it.

"Shringara VII" Diptych 16"x22.5" Digital print on archival paper





### The Adoration of beauty

Beauty is attributed to whatever pleases or satisfies the senses or mind, as by line, colour, and form, in the material world and in the spiritual world by eternal truth which leads to tranquillity.

Truth is beauty and beauty is truth is expounded in the hundred verses of saundarya-lahari. Satyam or truth is multidimensional, unchanging in time and space.

Adi Sankaracharya's composition "Saundarya Lahari" (waves of beauty) in its first forty-one verses has inspirational mantras in adoration of "the abode of Siva-Sakti".

Sakti is the primordial energy in creation which along with Siva becomes siva-sakti.

The paintings, oil on canvas, depict beauty in form and non form, sensual to spiritual.

The sensual aspect of beauty is seen in the adornment or Shringar by the Kathakali dancer in his elaborate personal make up and costume that transforms him into characters he acts.

The spiritual aspect of beauty in the theme of Saundarya Lahari, the journey from the outer world of forms to the inner realm of energy and atman, the self.

It is that journey in the discovery of self, from the form to the form less and adoration of the divine.

Santam-sivam-advaitam the ultimate perfection of beauty and its adoration forms the basis of this body of work.

### The Grace of Devi

The supreme power is the source of love and desire and a glance from her can convert the most undesirable one into an object of love and desire. Those who seek the grace of the Devi can enhance their attractiveness. O supreme power, if thy gracious side glance falls on even a very decrepit old man who is ugly to look at and whose erotic sensibilities are dead, he will be followed in all haste in hundreds by love lorn young women having their locks scattered, their rotund breasts exposed by the loosening of their brassieres and their girdles suddenly broken in excitement, thus letting their wearing clothes slip down.



"Saundarya Lahari series I" 72"x48" Oil on canvas







जगत्सूते धाता हृषिति रुद्रः क्षपयते  
तिरस्कुर्वन्नेतस्वमपि वपुराशस्तिरयति ।  
सदापूर्वः सर्वं ताददमनुगृह्णाति च शिव-  
स्तवाज्ञामालम्ब्य क्षणचलितपो भ्रूलतिकपोः॥

"Saundarya Lahari series II" 72"x48" Oil on canvas



### Supremacy of Sakti in creation

In deference to the command of your eyebrows moved for a moment, the creator creates the universe, the protector protects, and the destroyer destroys: the lord withdrawing all into himself dissolves his form, the auspicious one blesses it all.

Jivan-Muktas Devotees of high spiritual attainment

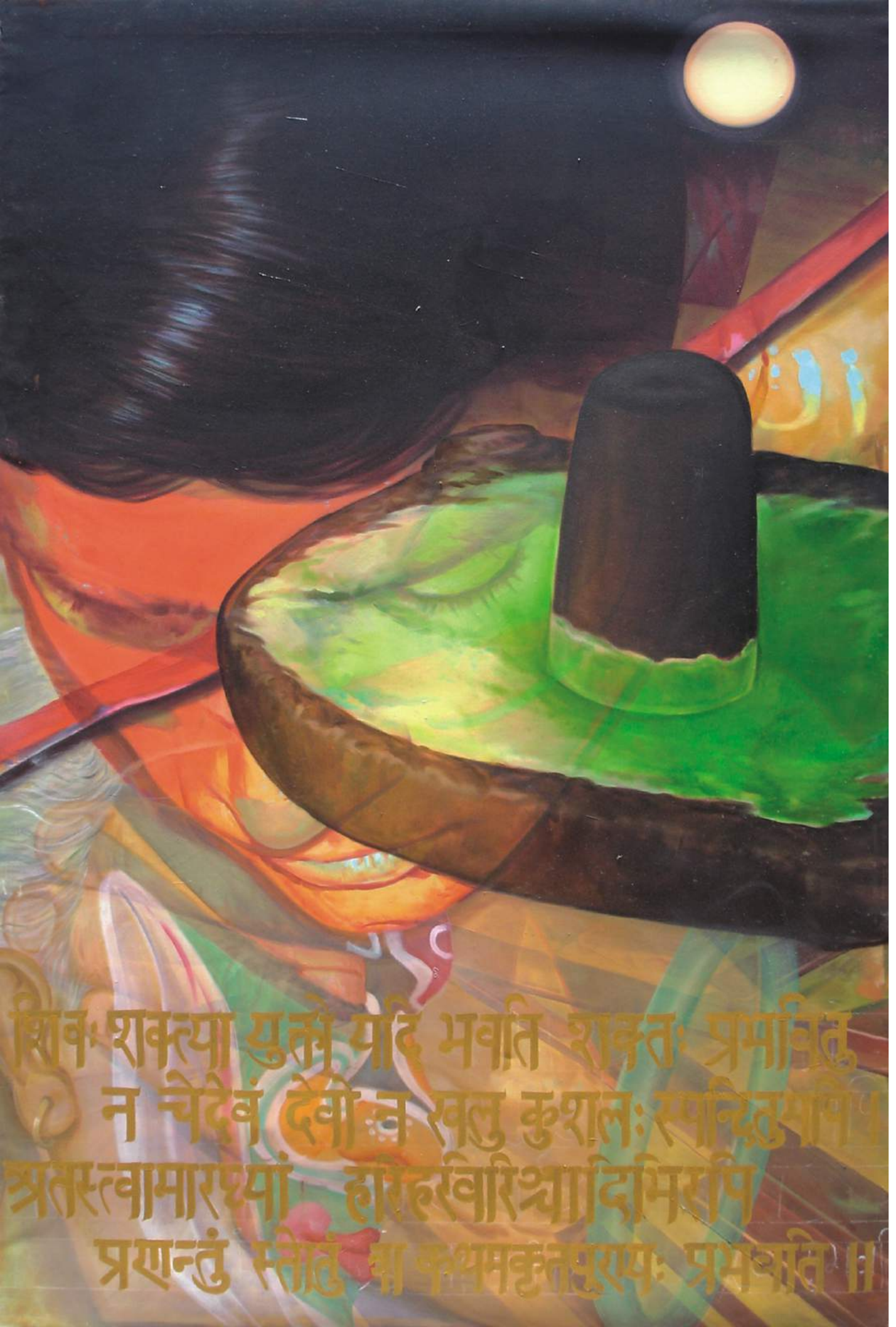
Through the sight of self surrender, let my prattle become recitation of your name, movement of my limbs gestures of worship, my walk perambulation around you, my food sacrificial offering, to you, my lying down prostration to you, whatever I do for my pleasure, let it be transformed into an act of worship to you.



"Saundarya Lahari series III" 72"x48" Oil on canvas

जपो जल्पः शिल्पं सकलमपि सुखाविरचय  
गतिः प्रादक्षिण्यक्रमणमशनाडिति विधिः।  
पणामः सर्वेषां सुखमाखिलमात्मार्पणदृशा  
सपर्यापयायस्तव भक्तस्य सर्वेषां भक्तानाम् ॥





“Saundarya Lahari series IV” 72”x48” Oil on canvas

शिवः शक्त्या युक्ते यदि भवति शक्तः प्रभावितु  
न चेदेवं देवी न खलु कुशलः स्पन्दितुमपि  
अतस्त्वामारण्यां हरिहरविरिश्वादिभिरपि  
प्रणन्तुं स्तोतुं वा कथमकृतपुरायः प्रभवति ॥



The Supreme reality Siva-Sakti, the inseparable whole

Creation is the result of the union of Siva and Sakti, the power holder and the power. The formless infinite becomes the myriad forms of life through power., Sakti.

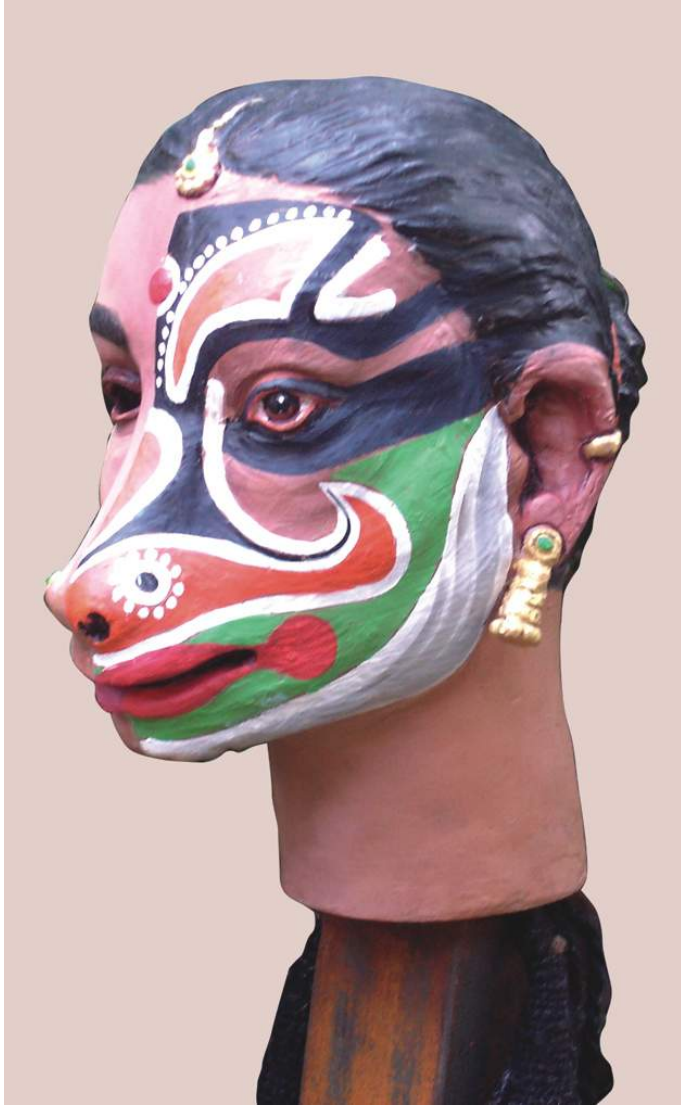
United with Sakti Siva is endowed with the power to create. Otherwise he is incapable of even movement. Therefore, who except those endowed with great merits acquired in the past can be fortunate enough to salute or praise thee divine mother who is venerated by the three deities of creation protection and destruction?

### The Face of a Mask

Faces are masks that mirror the world. Sometimes we see the face behind the mask but more often it is the face that is the mask, like Maya the ultimate illusionist. The series “the face of a mask” shows the face of a human animal who is always on show, with the dominant animal trait unmasked. In Kathakali ( a highly stylised classical Indian dance-drama noted for its attractive make-up of characters, their elaborate costumes, detailed gestures and well-defined body movements presented in tune with the anchor playback music and complementary percussion.) there are animal masks used as in the case of Daksa, Brahma's son who is restored to life with the head of a goat, Bali's son Angada in the monkey mask etc.

On the face of the human animal is the second mask, of “beauty”, shown through the colouring of the face, by the process of Shringar or beautification that a Kathakali dancer does before the show. The Kathakali make up of different types and colours reflects South Asian perceptions about the substantive nature of the person, where different colours are used for different personality traits. The motifs and colours represent inherent character traits. The creative process lies not in imitating but paralleling nature transferring the impulse received from nature into the medium of expression, thus vitalising the medium. The face is alive and so is the mask, both are real and unreal. The real in art never dies because its nature is predominantly spiritual. Masks and faces interchange and intertwine with each situation, like the face of fear dancing with the mask of death and we again see Maya the ultimate illusionist.





"Head III" 59"x9"x8" Fibre glass & Iron







"Head IV" 59"x9"x8" Fibre glass & Iron







"Head II" 59"x9"x8" Fibre glass & Iron







"Head V" 59"x9"x8" Fibre glass & Iron







"Head 1" 59"x9"x8" Fibre glass & Iron



# APPARAO GALLERIES

APPARAO GALLERIES, originally called 'The Gallery' Madras was launched in 1984. With the globalization of art and keen interest in contemporary art its pioneer Sharan Apparao realized that the need to personalize it with a less general name and used her name like other international galleries. APPARAO GALLERIES is now one of the leading contemporary art galleries in India.

APPARAO GALLERIES caters to the aesthetic needs of the Indian diaspora and provides a window to the exciting trends that emerging from South India. The gallery stocks a comprehensive range of artists and has the distinction of having promoted some of India's most renowned names in cities across the world. It also coordinates overseas activities through its export concern the 'Art Route'.

The gallery deals with established artists while building unknown emerging artists into 'brands' in the art world. By creating and co-ordinating art events it assists in display and presentation of contemporary art through auctions, solo shows, group shows, photo shows and art events. APPARAO GALLERIES' strength is that of an "art incubator" in the art world. Creating a platform of lectures & workshops for artists to interact with each other, APPARAO GALLERIES promotes young emerging talent to its forte.

APPARAO GALLERIES understand the needs of the collectors and locates exhibition in different venues traveling with them when necessary. It also acts as a consultant to authenticate and document all aspects of contemporary art for private and corporate collectors. It advises collectors on maintenance, restoration and up keeping of art.

APPARAO GALLERIES nurtured with passion by Sharan Apparao who firmly believes in 'art for art's sake' looks at art with an open & clear mind to give honest advice to viewers in terms of quality and content of the work and continues to inspire artists and art lovers from all walks of life.

# APPARAO GALLERIES

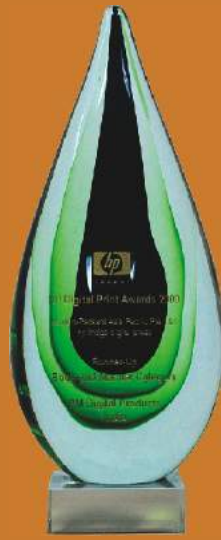
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