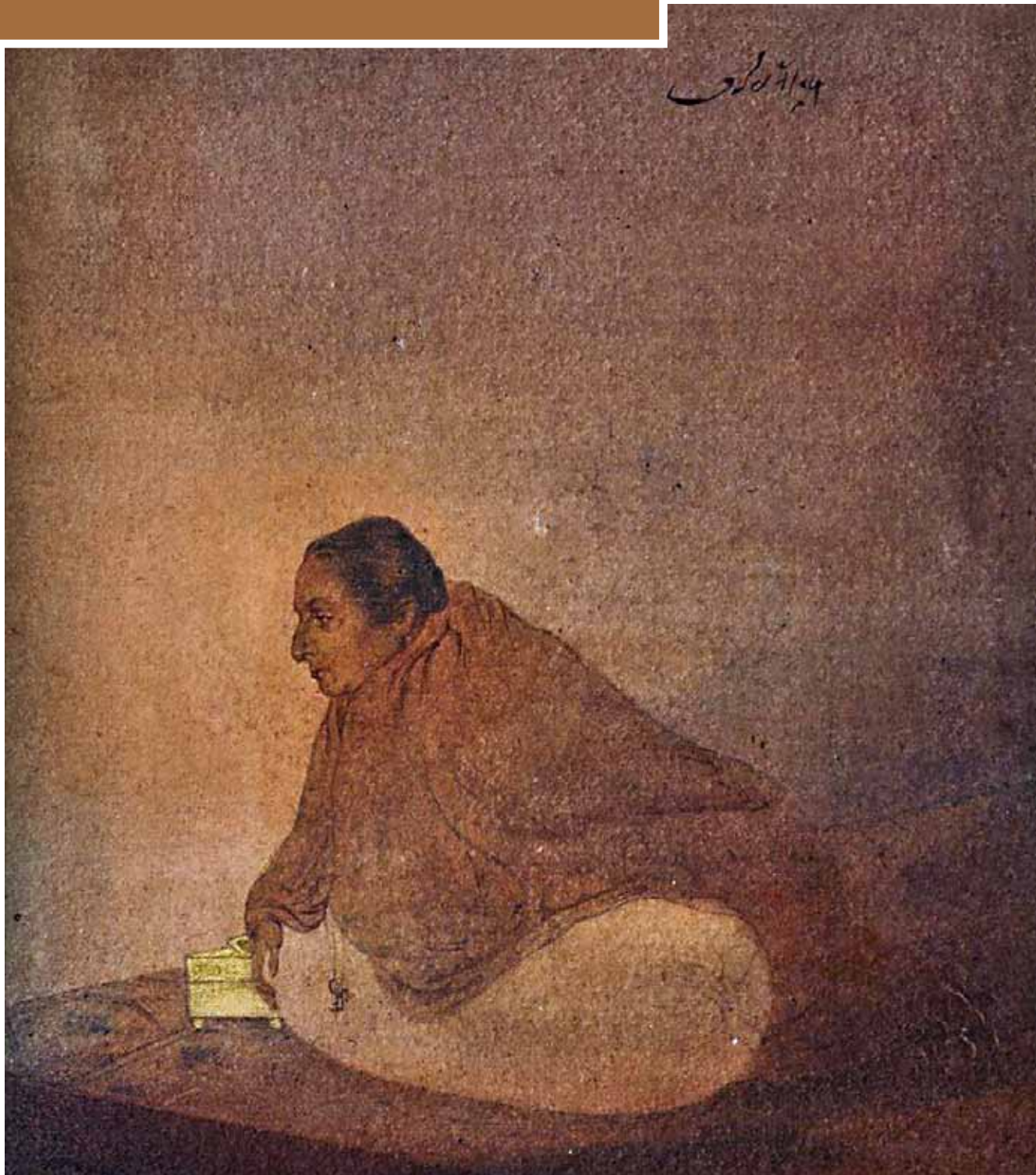




## MOMENTS OF VISUAL FELICITY AT 'BENGAL BEYOND BOUNDARIES'

- NANAK GANGULY

The exemplary presence of Aakriti Art Gallery in contemporary Indian art is exceptional and in all earnest what it has done in the past reveals its commitment to serious and meaningful pursuits. The exhibition

^ Abanindranath Tagore,  
*Untitled, Wash on paper, 5.3 x 4.75 inches*

is an account of a huge ensemble of past legacy and present, as we stroll through, on and off, through the rooms of Bikaner House, how it all becomes emblematic of the making of Indian contemporary art - cultural roles, the language, hierarchies, and so forth, breaking the viewer's habitual experience of viewing—just an extended contemplation reminiscent in art captivating of a remarkable assembly, and accomplishes a respectful satisfying mélange, each of whom possesses a sprightly distinctive approach. The gallery has presented works like Early Oil paintings, works done by Masters and contemporary practitioners who have contributed to the making and evolution of Indian art. The works at Bikaner House titled '*Bengal Beyond Boundaries*' July 7-16, 2023; conceptualized by Jogen Chowdhury and curated by Uma Nair, a wonderful process and spirit that provoke a dialogue that will not question our notion of culture but will also affect us and how we imagine ourselves. The accounts and language shall make for a lively diversity of angles and satisfying narrative styles. Considering that Aakriti creates a site with works of artists who have been showcased along with Masters to ensure the very best representations of contemporary developments. Thus from a profusion of options, the gallery has been able to distill a coherent and positive selection. Considering what the gallery has offered in the past quite elucidates the fact derived from its exhibition histories that the policy has always been remained a respect for senior and established talent and discernment of new promise through thoughtfully curated exhibitions. One already knows that it has also taken enormous care through exhibitions like 'Gen Next', to put contemporary Indian and International Art before the public in an appraised and consistent manner. Though its emphasis has largely been on Indian art, in particular, it has also showcased meaningful works from abroad at regular intervals. The gallery has also produced a huge corpus of literature on Indian and international art and published a much sought-after art magazine named Art Etc. News & Views. Some of the sterling essays have been carried out in the book which has been launched during the exhibition. As the audience interacts with Early Oil Paintings, the work by Masters and practicing artists instigate in the audience perceptions, and understandings of their own creative potential in which the works of some of the fresh talents will be seen with conjunction with that of established artists and Masters. The accounts and language that the participants offer make for a lively diversity of angles and satisfying narrative styles. The present may be interrogated in an attempt to decipher in it the heralding signs of a forthcoming event. Here we have the principle of a kind of historical hermeneutics from Anonymous Early Bengal, Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Jamini Roy, Hemendranath Mazumdar, Benode Behari Mukherjee, Gobardhan Ash, Manishi De, Gopal Ghose, Somnath Hore, Rabin Mondal,



^ Gaganendranath Tagore,  
*Untitled, Wash on Paper, 5.25 x 2 inches, 1927*



Kartick Chandra Pyne, Ganesh Haloi, Ganesh Pyne, Arpita Singh, Lalu Prasad Shaw, Jogen Chowdhury, Bikash Bhattacharjee, to Chandra Bhattacharjee, Chhatrapati Dutta, Tapas Biswas, and others. These works supposedly represent us.

To the present generation of artists, the medieval texts and icons and colonial heritage are living reminders of their cultural past, a conditional presence within collective awareness. Chandraketurgh, Pala, and Sena sculptures, mythological texts, Charupanchashika, Mughal, Jain miniatures, Pahari, Rajasthani, Deccani, early Krsna Lila paintings, and the Company School Engravings or aquarelles are more than familiar motifs. Such time-absorbed sites and legends and by extension those of other cultures have recently gained renewed meaning as mnemonic touchstones of a dislocated past. The present show showcases works done by Masters and contemporary practitioners who have contributed to the making and evolution of Indian art. The Masters showcased here recite to us in grand verse from the depths of the soul and reach out to us in a world of the infinitely rich theatre of their souls that entwine and intertwine a rich spell for all of us who have the effrontery to share in the drama. The Masters' presence and grace are remarkable,

and thus becomes a rare visual experience - visual texts that lead to a sort of sensation of meaning and connection with a deeper understanding that from the application of paint, its articulation, and of gesture, the paint that are largely capable of an immediate registration of the movement in time of an intuitive-subjective experience with the reaching of a climax of a romantic apotheosis arousing our sensation and reception. Only by identifying, tracking down, and determining and connecting at the same time the supreme practices of these great Masters allow us to acknowledge those legacies and make them blossom in such a way as to give our lives to something original and sublime. The works are irradiate, compositions of moments adorned with a visual felicity by a total expressive efficacious visual text, but it never slips into an external sign but rich in solitude and inwardness revealing the legacy and aesthetic beliefs reminding us that the passage and journey of a painter's work are always toward comprehensibility, clarity, and revelation of the soul.

^ Sailoz Mukherjee,  
*Village Scene, Oil on canvas, 17.5 x 23 inches*



There is no longer a separate realm capable of acting as a container for the ideal solutions to real problems, no longer a safe distance between day-to-day actions and the purity which surrounds one's hopes and aspirations. The two spheres have merged into one complex hyperspace which is as yet incompletely mapped onto our consciousness that is overwrought and rather ecstatic- emerges through a soft treatment of projected sites to engage the viewer's gaze in a variety of orientations. For each of us there are several tracks framed within time, variously traversed, so that cultural change is simultaneously demurred and fast, not just across fraternities or associations, but within socially and historically located selves. The Masters here expressed such human concerns or ideological commitment but at the same time make an archive of their romantic legacy only in the process of their involvement in a metaphor. Interferences occur for the sake of a new association/position: another binary opposition. Here is a space for cultural poesies- "until only infinity remained of beauty." Otherwise, the legacy is simply there, as the printed word, as aesthetics. Things can harden meaningfully in the moment of indecision. "We live our lives, made up

of a great quantity of / isolated instants / To be lost at the heart of a multitude of things."

BENGAL BEYOND BOUNDARIES is presented by AAKRITI ART GALLERY at BIKANER HOUSE, New Delhi, Delhi 110011 from 7th to 16th July 2023. The concept for the exhibition is curated by Jogen Chowdhury, with Uma Nair serving as the curator. The archive is managed by Pranabranjan Ray, while Nanak Ganguly and Chhatrapati Dutta have contributed to the creative impulse. Tapas Konar and Timir Brahma are the coordinators, and the research has been conducted by Samindranath Mazumdar.

^ Bikash Bhattacharjee,  
*Salvationist, Oil on canvas, 65 x 78 inches, 1997*