

Rhythms of India in San Diego

By DEEPANJALI KAKATI

The San Diego Museum of Art in California has organized the first exhibition outside Asia of the expansive repertoire of Nandalal Bose, often considered the father of modern art in India. Open from February 23 to May 18, “Rhythms of India: The Art of Nandalal

Bose (1882-1966)” features nearly 100 of the artist’s finest paintings.

From the natural beauty of “Village Huts,” the swirling strokes of “Dhaki (or Drummer)” and “Shanaiwala (or Flute and Drum Players)” to the rural scenery in “New Clouds” and the stark lines of “Dandi March (Bapuji),” the exhibition

provides a glimpse of Bose’s different styles and media.

“Nandalal Bose was a seminal figure in Indian art history, and his paintings, drawings and murals will engage visitors with their refinement and pure aesthetic power. Furthermore, ‘Rhythms of India’ celebrates SDMA’s emergence as a primary source of Indian art scholarship in the United States,” says Derrick R. Cartwright, executive director of the museum.

About 15 works on display in a special gallery depict how Bose contributed to India’s struggle for independence from colonial rule through his close association with Mohandas K. Gandhi. The exhibit gains added significance in this 60th year since India’s independence and Gandhi’s assassination.

“The extensive repertoire of Nandalal Bose manifests the resilience and continuity of India’s civilizational heritage, our indomitable spirit during colonial rule, and our emergence as a democratic and

Top: Shanaiwala (or Flute and Drum Players), tempera on paper, 62.9 x 56 cm, 1937.

Left: Buffalo Rider, ink on paper, 34 x 17.3 cm, 1944.



Photographs courtesy San Diego Museum of Art

A public-private partnership has brought Nandalal Bose's versatile art to America for the first time.



pluralist nation state after a unique freedom struggle," Indian Ambassador to the United States Ronen Sen wrote in a message published in the exhibition catalogue.

With examples from its Edwin Binney 3rd Collection, India's National Gallery of Modern Art, and public and private collections, the San Diego Museum of Art has provided a comprehensive view of Bose's contribution to the development of a new Indian art form.

Organized in collaboration with the government of India and the National Gallery

For more information:

San Diego Museum of Art

www.sdmart.org

National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

<http://www.ngmaindia.gov.in/>

of Modern Art in New Delhi, the exhibit is an example of public-private partnership for promotion of cultural exchange and mutual understanding between India and the United States. The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi and the Department of State encouraged the initiative and advised the museum representatives during their multiple visits to India. U.S. Ambassador to India David C. Mulford and Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher contacted the museum's Indian partners to endorse and facilitate the loan of the art objects.

Born in Bihar in 1882, Bose spent most of his life in Bengal. At the beginning of his career, he was one of many artists who wanted to revive the spirituality and cultur-

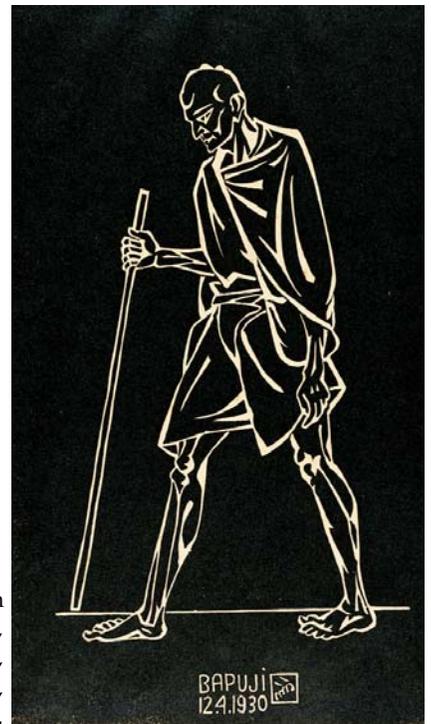
*New Clouds, tempera on paper,
42.2 x 69.9 cm, 1937.*

al authenticity of Indian art after centuries of British influence.

Over the next few decades, Bose experimented with a variety of Indian, Japanese and Chinese techniques and made a niche for himself as an artist. His works comprised scenes of nature and tribal and village life, as well as devotional subjects. It was his portrayal of rural India, shorn of Western influences, which captured Gandhi's attention. Although Bose's art was not overtly political, Gandhi saw in the images of a traditional India a reflection of his nonviolent movement.



Caitanya and Haridas, *watercolor on paper*,
24.8 x 17.1 cm, circa 1942.
Collection of Supratik Bose.



Dandi March
(Bapuji),
linocut on paper,
34.9 x 22.5 cm,
1930.

“The work of Nandalal Bose was very important in the evolution of modern Indian art and in helping to give it definition in the years before and immediately after India’s transition to independence,” Ambassador Mulford wrote in his message printed in the exhibition catalogue.

“This exhibit of works by Nandalal Bose, and others like it,” he added, “reflects our growing people-to-people relationship and the desire of Americans and Indians to understand more about one another’s rich cultures and to find ways to build stronger partnerships in the future.”



Village
Huts,
*watercolor
on paper*,
20.6 x
39.6 cm,
1928.