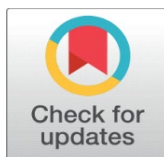
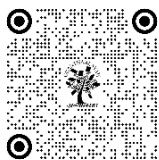


SAYED HAIDER RAZA -A CELEBRATION OF NATURE

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ABSTRACT

Art is basic human activity rooted in his nature and history of all civilizations. From time to time many philosophers have tried to define art, but their definitions are varied as life and nature themselves are. Art can teach research much about a culture. It illustrates a people's views about beauty, morality, religion, and many other topics. The emphasis of this research is on the contribution of PAGs most influential artist S.H Raza, in the development of contemporary Indian art. His paintings are extremely attractive and full of colour which represents the celebration of nature through rich and vibrant color which represents the continuous experimentation of an innovative and imaginative personality, who is not satiated with his past Laurels alone and is continuously experimenting with new forms, makes them highly appealing, attractive, and timeless and source of inspiration for art faculties and art Connoisseurs.

Keywords: PAG, Contemporary Indian Art, Experimental, Innovative, Imaginative Personality, Versatile, Vibrant Colour

1. INTRODUCTION

Art is basic human activity rooted in his nature and history of all civilizations. From time to time many philosophers have tried to define art, but their definitions are varied as life and nature themselves are. According to Plato 'art is three times away from reality' According to Aristotle 'Art is Imitation' According to Michelangelo 'Art is the expression of human spirit'. According to Pablo Picasso 'Art is the lie that makes us realize the truth'. [Figure 1](#)



Figure 1



Figure 1 The Progressive Artists Group Back row: (left to right) M F Husain, S K Bakre, S H Raza Front row: (left to right) F N Souza, K H Ara, H A Gade.
Source Art India Magazine.

Art can teach researchers much about a culture. It illustrates a people's views about beauty, morality, religion, and many other topics. The art of today is different from the art of any other time. Just as life itself is different from anything experienced in history. The passions, the problems the ever-widening world of science and invention, the adventurous charting of unknown spaces beyond our world and the equally mysterious discovery of the world within ourselves have added new dimensions to our lives of which no former generation was aware. It is true that this art is different from tradition, but tradition itself is not static but evolving. [Figure 2](#)

Figure 2

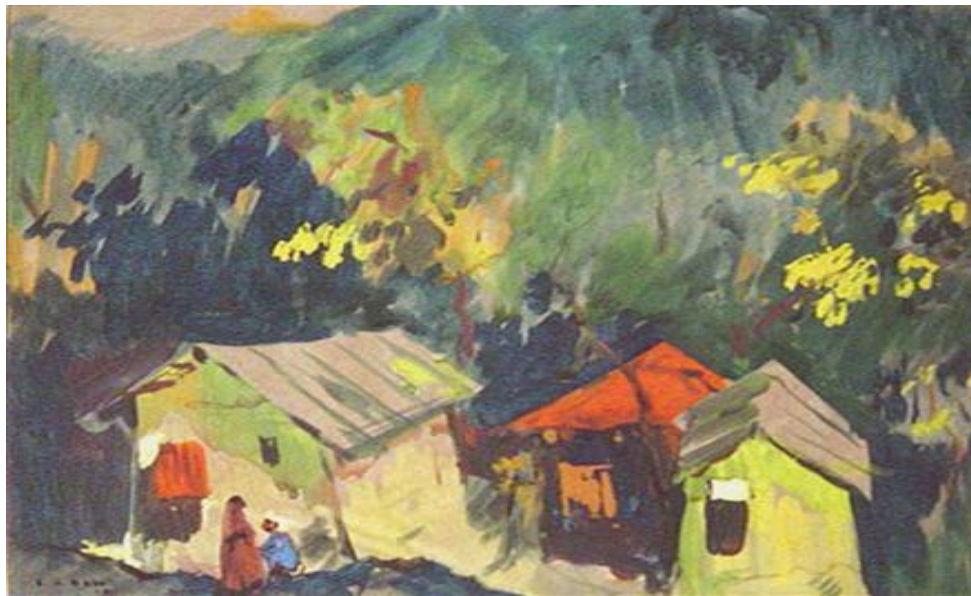


Figure 2 Untitled-(1948), reminiscent of his childhood spent in the forests of Madhya Pradesh.

Source saffronart.com

The role of contemporary art is not merely to repeat the past but to point forward, to lead us to new realms of experience, which has been beautifully represented by its different eminent artists like Syad Haider Raza, he constantly challenged the conventions of painting in India – as a founding member of the most important PAG (1947–56), [Imbert \(2003\) 21](#) which rejected academic realism to develop a unique artistic language. The emphasis of this research is on the contribution of PAGs most influential artist S.H Raza, in the development of contemporary Indian art. [Figure 3](#)

Figure 3

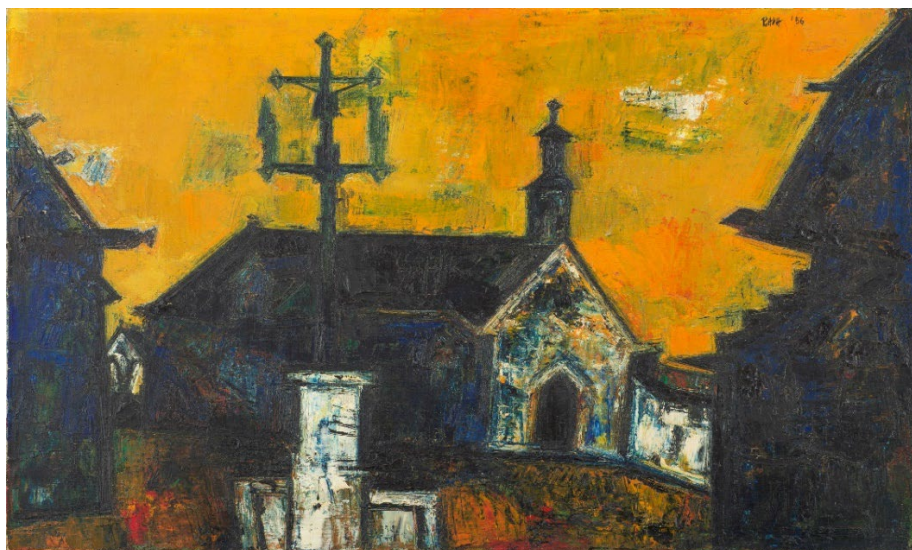


Figure 3 Eglise et Calvaire Breton; Oil on Canvas; 1956.

Source Image courtesy: Piramal Museum of Art.

A ground breaking artist, while in India, Raza experimented with a number of Modernist styles. In his early days, he painted landscapes and townscapes, translating the world around him onto his canvas in bold and beautiful strokes. In France, he evolved his style further, moving from authentic depiction of natural landscapes to focus on translating structure and he moved to Paris where he painted French landscape scenes with gestural brushstrokes and an impasto application of paint. Later his landscapes would become increasingly abstract, which contributed to the development of his now-famous unique styles such as Abstract Expressionism and Geometric Abstraction. The free use of vibrant colours makes independent geometric patterns around a focal point in the painting. This led to the iconic “Bindu” becoming a symbol of his art and a representation of his cultural heritage. Later, in the 1970s and 80s, he turned his artistic gaze inwards—an inner spiritual landscape rooted in the ethos of his homeland. He abandoned the figure and gave into lines and the circle: the Bindu, a Sanskrit term meaning a point or dot. [Sen \(1997\) 107](#) His style transformed from realist landscapes to spiritual abstractions manifested in the geometric all the while retaining his characteristic emphasis on colour and emotion. He passed away in 2016, aged 94 leaving behind his incredible body of work for which he received Various prestigious Awards by Government of India and one French Legion of Honour from the French Government. [Figure 4](#)

Figure 4

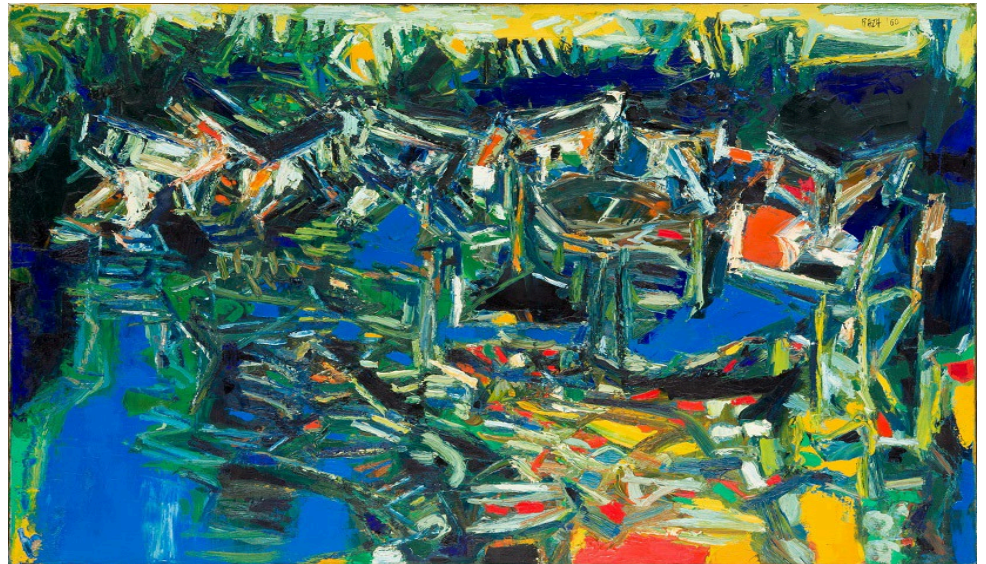


Figure 4 Sienne Port, Oil on canvas,1960.

Source Pirmal Museum of Art.

Raza’s artistic career began initially by focusing on nature, in all its grandeur painting, flowers etc inspired from his surrounding environments. He purposefully absorbed the beauty of nature through his palette of flowing watercolours illustrating and the precise representation of nature in a bold and beautiful stroke. He had spent his early childhood in and around the dense forest of Madhya Pradesh, [Imbert \(2003\) 13](#) and his childhood memories cultivated and impacted his work and is regularly echoed in his style of paintings. His style developed and evolved beautifully over decades. Raza started with realistic and expressionist landscape about 1950s and in 1960s to abstract expressionist landscapes to gestural landscapes towards pure abstraction and geometrical forms.

The portrayal of nature has been an integral component of his paintings. [Vajpeyi & Raza \(2005\) 60-61](#) One can see his fascination towards the nature, which he had depicted through pure abstraction using rich and vibrant colours. His depiction of landscape employing bold strokes were his early style. In his later stages he was abundantly inspired by Paul Cezanne. he developed his unique character by concentrating on the form and construct by designing basic geometrical forms, in which lines and colours began to dictated his paintings. Raza later on usually painted gestural landscapes, developing abstract expressionist style- gestural landscape towards the untainted spiritual abstraction leading to his "Bindu" series. The emphasis was given on the feelings and colours. His style is recognized for its pure abstraction usage of oil and acrylic as medium. His recognition also comes from the fact that he is also acknowledged as a true colourist, for using colour symbolism.

Raza's art is in true sense are celebration of nature, it developed through his early expressionist water colour landscapes, or the Cubist compositions during his sojourn in Paris. Or his later abstract works characterized by the synthesis of geometric forms with tenets of spirituality. Distinctly Raza experimented only with few primary colours, constructed, and reconstructed to imitate the passion and colours of his native land. Concurrently, he had realized the spiritual and metaphysical aspects of nature and it is reflected in his works. [Figure 5](#)

Figure 5

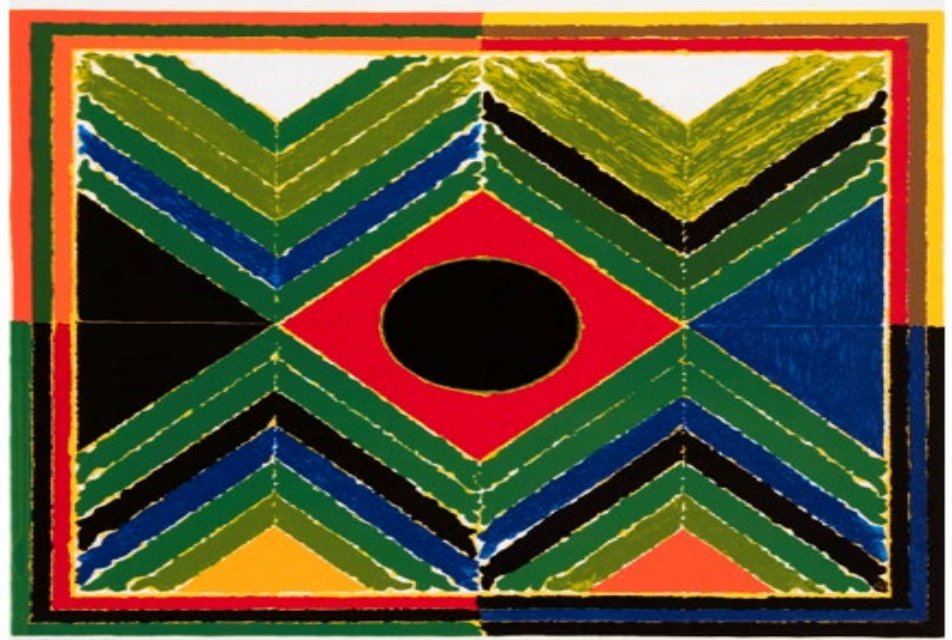


Figure 5 Bindu, GERMINATION, 1987, Serigraph on white vellum paper, Signed, dated, and titled in pencil along lower margin, Image: 50 x 50 cm, 20 5/8 in, this work is located in London and is unframed.

Source <https://www.grosvenorgallery.com>

In my observation, S.H Raza is one of the most gifted and talented modern artists, who have made innumerable contributions towards growth and development of Indian contemporary Art. An artist, a visionary, and an inspiration for all. He's a revolutionary painter and his pathway is to be retained and learnt from. His unique approach to art has earned him the place of eminence in the Indian

contemporary art. Forms seem to float in his art works and it's almost like a complex web work. His art works are truly a treat to watch. [Figure 6](#)

Figure 6

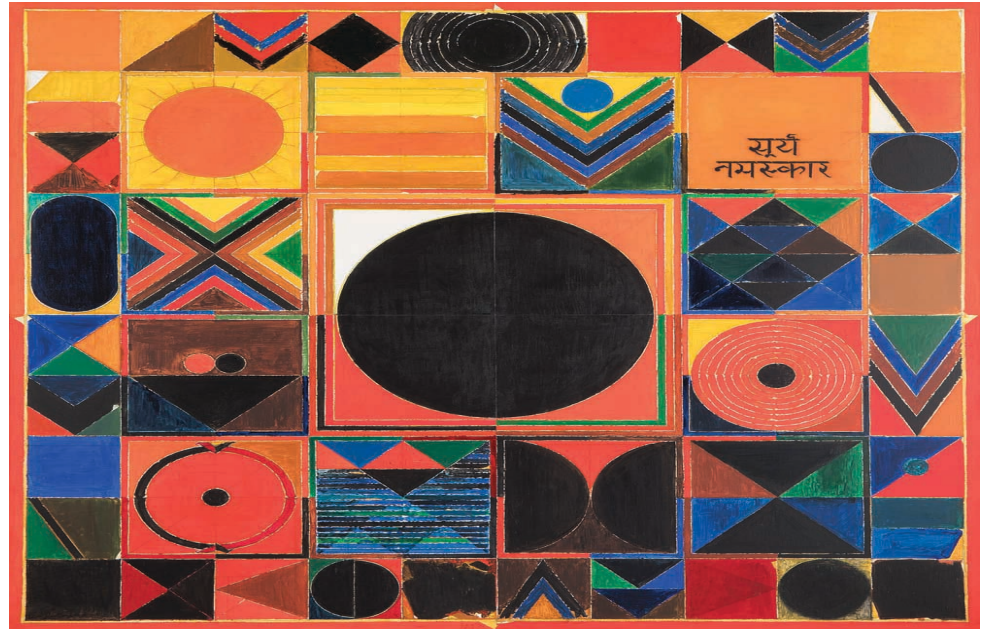


Figure 6 Surya Namaskar, 1993, acrylic on canvas.

Source Piramal Museum of Art.

In essence, S.H Raza remains one of India's finest, most accomplished, and versatile, celebrated artists of the Indian subcontinent. His work reflects the influence of Western culture and Eastern philosophy, but also of nature and elements of his childhood. He is considered to be the masters of abstract art; his works are an expressionist view of nature and its various facets. His paintings are extremely attractive and full of colour which represents the celebration of nature through rich and vibrant colour which represents the continuous experimentation of an innovative and imaginative personality, who is not satiated with his past Laurels alone and is continuously experimenting with new forms, makes them highly appealing, attractive, and timeless and source of inspiration for art faculties and art Connoisseurs.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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