



## Major Exhibition Exploring Primitivism in Modern Indian Art to Make U.S. Debut at DAG New York in March

*Primitivism and Modern Indian Art, Opening March 14 During Asia Week New York, Features Over 70 works by Most Significant Figures of Art in India, Including Jamini Roy, Amrita Sher-Gil, Ramkinkar Baij, and Madhvi Parekh*

**New York, NY, January 27, 2020** – DAG today announced the U.S. debut of *Primitivism and Modern Indian Art*, bringing together over 70 works by Indian modernist painters to explore the stylistic influence of primitivism and its motifs in non-Western contexts. Opening with a preview on March 14 during Asia Week New York and curated by Dr. Giles Tillotson—a leading scholar in Indian art and architecture—the exhibition showcases works by some of the most recognized Indian masters, juxtaposing vastly different interpretations of the genre to demonstrate the breadth of primitivism in India. On view through June 6, *Primitivism and Modern Indian Art* builds on DAG’s ongoing commitment to representing the expanse of Indian art practice through the presentation of museum-quality exhibitions globally.

“The works featured in *Primitivism and Modern Indian Art* defy any common visual link with each other, demonstrating each artist’s own language of expression,” said Ashish Anand, CEO & Managing Director of DAG. “However, taken together, the works explore the evolution and overarching language of primitivism within art practice in India. Building on our previous exhibitions in New York, we’re pleased to present this highly-researched exhibition and series of masterworks that contribute important scholarship and new perspective on how this originally Western artistic movement manifested in such a unique manner within the realm of Modern Indian art.”

*Primitivism and Modern Indian Art* explores how a range of Indian artists incorporated primitivism into their own work in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, attaching a different range of values and meanings in the Indian context based on their artistic practices. The exhibition also explores the key elements that defined the primitivist style in modern Indian art, including a shift away from intricate and traditionally “sophisticated” stylistic elements, as well as the incorporation of visual elements drawn from folk art. The exhibition also demonstrates how Indian artists sought inspiration from primitive imagery drawn from within Indian culture.

Three artists featured in the exhibition—Rabindranath Tagore, Sunayani Devi, and Madhvi Parekh—were self-taught artists, who came to primitivism and included it in their work outside of a formal artistic education, representing a natural incorporation of primitivism in their practice. Additional artists, who had formal art educations honed at elite institutions—including Amrita Sher-Gil, George Keyt, and Jamini Roy—were trained in what was considered a more sophisticated style in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but actively chose to adopt a more ‘native’ form of practice. The exhibition also features work by modernist sculptor Ramkinkar Baij and painter J. Sultan Ali, both of whom chose to incorporate singular elements of primitivism in their work.

Other artists featured in *Primitivism and Modern Indian Art* who eschewed recognizable tropes from modern Indian art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to create a unique visual language hearkening back to primitive imagery, in spite of the sophistication of training at their command, include M. F. Husain, F. N. Souza, K. G. Subramanyan, Jogen Chowdhury, and Rabin Mondal.

*Primitivism and Modern Indian Art* is accompanied by a comprehensive publication and is currently on view at DAG’s Mumbai gallery.

## **ABOUT DAG**

DAG (formerly known as the Delhi Art Gallery) was established in 1993 in New Delhi, and over the past 25 years, has built a reputation for the quality of its collection that represents the expanse of Indian art practice. This extensive collection charts a historic continuum, from the early works of academic artists trained in Bengal and Bombay, to modernists from Baroda, Delhi and beyond, and includes artworks by some of India's most celebrated artists, including Raja Ravi Varma, Amrita Sher-Gil, Jamini Roy, S. H. Raza, M. F. Husain, Tyeb Mehta, F. N. Souza, Avinash Chandra and Chittaprosad. With the aim of taking Indian modernism to a wider audience, DAG now has gallery spaces in the historic Kala Ghoda in Mumbai, and the iconic Fuller Building in Manhattan, New York, in addition to its gallery in Delhi. It regularly participates in international fairs such as Art Basel Hong Kong, Armory New York, Art Dubai, Masterpiece London and India Art Fair.

The mandate of taking art to the people has led to museum-quality exhibition collaborations with stellar art institutions such as the National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai, The Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi, the Punjab Lalit Kala Akademi, Chandigarh and the Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur. The most recent and monumental collaboration has been with the Archaeological Survey of India—with the *Drishyakala* museum at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Red Fort being inaugurated by India's Prime Minister on 23 January 2019.

With the democratisation of Indian art as its core aim, DAG consistently hosts outreach programmes for students of schools and colleges, and also runs a pioneering programme for the visually impaired by allowing them to experience art through tactile aids.

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