

Emami Art Hosts NS Bendre: Drawings, Sketches, Watercolours

Rarely shown works on paper revealing the intimate bonding the artist felt with the world

Kolkata, October, 2021: Emami Art, one of India's leading contemporary art galleries based in Kolkata is delighted to present **NS Bendre: Drawings, Sketches, Watercolours** an exhibition that brings together some 40 rarely shown artworks on paper from across the artist's career, revealing the intimate bonding he felt with the world. The exhibition will on be display from 13th November to 12th December, 2021 on the 5th floor of Emami Art at Kolkata Centre for Creativity.

NS Bendre had a long and astonishingly prolific career, exploring the earth, travelling widely and producing a large body of drawings, sketches, and watercolours of the sites and people that make up a significant part of his oeuvre. Much of his unique sensibility, the vernacular charms in colouration and depiction of human figuration in his mature work, was shaped by his rich travel experiences and a life-long habit of drawing from nature. Born in Indore, the capital of princely Indore State, Narayan Shridhar Bendre (1910-1992) studied painting in the State School of Art, excelling in academic realism. A steady winner of medals in the Bombay Art Society's Annual Exhibition, an outstanding event in those days, he was admired for his skills in academic style and the chromatic brilliance of watercolours.

A significant change took place between Bendre's early works and later mature paintings. However, in his drawings and sketches of sites and human figures, like those on display at the exhibition, he maintained persistence and continuity of style throughout his life. As a result, it is often difficult to date his undated work without external references. Resisting the impulse of modernism, he used art to get closer to the object, exploring the magic of mimesis, the sense that the picture has an organic bond with what it is a picture of. This corporeality, according to John Berger, only drawing and no other mediums of art can have.

Bendre felt a similar corporeal bonding with the world, as he wrote:

I belong to this earth. I walk on this earth. I eat on this earth, and I don't think of anything but this earth. Things here are like a library to me.

"It gives me great pleasure to present NS Bendre's rarely shown works on paper from across his long and intensively productive career. Best known as a painter, Bendre had a lifelong habit of drawing from life and nature and produced a large body of drawings, sketches, and watercolours in the academic style, a distinctive part of his oeuvre. The exhibition offers a glimpse of it. Unlike the modernists who abhor realism in art, Bendre strongly preferred it in his drawings. Bendre was also an avid traveller, and his brilliant early watercolours of various places are the show's attraction. I hope everyone comes and experiences these beautiful works" Said Ms. Richa Agarwal, CEO Emami Art

NS Bendre:

Born in 1910 in Indore, the capital of princely Indore State, India, NS Bendre has been widely recognized as one of the pioneers of modern Indian Art. He studied painting at the State Art School, Indore, graduating in 1934. His work has been presented in major galleries and art institutions in India



and abroad. In 1992, the year he passed away, Vadehra Art Gallery organized *Professor NS Shridhar Bendre: Drawings and Paintings*. Another large show in Mumbai was *NS Bendre: the Exhibition of Sketches*, organized by Jehangir Art Gallery in 2000. In addition, his work was the subject of several solo exhibitions in Mumbai, Baroda, Delhi and other Indian and international cities. He held his first solo show abroad at Windermere Art Gallery, New York, in 1946.

A steady winner of medals in the Bombay Art Society's Annual Exhibitions in the 1930s and 40s, NS Bendre received many acknowledgements, including Kalidas Samman (1984), Gagan-Abani Award (1982, 84), and Padma Shri (1969) and Padma Bhushan (1992) from the Government of India.

About Emami Art:

Emami Art, one of the most significant art institutions in the eastern part of India, is a key space for cultural production in the region. The organisation is focused on a future-forward, complex, multi-dimensional approach and steadfast in the advocacy of emerging, mid-career and established artists as well as an engagement with contemporary and historical material. The gallery aims to create dynamic, wide-ranging registers of exhibition-making and viewing. Deeply committed to promoting a regional, national and international agenda through innovative and alternative programming, emphasis on community and socially relevant engagements, institutional partnerships and more via a multi-year vision for the future, Emami Art is resolute to be a catalyst of change, research, innovation and inclusivity. Emami Art, Kolkata Centre for Creativity 777 Anandapur off EM Bypass. www.emamiart.com

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