

# MATTERS OF THE FAITHFUL HEART

While Mumbai's India Art Festival 2013 saw the participation of several galleries from the country, two elegant art galleries from Mumbai, Sakshi Gallery and Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke have chosen to specifically focus and display the exquisite works of two renowned artists for the eagerly awaited India Art Fair 2014 at New Delhi, reports **Sushma Sabnis**.

The winter sees the art enthusiasts throng to the capital and this year the much awaited India Art Fair 2014, slated to take place from 30th January to 2nd February 2014, returns with promises to keep. This year the art fair will see the participation of two well-known galleries from Mumbai, with special focus on two of their eminent artists, Rekha Rodwittiya and Arun K S.

Artist Rekha Rodwittiya's works on display at the Sakshi Gallery booth at India Art Fair 2014 are works from the series, 'Matters of the Heart' in which she portrays in a feministic stance, her isolated, exalted female figures, this time with frontal postures and unflinching gazes at the viewer. The skin covering these figures is a mapping of the artist's own memories in the form of photographs from her collections and recollections. The female figures retrieve a kind of personal history and bring back to the present a remembered past along with the truth, embodying struggle and joy

The pictorial language re-examines *tradition*

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and modernity within the context of an ever-changing requirement and the artist, with a keen interest in drawing, defines the contours of the images with an almost unrelenting starkness which defines and refines the works and the female protagonists. The female figures seem to be witnesses to the happenings around them and the imagery which forms their second skin seems to be the markers of memory which were left on them for eternity.

In the artist's own words, "There are hundreds of stories that each of us carry with us. These stories are often matters of the heart which are an amalgamation of truths and desires, memories and histories which, in turn are fed each day by the pulse of our lives as we live it. As an artist, it is from this ever evolving framework of energies that my ideas are born."

While Rekha Rodwittiya's works portray an openness and uncompromised representation to the viewer, the works of Kerala born artist Arun KS, represented by Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, portray a kind of subtlety of expression, hinting at the truth.

Arun K.S.'s works on display are triptychs titled, 'Drama of the Analyzed and the Analyzer' and 'False Ending'. When viewed from a distance, the works seem impenetrable, like fog, either in the mind or in actuality. This fog, however lifts when one gets closer to the work. The works reveal itself to the viewer in layers in an almost labyrinthine fashion of unraveling. The works have been rendered using pages of a much used Bible, apparently belonging to Arun's family, and each page has been lined onto the canvas with a specific structure in mind, along with paper pulp, water colour, ink, cement and wax.

Here, the artist is not just building on the art work, but also archiving how faith has built up in his own mind since childhood. The work reflects his religious and spiritual pursuits as the artist performs the role of both the creator (of art) and the believer (of religion). By using the family's Bible, he involves the presence of the other followers of the faith as a witness to this union. When art frees itself from the shackles of being a stand alone, detached and unites with the maker, the viewer and the participant, its transcendence is a quiet serenity which subtly reflects in Arun's works.

Arun K.S., *False Ending*, 2013, art powder color, watercolor and ink on canvas prepared with paper pulp and pages from the Bible, concrete and wax, 48" x 96" (4 panels)

