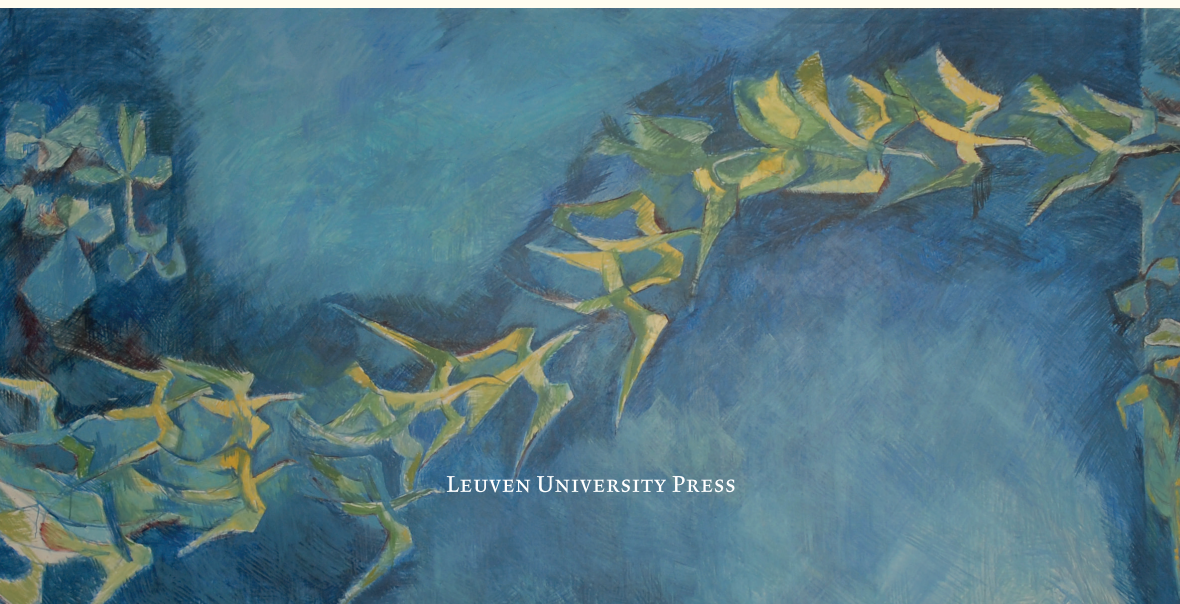
Simone Wille

Cold War Art Worlds

South Asian Art and Artists in Prague 1947–1989



Leuven University Press

Cold War Art Worlds
South Asian Art and Artists in Prague, 1947-1989

COLD WAR ART WORLDS

South Asian Art and Artists in Prague, 1947-1989

Simone Wille

Leuven University Press

Published with the support of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): 10.55776/PUB1245

FWF Austrian Science Fund

Research results from: The Austrian Science Fund (FWF): project 10.55776/V880

Published in 2025 by Leuven University Press / Presses Universitaires de Louvain / Universitaire Pers Leuven. Minderbroedersstraat 4, B-3000 Leuven (Belgium).

ISBN 978 94 6270 470 1 (Paperback)
ISBN 978 94 6166 662 8 (ePDF)
ISBN 978 94 6166 663 5 (ePUB)
https://doi.org/10.11116/9789461666628
D/2025/1869/40
NUR: 654

Typesetting: Crius Group
Cover design: Daniel Benneworth-Gray
Cover illustration: Detail of Shakir Ali, *Birds in Flight and Flowers*, 1966. Oil on canvas, 167 × 470 cm. Inventory No. VU 100/67, acquisition—donated by the artist in 1967. Lidice Art Collection, Lidice Memorial. Photograph Lukáš Havlena.

Table of Contents

Notes on Image Titles and Reproductions

Many of the art works and photographs included in this publication exist under different titles, in Czech as well as in English. Many of the art works are kept in Czech collections, which is why they have been given Czech titles. Since the translation of the original English titles into Czech confirms one of the theses of my book, namely the significance of the transcultural exchange that took place between South Asia and Czechoslovakia, I have kept, where available, both titles in the captions of the artworks.

Although every effort has been made to secure permissions to reproduce the images, the provenance of some works remains unknown. If the location of these works is brought to my attention, I will gladly provide acknowledgement in subsequent editions.

Acknowledgements

Cold War Art Worlds is about twentieth century modernism as it struggled at a turning point in history. Through joint efforts in, and between, places that have often been overlooked in conventional art-history narratives, modernism took on exciting new forms.

The argument of this book develops within an interdisciplinary framework encompassing art history, history, social and political history, Indology, and mobility studies. It puts forward questions about the composition and location of art worlds, together with the contributions of artists and artworks they have collectively animated.

One of the crucial catalysts enabling exchange and participation during the Cold War was cultural mobility. For this reason, my book elaborates a concrete proposal for a migratory aesthetics, supported by extensive archival details. It is connected with many years of personal mobility across wide-ranging regions and archives, where I undertook research in a series of private and institutional archives and depositories, and engaged in conversations and critical thinking with friends and colleagues.

I have been fortunate to be able to reflect on artmaking, and the role that the discipline of art history can and should bring to an increasingly globally oriented conversation, with many interlocutors. I would especially like to mention Ebba Koch, Partha Mitter, Christian Kravagna, Sanjukta Sunderason, Iftikhar Dadi, Salima Hashmi, Naazish Ataullah, Parul Dave Mukherji, Supriya Chaudhuri, Tapati Guha-Thakurta, Zeynep Kuban, Michele Greet, Markéta Hánová, Hammad Nasar, Fanny Drugeon, Dominique Bermann Martin, Przemysław Strożek, Gabriela Świtek, Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus, Monica Juneja, Burcu Dogramaci, Ming Tiampo, Jan Wollner, Dagmar Pospíšilová, Tomáš Winter, Milena Bartlová, Beáta Hock, Katarzyna Skiba, Ewa Klekot, Bilal Hashmi, Samina Iqbal, Durriya Kazi, Bhanu Padamsee and the late Akbar Padamsee, Manisha Patil, Seneka Senanayake, Katharina Wiedlack, Julia Allerstorfer-Hertel, Tereza Stejskalová, and Marta Edith Holečková.

My research for this book has relied on numerous sources across languages and geographies. The book would not have been written without the help of many, and without the kind cooperation of, and fruitful

conversations with archivists and others, on whose generous support, broad knowledge, and linguistic expertise I depend.

I would especially like to thank the following collaborators, colleagues, supporters, and friends in Prague: my special gratitude goes to Zdenka Klimtová from the National Gallery in Prague, whose unwavering support and insights opened up many doors, and led to connections in Prague and across the Czech Republic, which would not have been possible without her. I thank Jaroslav Strnad, from the Oriental Institute at the Czech Academy of Sciences, whose outstanding expertise in the history of India and its languages, combined with his personal acquaintance with some of the protagonists in my book, were indispensable in piecing together information I collected. Both Klimtová and Strnad offered massive support during my research, and shared their insights and their contacts over many years of endless conversations. The National Gallery in Prague has supported my research since 2016, and I extend my thanks to the Asia Collection, and especially to its director Markéta Hánová and her team, including Jana Ryndová and Kristýna Rendlová. The National Gallery in Prague has become a home away from home and I am grateful to them.

This book would not have been written without the indispensable help of remarkable individuals at libraries and archives in various places, where I spent months of research. I am grateful to all of them. In Prague, I would like to thank Anna Křivánková from the library at the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Prague; Marie Bahenská from Masaryk Institute and Archives of the CAS; Alena Palúchová and Tereza Czesany Dvořáková from the library at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU); Markéta Kudláčová, archivist at the National Gallery in Prague; the team of the National Archive in Prague; Karolina Hrichová and Ivana Poláková, together with their colleagues at the Film Institute in Prague; Markéta Hofmanová from Fotobanka ČTK; Ondrej Beck from Krátký Film Prague; and the team of the Archives of the City of Prague. In Lidice, I thank former curator Luba Hédlová and current curator Miloslav Vorliček from the Lidice Gallery; in Vienna, I thank Michael Zinganel from the Museum Nordwestbahnhof, for helping me to get a sense of the infrastructure across the Iron Curtain; in Lahore, I thank Fatima Slaman from the Shakir Ali Museum; and in New Delhi, I thank the team at the Delhi Art Gallery (DAG) for sharing their insights with me. I also thank Sneha Ragavan and her team at the Asia Art Archive in New Delhi; the team at the library of the School of

Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlala Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi; the library and its staff at the Lalit Kala Akademi and the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi; and the team at the library of the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art in Mumbai.

In Brno, my thanks go to Jana Vránová from House of the Arts; Vendula Borůvková and Pavel Hubička from Radost Theatre; and in Bratislava, I would like to thank Lucia Karellová, Martin Kaňuch, Jaroslav Procházka, Branislav Frlička and the team from the Slovak Film Institute; Eva Filová from the Academy of Performing Arts; Lucia Gregorová Stach from the Slovak National Gallery, and Katarína Laššáková from the Slovak National Library. In London, I thank the team of Records and Archives at the British Council; the team at the Asian & African Studies Reference Service of the British Library; the team at UCL Special Collections at the University College London; and Patricia O'Neill for helping to find material across several London archives. Many positions within these archives have seen changes; this is why I would generally like to thank the many expert librarians and archivists whose knowledge is so crucial, and without whose help scholars like myself would not be able to carry out their work. We would simply be lost without you.

I thank the Shakir Ali Museum in Lahore; the National Gallery in Prague; the Náprstek Museum in Prague; the Lidice Art Collection, Lidice Memorial in Lidice; the Archives André Lhote in Le Raincy; the Slovak Film Institute in Bratislava; the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava; the Symposion Europäischer Bildhauer (SEB); Národní filmový archiv in Prague; the Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS) in Prague; Ms Helena Bonusová and the Krása family; Fotobanka ČTK in Prague; Senaka Senanayake; the archive of Dům Umění in Brno; the UCL Special Collections; The Rangoonwala (Wahab Jaffer) Collection; the Collection of (Late) ZISHAN AFZAL KHAN, Shahbano Abbas, Islamabad; The Sher-Gil Sunderam Arts Foundations; Rekha Rao; Amba Sanyal; for permitting me to reproduce works from their collections. I also thank Geeta Kapur, Sonal Khullar, Susan S. Bean, Sneha Ragavan, Jesal Thacker, and Noopur Desai for helping me reach out to collectors.

For extended quality conversations I thank Tomáš Danhel, and the late Jan Marék. For conversations, and for allowing me to use photographs from her father's fond, I would like to extend a warm thank you to the Krása family and especially to Helena Bonušová, daughter of the late Miloslav Krása, as well as to Helena Honcopová, for sharing with me

some of her memories of meeting Biren De. Nina Malíková has been most generous in sharing her knowledge about puppet theatre and the history of UNIMA (Union International de la Marionette), as well as the writings of some of her close colleagues. In Karachi I thank Durriya Kazi and members of her family who have collectively shared with me some of their memories about Shakir Ali's Indian background and the arrival of his family in Karachi in 1947.

In Vienna, where I am mostly based, I am very fortunate for critical conversations with art historians and Iranian-studies friends Christine Bruckbauer, Negar Hakim, Christiane Kalantari, Barbara Karl, Ebba Koch, Christine Nölle Karimi, Christian Kravagna, and Sabine Vogel.

My colleagues at the Institute of Art History, University of Innsbruck have been generous with their support. The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) has supported my work over the years via two project grants and two publication grants. The book has benefited immensely from this generous research support. My publisher, Leuven University Press, has supported me from the start, helping me think about the shape of the book. It is a pleasure to acknowledge Mirjam Truwant and the entire LUP team in Leuven for their kind, patient, and professional support throughout the publication process.

I thank my project collaborators and research affiliates Kateřina Volková (Rührová), Zuzana Smolinská, and Lavanya Verma. Their help and contribution to the project *South Asia in Central Europe* has been indispensable, and conversations with them enriched the many necessary steps between research such as the search for documents and obscure persons and literature.

I am most grateful to Polly Gannon for her wonderful guidance in language proofreading, and for her insightful comments before sending the manuscript to peer review as well as after. I also thank Rebecca Bryan for her excellent help with copyediting.

I am also grateful to the two insightful peer reviewers whose feedback led to important improvements of the manuscript.

My family has been extremely patient and supportive. Words cannot begin to express my appreciation to my husband, Randi Trauttmansdorff, for his unwavering faith in me and my work. Our children, Maximilian and Ginevra, are the joys of our lives, and their inquisitive spirit and curiosity has inspired me in many ways.

I lost my father, Egon Wille, when writing the conclusion of this book. As a child, I remember spending endless hours with him and my mother,

Erika, outdoors, walking in nature, in the Tirolean Alps. There, they taught me how to focus patiently, studying details and processes related to flora and fauna, in particular, and nature in general. In this way, they showed me how to develop a passion for things that are not immediately evident and recognizable. It is to my parents that this book is dedicated.

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Cold War Art Worlds: South Asian Art and Artists in Prague, 1947–1989

The Central European capital city of Prague played an important role in the emergence of a post-war art world. Along with other places in the polarised post-war landscape, Prague was a key site for artists from across South Asia during the Cold War era, between 1947 and 1989. The purview of my book begins with the withdrawal of the British colonial power in India, and ends with the collapse of the communist Eastern Bloc. In addition to Ljubljana and Warsaw, as well as São Paulo, Dakar, Alexandria, Baghdad, Casablanca, and Havana, to name only a few,[1] Prague became a formal and informal meeting place, where abundant opportunities for studying, exhibiting, visiting, practising, and publishing emerged. Political, ideological, and art historical discourses took shape, with a group of Czechoslovak (Czech Republic/Czechia since 1993) protagonists at the centre of these discourses and activities.

For artists from South Asia, and, indeed, from other regions across the decolonising world, the transcultural dialogue that took root in these places opened opportunities, theretofore unknown, for travel and discourse, for artmaking, and for many kinds of collaboration and exchange. In the wake of Soviet Communism and decolonisation, these previously somewhat "off-limits locales," to use Anthony Gardner's and Charles Green's formulation for the study of biennales in the global south,[2] were transformed into new art worlds, where artists, especially those from the former colonies, were recognised and appreciated beyond, or at least unconstrained by, the prevailing hierarchies.

This book sets out to examine and understand the new art world that came into being in Prague. It poses questions about the nature of artists' travels to Prague, and investigates the ways their travels impacted their individual careers. It also looks at how these travels affected art discourses about these South Asian artists at large. Since cultural mobility is what enabled the formation of new networks of communication and exchange, this book challenges and complicates assumptions about Cold

War binaries of East and West, and of the polarisation between so-called totalitarian regimes and free cultures. My project thus tells a story of decolonisation that rejected the either/or choice of systemic alignment, and instead turns to ways in which participation across blocs became a conscious choice. By taking Prague as a point where, post-World War II, modernism from South Asia intersected with multiple peoples, histories, and ideologies, this book proposes new ways of writing art histories that prioritise migratory aesthetics over nationalist parochialism.

1.2 The Formation of Art Worlds and Artistic Careers through Mobility

The trajectories of many South Asian artists whose careers unfolded during the postcolonial era were characterised by different modes of regional and transregional mobility. These modes include flight, migration, relocation, and travel. I am thinking here of artists such as Maqbool Fida Husain (1915–2011) and Ram Kumar (1924–2018) from India; Zubeida Agha (1922–1997) and Shakir Ali (1916–1975) from West Pakistan (Pakistan since 1971);[3] Zainul Abedin (1917–1976) and Sheikh Mohammad Sultan (1924–1994) from East Pakistan (Bangladesh since 1971); Lain Singh Bangdel (1919–2002) from Nepal; and artist Senaka Senanayake (born 1951) and filmmaker Piyasiri Gunaratna (born 1936) from Ceylon (Sri Lanka since 1972). Through their extensive mobility within and between South Asia and regions stretching from East/Central, Southeast and Western Europe to Central and West Asia, East Asia, North and Northeast Africa, as well as South and North America, they developed complex relationships between the postcolonial nations they belonged to and the emerging art worlds they accessed through their work. The experiences of these itinerant artists are part of their individual trajectories, but also part of the emerging art worlds of the Cold War.[4] The story this book narrates, therefore, stresses a history of post-war modernism that diverges from histories that are centred on Western European and North American domination. It emphasises a history of modernism that cuts across linear histories of art by turning to artists who are part of what Joan Kee proposes to call the "global majority."[5]

Shakir Ali's large painting *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1), which also appears on the book cover, symbolically unites elements that speak of the artist's transregional journey. This journey spanned several years, from 1946/47 until 1950/51, and the painting directly and indirectly addresses this

Fig. 1 Shakir Ali, *Birds in Flight and Flowers*, 1966. Oil on canvas, 167 × 470 cm. Inventory No. VU 100/67, acquisition—donated by the artist in 1967. Lidice Art Collection, Lidice Memorial. Photograph Lukáš Havlena.

experience. The imagery of the birds suggests freedom, justice, and the artist's own journey. As such, it captures his many crossings and transitions, from colony to empire and post-empire, to postcolonial nation state—first as a distant and imagined possibility, and later as a lived reality. Directly related to the artist's transitions and experiences are the ideological and political discourses and positions he embraced, but also confronted and resisted. These range from his early progressive and left-leaning associations in Bombay (Mumbai after 1995), London, and Prague, to the ways in which he later quietly distanced himself from such discussions in Lahore. Moreover, the painting reveals a painterly discourse that Ali tested along his journey, and shows how he positioned himself artistically in the post-war world. It is clear, however, that the many aspects and layers of a painting such as *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1), which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 2, only become apparent once we know more about the artist's complex itinerary and affiliations, and the encounters they enabled. In 1967, Shakir Ali donated *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1) to the emerging Lidice Solidarity Collection. The place itself, located twenty kilometres west of Prague, and the tragedy of its total and systematic destruction by the Nazis on June 10, 1942,[6] together with the artist's journey to Prague, were formative experiences that shaped his painterly migratory aesthetics. While the current display of the painting in the conference room of the Lidice Gallery is in part a practical solution, due to the size of the painting, it also inevitably introduces a political and ideological framing, if we consider the function of the conference room as a space where conversations take place, proposals are made, and arguments are defended. The Lidice conference room is also used as a space

where foreign delegations, who are brought on an official tour to Lidice, are often gathered and photographed in front of Shakir Ali's painting.[7] The painting *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1) is about many things, not least the journey in general, and the artist's mobility in particular.

Shakir Ali lived and spent time in an impressive array of places: from northern India to Bombay; from there to London; to Gordes, in the south of France; thereafter to Prague; and then on to Karachi and Lahore. Among all these places, the Czechoslovak capital Prague was most central to his experience as an artist and a person. It was a critical meeting point, an anti-colonial hub, a site of exchange, encounter, and affect, and a place to which he would repeatedly refer, artistically and emotionally, but also silently, as he did in *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1).

When I discovered Ali's work in the Lidice Art Collection in 2014, therefore, I felt compelled to examine in greater detail the artist's travel itinerary, and the kinds of work that he was moved to create in response to his mobility.[8] As it turned out, Shakir Ali was not the only artist from South Asia who travelled to Prague and spent time there. It is no exaggeration to say that Prague became a key meeting place and central discursive space for many artists from India, West Pakistan/Pakistan, and Ceylon/Sri Lanka. Prague was the destination of artists who travelled there for art exhibitions, and to take part in exchange and study programmes. Some artists attended events that accompanied the communist-led World Youth Festival or the World Peace Movement; but Prague was also a 'virtual' destination for artists who did not physically travel there, but were rather in long-distance dialogue with it. In the Lidice Art Collection, Shakir Ali's work shares company with the work of these other South Asian artists whose work is also in public collections in Prague. This suggests that the region was an intersectional crossroads of participation and critical engagement with socialist, Western, and non-Western art, for artists and thinkers from South Asia and Czechoslovakia. This unique geographical and cultural configuration opened artistic perspectives with broad ramifications, which I will examine in this book.

These initial discoveries inspired me to formulate, and try to unpack, questions about the "cultural mobility"[9] of these artists and their milieus. My notion of mobility concerns not just the ability or capacity to move from one place or destination to another; it also takes into account the personal

motives and impulses and the ideological, social, and political context that impelled or facilitated this kind of movement. Greenblatt's formulation has contributed to a field of study that is now known as 'mobility studies.' What I take from his insightful observations is an approach to thinking about the process that informs the making of cultures. Moreover, I am interested in the ways that international solidarities emerged, and how this newly established, shared ground informs and enables narratives about South Asian art and artists' mobilities during the Cold War, with a particular focus on human and institutional relationships.

My book, which I have titled *Cold War Art Worlds: South Asian Art and Artists in Prague, 1947–1989,* investigates, therefore, the varieties of mobility (and immobility) of art and artists from South Asia to the Central European capital city of Prague and its surroundings. It considers how Prague, geographically distant from the twentieth-century artistic capitals of London, Paris, and New York, functioned as a critical meeting place, an anti-colonial hub, and a site of exchange and encounter in the decades after World War II. Given the shadows cast by international politics and historical events, and the complexities at play in artistic formations during this era, the Cold War functioned as a framework for artists such as Shakir Ali. What we witness is their efforts to participate in creating art worlds that were not necessarily tied to any metropole, but were rather in conversation with a series of locations—locations which they, as artists from the decolonising parts of the world, deliberately moved into and out of. In my analysis, I am inspired by approaches to art history that take the mutual relationship between art and politics into consideration, crucial for understanding the relationship between the Cold War and the decolonising world, and for nuancing binaries such as friend and enemy, East and West.[10]

Shakir Ali's *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1) addresses binaries such as these. It is a painting about movement, rather than stillness; about change rather than permanence. This allows us to locate it within the sphere of a "dialectic of cultural persistence and change."[11] The complex experiences that are inscribed in paint on the canvas in *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1) are, therefore, representative of the experiences of many South Asian artists, whose careers unfolded through mobility in the postcolonial era. *Cold War Art Worlds,* therefore, argues for an art history of the post-World War II era that is not rooted in isolated and individual national values and spaces. Instead, it keeps in view what Sarah Rogers

outlines as a particularity of the Cold War period: namely, "the ways in which public, private, and government initiatives coalesced as gestures of cultural diplomacy, bringing into contact artists, formal languages, and pedagogical approaches to art making from across geographies and ideological positions."[12]

Many histories of artistic modernism in the 1940s see the centre of the art world shift from war-torn Europe to New York City, about which Serge Guilbaut famously wrote that "New York stole the idea of modern art,"[13] prompting the veteran art critic Irving Sandler to announce the triumph of American painting.[14] The juncture that such accounts represented clearly neglected most parts of Europe, not to mention the rest of the world.[15] Especially in the past two decades, artistic centres across vast geographical regions have been investigated from regional and cross-regional perspectives, thereby contributing to a wealth of knowledge about "modernism's cross-cultural past."[16] Kobena Mercer's approach, which places at the centre of investigation "three-fold interactions among non-western artists, minority artists within the West, and western art movements that have engaged with different cultures,"[17] has proven to be an important methodological contribution towards a shift in how we view the "geographies of modernism."[18] Mercer's reflections, which include experiences of diaspora, and transcultural mobility and exchange, contribute, therefore, together with Said's "contrapuntalism," to an understanding of the art worlds of the Cold War as they emerged in Prague and Central Europe as a crossroads for artistic debates and possibilities.

As artists have become increasingly mobile, how do we narrate their works and worlds? This is a concern that art historian Sonal Khullar addresses in her book *Worldly Affiliations: Artistic Practice, National Identity, and Modernism in India, 1930–1990,* attending to their aesthetic experience in relation to East and West, and to the legacy of the past.[19] What her study offers is an analysis for rethinking the relationship between the relationship of Indian artists to modernism, not as a rupture, but as continuity in the midst of change. Examining mobility requires us to look at the artists' routes, not only to London and Paris, often referred to by scholars as simply the West, but also the many other locations and regions that these artists either travelled through or to.

Art historian Atreyee Gupta has highlighted this lacuna in scholarly enquiry through an important work by the artist M. F. Husain.[20] In *Between the Spider and the Lamp*, a painting by Husain from 1956, which has also been described as a "metaphor for modern India" by art historian Yashodhara Dalmia,[21] Gupta discusses the intrusion of the image of the Other in relation to one of the three figures in the painting, namely the dark-skinned figure dressed in white. She points to its resemblance to both the pre-modern Indian sculptural tradition, as well as to those pharaonic figurative images that fascinated Indian artists like M. F. Husain and Mohan Samant. These artists had a chance to see the latter *en route* from India to Europe on a boat that stopped in Egypt.[22] Gupta views this intrusion of "an emblematic figure from a different ethnographic narrative of origins" as "a deliberate incursion of the image of the other." The fact that it concerns "a now celebrated allegory of the modern nation" prompts her to ask whether this "intrusion of the figure of the other" can "then open up the imagination of the sovereign nation to what lies outside its geopolitical borders?"[23]

The fact that ships (which were the common mode of transport for passengers travelling from Asia to Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s) usually stopped in Egypt, calls for a closer look at the artists' itineraries, and, thus, at iconography and aesthetic representation in general. The narrative presented here, which emphasises the artists' increasing mobility in the post-war period, allows us to sketch their efforts less as a commitment to redraw the boundaries that define East and West, North and South, than as a commitment to crossing geographical, cultural, and ideological borders. In this way, according to the thesis of this study, new geographies opened up as spaces to which artists and intellectuals from the decolonising world, in particular, had increasing access; indeed, they often had more access to these worlds than their Western artist colleagues did. Prague represented just such a "conjunctural terrain," in the words of Antonio Gramsci, where aesthetic transformations were made possible through artistic mobility, input, and contributions. Positioning Prague as a "conjunctural terrain," where critical voices and different awarenesses intersected, allows us to view it as crossroads, a fertile ground for evaluating the post-independence mobility of many artists, along and across ideological lines, and cultural and political geographies.

1.3 Cold War Art Worlds

Where can we locate these new geographies? In what ways were they accessible? To whom, and how? In what ways were they shaped by the interactions of those who engaged with them? After the end of colonialism and the partition of South Asia in 1947, there was a global shift in the balance of power. This shift was characterised by rival ideologies and spheres of American and Soviet influence. While this created new borders, lines of control, and an Iron Curtain, it also opened opportunities across regions where new cultural and political connections, platforms, and alliances were forged. Artists from the decolonising world, including South Asia, gained increasing access to international travel, allowing them to take part in cultural and art-related conferences, artist residencies, exhibitions, and study opportunities across the political blocs that defined the Cold War period. Their access to both Soviet and Western-led initiatives, beginning in the late 1940s, foreshadows some of the major concerns of political and cultural 'non-alignment,' in which a productive artistic positioning in a field of tension between political histories fostered artistic possibilities.[24]

Together with their newly independent nations, South Asian artists found themselves in a world of post-war internationalism and decolonisation in which art, artists, and institutions intersected with politics and ideology. This was how they positioned themselves, both discursively and aesthetically.[25] Through active participation in this new world, artists were able to gain international visibility and recognition. Most important for the central thesis of my book, through their mobility and participation these artists were able to co-create the art worlds to which the global political map of ideological positions and divisions resulting from the growing Cold War gave them access.

Post-independence, South Asian artistic modernism, therefore, resists being narrated within a single or isolated national framework; this has been a concern of recent art historical research and publications.[26] A holistic perspective and picture requires that we take into account the vitality of artistic activism, and the transregional and transnational participation of artists that are the 'global majority.' Amid the intransigence of ideological barriers between the East and the West, cultural activities and platforms were either revived or newly established across regions, after the devastations of World War II. South Asian artists played a vital role in this. Therefore, the transregional and transnational dimensions of participatory artistic practices, whether from a local or a migratory

position, are crucial for breaking hegemonic norms of the Western canon of modern art, and for underscoring the insight that modernism, as a "world-making practice,"[27] is built on universal aspirations.[28]

1.4 Prague: Co-creating Alternative Art Worlds

Up until now, studies on the mobilities of South Asian artists have focused largely on exchanges and entanglements within the geographical areas of Western Europe and North America. Art historian Susan Bean's study of the inspiration of M. F. Husain's horses in Chinese art, as well as art historian Atreyee Gupta's inquiry into the same artist's work, focusing on his journey to Egypt and on what formally inspired him there, are examples of close readings of artistic form, and the significance of geographical mobility as a determining force for Indian post-independence modernism.[29]

The mobility of artists in the framework of exhibitions and residencies in the regions of East/Central Europe, but also in South/East Europe, during the post-war era has received far less attention from international scholars than the mobility of artists to Western Europe and North America. While artists' ventures into East/Central Europe are mentioned in art history accounts, there is little serious engagement with the subject, and a dearth of details and facts.[30] It is only recently that art historians and curators, especially in East/Central Europe, have begun to pay attention to such cultural and political exchange and events.[31] This is the result of a scholarly move to open up the region to the legacy of its Cold War cultural relations. Exhibition projects such as *Revolutionary Romances? Global Art Histories in the GDR*, at Albertinum in Dresden, or the research *cum* exhibition project *Parapolitics: Cultural Freedom and the Cold War,* mounted by the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, reassess the post-war art world through the lens of its many imbalances.[32] A detailed reading of Polish–Moroccan artistic exchange starting in the mid-1950s and into the 1980s was carried out by art historian Przemysław Strożek, which resulted in an exhibition and publication project in 2020.[33]

What projects such as these so crucially show is how seriously art was taken at the time, and how instrumental cultural exchange was in waging and advancing ideas of struggle and modernist positioning. *Cold War Art Worlds: South Asian Art and Artists in Prague, 1947–1989* draws from these insights. The book then turns its attention to artists from India, West

Pakistan/Pakistan, and Ceylon/Sri Lanka, who made their way to Central Europe, and produced, exhibited, and published their artwork there.

I will focus on Prague, the Czechoslovak capital city, which was often a point of departure for foreign visitors and exhibitions to other regional cities and towns, such as Lidice, Brno, Bratislava, and Litoměřice. I will ask how the mobility of South Asian artists and their artwork to Prague impacted their positioning in the art worlds of the Cold War period, as well as how these artists and their works contributed to and co-created these art worlds. I will also reconstruct the networks and forms of friendship that supported this exchange, and unpack ideas of cultural internationalism and relationship. Following writers concerned with theorising cultural mobility, I will inquire about the importance of mobility for aesthetic production,[34] situating the artists' work in the sphere of oscillating "persistence and change,"[35] as observed above, rather than in the contested terrain of "the real," and the "ideological and geographical division of the Cold War."[36] Uncovering histories of engagement, and examining experiences that have heretofore received little attention because they lie outside the well-worn routes connecting the former colonies and empires, this book centres its attention on what historian Reinhart Koselleck has called the "space of experience" and the "horizon of expectation."[37] This, in turn, makes possible what Andreas Huyssen has called "alternative geographies of modernism."[38]

As early as 1947, Prague became just such a possibility and alternative on the global map of post-war art worlds. The first iteration of the World Youth Festival, in the summer of 1947, which mobilised young and progressive-thinking people from around the world to travel to the Central European metropolis,[39] made a significant contribution to this development. Historian Joël Kotek claimed that during that summer, "Prague [...] became for young idealists the crossroads of the world."[40] The festival, which came together as an idea at the London World Youth Conference in 1945, was organised as a programme of social, cultural, and sporting events. Similar events, such as the World Student Congress, the World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace, and the World Peace Movement, followed. Their venues, such as Prague, Warsaw, Budapest, Bucharest, and East Berlin, became attractive and exciting discursive centres.[41] Though many of these mass events were controlled politically and ideologically by the Soviet authorities, they captured "the spirit of young people, especially those of the Third World,"[42] through appealing to issues such as peace, disarmament,

and anti-fascism, but also with "allegations that the non-communists had abandoned them during their struggle against colonialism."[43]

I contend that through events such as the World Youth Festival, the decolonising world entered into dialogue and exchange with the region of East/Central Europe—a successful shift in priority and attention that spanned much of the Cold War period. One of the central concerns of the socialist countries was the politics of a socialist internationalism. For Czechoslovakia, this also meant re-establishing older connections with South Asia—primarily India, but also Ceylon/Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, which were then strengthened by treaties, educational, cultural, and economic exchange agreements, and a range of new initiatives. Most decisive in this development was the state-controlled exchange of literature, students, art, film, theatre, music, sporting events, etc., which set itself the goal of consolidating the socialist world view. Cultural diplomacy programmes were primarily based on socialist internationalism and decolonial solidarity.[44] But personal dialogue also played a role. In evaluating the connection of the German Democratic Republic to Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Arab nations such as Syria, Iraq, and the Palestinian freedom movement, art historian Christian Saehrendt coins the term "charisma transfer" to describe the hopes of the German Democratic Republic for a positive internal and external feedback effect from such international engagements.[45] Indeed, such positive feedback effects were central to Czechoslovakia's interest in establishing and renewing relations with the new South Asian states of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon/Sri Lanka in order to achieve trade agreements and ideological cooperation on a political level.

More specifically, however, my research for this book has focused on the impact of these cultural and political connections on art and artists of South Asia. In telling the story of artists and young intellectuals from the decolonising contexts of South Asia, and foregrounding their migratory aesthetics, as impacted by Central European crossroads, this book follows a concept developed by Ming Tiampo and Liz Bruchet in their study of the Slade School of Fine Art. Tiampo and Bruchet view this as a site of contrapuntalism,[46] following Edward Said's notion of contrapuntalism.[47] While these authors foreground Said's contrapuntal method "to reveal the role of the colony in imperial centres," and, more broadly, the polyphony this produced at the Slade as a site of production,[48] my own use of the notion of contrapuntalism introduces another layer of reading, one that lies outside the former axis of the colony and the metropolis. By reading

into art historical narratives the interaction of South Asian artists with centres beyond the Iron Curtain, I wish to complicate the "simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and those of other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts."[49] Prague and Central Europe, both as geography and art worlds that have long been excluded from the dominant art historical narrative itself,[50] were co-created by "the [South Asian] artists as agents of contrapuntalism."[51] Thus, by adopting a microhistorical approach,[52] with a focus on the mobility of South Asian artists to Central Europe, Prague in the summer of 1947 may be seen as just such a hub or crossroads, allowing us to draw connections between artists and modernism from India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

1.5 Looking Towards India

Consider the Prague-based Indologist, idealist, and communist, Miloslav Krása (1920–2004). His role in establishing, nurturing, and maintaining contact and friendship with artists, intellectuals, and key cultural figures from across South Asia was decisive. In his book *Looking Towards India: A Study in East-West Contacts*, published in Prague in 1969, Krása conjures up historical and contemporary connections between India and the Czech lands. Since Krása's history is not shaped by Euro-American history, it can be located along a trajectory of "interventionist assessments," to borrow a notion from critic and art historian Geeta Kapur, who used it to assess twentieth- and twenty-first-century art and its histories.[53] Krása, in his book, thus endeavours to take account of his own cultural-political activities, and positions Czechoslovak–Indian friendship on a historical continuum of cultural and intellectual exchange.[54] According to Tara Chand (1888–1973), whom Krása knew from the time he studied at Allahabad University, and who wrote the foreword to Krása's book, the author dedicated his professional career "to the cause of Czechoslovak-Indian understanding and friendship by compiling this study on east-west contacts."[55] Krása establishes a chronology that demonstrates how India had historically been a source of inspiration for the people living in what was then Czechoslovakia.

A central aim of Krása's book was to enumerate and assess the wealth of original Czech translations from ancient and modern Indian texts, as well as to describe personal historical encounters of travellers from the Czech lands to India. Moreover, the academic discipline of Indology, represented

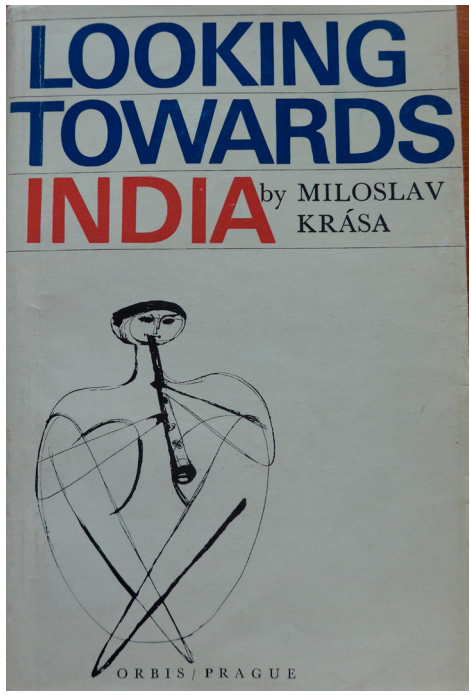


Fig. 2 *Looking Towards India*, book cover with a work by Ajit Chakravarty, *Flute Player*, dry point on paper, 30 × 43 cm, National Gallery Prague, inv. no. Vm 1816. Photograph of the book cover by Simone Wille, 2025.

by notable Czech scholars such as Vincenc Lesný (1882–1953) and Moriz Winternitz (1863–1937), who both taught and researched at Santiniketan in the 1920s, is a recurring reference for Krása. Krása points out the uniqueness of the "[...] self-evident fellow-feeling between members of nations so distant from each other [?]."[56] In his book, Krása demonstrates his serious engagement with India, foregrounding his extensive cultural, historical, and contemporary knowledge of it. In the space of almost two hundred pages, the author brings together historical data and facts from both countries, ultimately focusing on Czechoslovak's interest in India over the centuries.

Krása's book is illustrated with reproductions of the work of contemporary artists. On the cover, we see Ajit Chakravarty's *Flute Player* (Fig. 2). Hermína Melicharová's (1923–2000) drawing for Tagore's *The Land of Cards* appears inside the cover. Accompanying the foreword is a work by Miloslav Troup (1917–1993), the drawing for Mir Amman Dihlavi's Stories of *Four Dervishes* (Garden and Spring) from 1963. This is how Krása establishes his book, with its historical expertise, as a platform in which artists from Czechoslovakia and India may participate in a cross-cultural dialogue together.

By reproducing on the cover of the book the work of an Indian artist who studied in Prague (Fig. 2), Krása positions Czechoslovakia not only as a country with a great affinity to India, but also as a place where contemporary and modern Indian art is preserved, nurtured, appreciated, discussed, and understood.[57] Together with other works by Chakravarty, *Flute Player* (Fig. 2) is part of the National Gallery in Prague's (NGP) collection of Indian modernist art. Krása played a significant role in creating the collection.

The chapters of Krása's book that deal with twentieth-century historical developments are marked by an attempt to compare "[T]the defeat of the Czech democratic revolution in the stormy year of 1848 […]" with "the suppression of an anti-British rising in India ten years later." It is here that Krása articulates the resistance of both populations against the rule of foreign power.[58] The visits of Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) to Czechoslovakia in 1921 and 1926 are described in detail, as is Jawaharlal Nehru's (1889–1964) first visit to Prague with his daughter Indira, in August 1938. This is remembered particularly clearly, not least because Nehru, at the time, supported the freedom of Czechoslovakia. After the signing of the fateful Munich Agreement, the fate of independent Czechoslovakia was sealed, and the rest of the country was occupied by Nazi German in March 1939.[59]

In the final chapter, which is concerned with India's sovereignty as a "nation of the world,"[60] Krása attempts to highlight shared principles and international political attitudes, with an emphasis on world peace. Krása's book, which marked the height of his professional career as a party member and a cultural diplomat, can be seen as a historical legacy. From as early as 1947, until his retirement in 1989,[61] Krása was involved, in one capacity or another, in almost all cultural and artistic matters concerning India, as well as Ceylon/Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. This establishes him as a "cultural broker," in Höh, Jaspert, and Oesterle's sense of the term: someone who "actively or deliberately transfer[s] cultural messages or contents to a different environment."[62] Krása's role as a "cultural broker" will be a guiding thread throughout my book.[63]

Like Krása, Lubor Hájek (1921–2000), Indologist and first head of the Department of Oriental Art at the NGP, from 1952 until 1986, made considerable efforts to establish and maintain contact with Indian artists. Hájek's commitment to building a collection of Indian modernist art as part of the NGP's Oriental Art Collection was an important component of

the Czechoslovak state's efforts to promote friendship and international solidarity. This was a geopolitically and ideologically motivated concept, in which political and cultural activity led to many forms of transcultural contact through engaged meetings and exchanges. However, Hájek was also invested in art historical inquiries, necessary, in his view, for understanding Indian and Asian art more deeply.[64] Hájek's contemporaries agree that he was an outstanding connoisseur of Asian art.[65] His many publications in Czech, English, and also German, often accompanied with photographs by Werner Forman (1921–2010), are proof of his scholarly output.[66]

Last, but not least, was Jan Marek (1931–2022), a senior research fellow at the Oriental Institute in Prague. Marek's background was Indology, and the study of Persian language and literature. He was a student of the well-known scholar Jan Rypka (1886–1968). Marek's initial scholarly work included the study of medieval Persian literature in India.[67] He taught Persian and Urdu at Charles University in Prague. After his retirement in 1989, he continued to work as an associate professor of Indian Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague.[68] Due to his expertise in Urdu, Marek travelled frequently to Pakistan, and reported regularly on the country's economic, political, and artistic development, primarily in the cultural journals *Nový Orient* and *New Orient Bimonthly*.[69]

In their capacity as Indologists, cultural agents, and scholars eager to build and maintain friendship with Indian and South Asian artists, writers, and intellectuals, Krása and Hájek, and to some degree Marek, are here seen as individuals who took their roles very seriously.[70] Krása and Hájek, in particular, brought their commitment and professional dedication to the field of fine arts, where they explored various manifestations of aesthetic modernism, the significance of modernist movements across Asia and Europe, and the points at which these intersected.

I would argue that the narrative that follows, which presupposes interactive and critical engagement and exchange, corresponds to what Christian Kravagna calls "an art history of contact."[71] This can be closely connected with Kobena Mercer's suggested formulation of a "cosmopolitan modernism" based on experiences of diaspora, transcultural mobility, and exchange.[72]

Following the World Youth Festival, *Cold War Art Worlds* takes the collection of twentieth-century Indian modernist art in the NGP and the works of artists from Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka in the Lidice Art Collection

as a starting point for connecting art worlds and art histories in the framework of the Cold War. It reconstructs the political and ideological lines of conflict of the Cold War era to reassess artistic developments of post-independence South Asia, as they intersected with the Central European capital city of Prague and its regional surroundings. One of my central concerns is socialist internationalism in the period between 1947 and 1989, and how it guided the relationship between Czechoslovakia and the South Asian nation states of India, West Pakistan/Pakistan, and Ceylon/Sri Lanka. International solidarity and friendship with the so-called brotherly states were the cornerstones of a geopolitical and ideologically motivated concept of Czechoslovak foreign policies, and therefore depended on transculturally informed contacts and exchange. International travelling solo and group exhibitions, study programmes in Prague, and study tours in Czechoslovakia for artists, together with the acquisition of artworks, were therefore part of a diplomatic agenda organised by the state. Twentieth-century internationalisms are generally what linked geographically remote movements through global initiatives to transform the world,[73] and, by extension, the art world. Following from this, Chelsea Haines and Gemma Sharpe argue that the post-World War II period ushered in "internationalism as a model of bureaucratized diplomacy,"[74] establishing controlled internationalism as the basis for networks of socialist brotherly states. Accordingly, the narrative of this book turns to internationalism to locate and unpack the art worlds that emerged and intersected through participation in regions too long considered marginal.

1.6 Activating Art History through the Archives

A detailed study of the history of Indian art exhibitions and the art collections of South Asian modernist art in Czechoslovakia is long overdue. My contribution to the study of this subject will thus prioritise an analysis of South Asian post-independence modernist art from a transnational and transregional, rather than a national or Western European, perspective. I will draw upon notions that art historian Piotr Piotrowski articulated in "On the Spatial Turn, or Horizontal Art History," which he published in *Umění*, the leading Czech art historical journal, in 2008.[75] While the metaphor of horizontality has been widely debated,[76] I view it as a useful tool, especially with regard to interaction through mobility. This notion

has been favoured by scholars such as Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, who has formulated how spatial geographical marginalities that are remote from metropolitan centres enter into dialogue with each other.[77]

In order not to overgeneralise the rich, layered, complex, and often very nuanced connections and exchanges between countries of the former Eastern Bloc and the decolonising world, *Cold War Art Worlds*, therefore, chooses to examine a global microhistory of South Asian art and artists, with Prague and Czechoslovakia between 1947 and 1989 as the locus of these art worlds.[78] This book will thus cover a period of four decades, from the partition of South Asia to the end of the Cold War. It will chart the journeys of art and artists as they traverse geographical and political divides, and reveal how this intense and engaged exchange with Czechoslovakia and their Czechoslovak counterparts informed their work, and perceptions of it.

The book's distinct methodological goals are to activate unexplored Cold War histories and their actors, as they animated and connected the geographies and cultures of South Asia and Czechoslovakia via art and mobility and to foreground the question of how participation across antagonisms informed the visual sensibilities of the artists, prompting them to reject the binaries of systemic alignment in the Cold War art worlds they inhabited and worked within. This project draws upon two long-term research projects: "Patterns of Transregional Trails: The materiality of art works and their place in the modern era. Bombay, Paris, Prague, Lahore, ca. 1920s to early 1950s" and "South Asia in Central Europe: The mobility of artists and art works between 1947 and 1989."[79] The archives that were built through these projects largely form the anatomy of this book. Therefore, I apply theoretical concepts that address contact zones, cultural exchange, and contrapuntalism, with a focus on links between cultural mobility, modernism, and creative output,[80] to trace the conceptual structures of some of these Cold War art worlds.

Much of what informs this book was gathered and researched, over the course of many years, in archives in Prague, Lidice, Bratislava, Brno, Leipzig, Berlin, Warsaw, and to some extent Vienna. I also spent time studying archives in London and in Le Raincy, as well as in Paris, New Delhi, Mumbai, Lahore, and Karachi. The archives that I looked at in Prague are especially relevant to the transnational past that I am concerned with. Take, for example, *Sbor národní bezpečnosti*, the Archive of the Security Service. Most of the information that I was interested

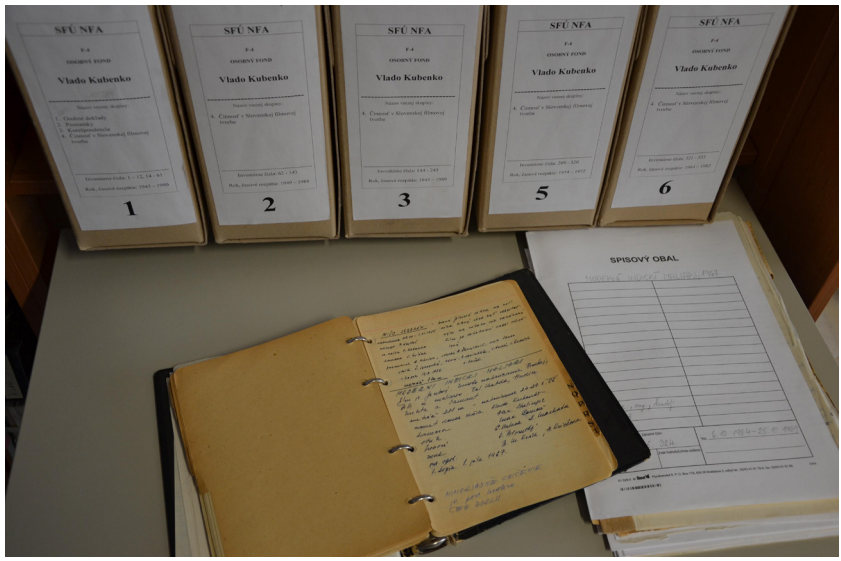


Fig. 3 Vlado Kubenko Fond, © Slovak Film Institute-National Film Archive, Bratislava.

in is contained in documents that have not been systematically filed. Therefore, when trying to gather information about individual persons, I was obliged to think creatively. I would either write out their names in multiple variants and variations, or pinpoint individuals whom they might have been in touch with while in Prague, thus increasing the chance of scoring a hit. While my research is still ongoing, I learned that writing art histories under such circumstances can never be complete, and must therefore be accepted as a project always 'in-the-making'. Even the more systematic and orderly archives, such as the one at the NGP and the Slovak Film Institute-National Film Archive in Bratislava (Fig. 3), will need to be revisited and re-evaluated once new data has been retrieved elsewhere.

1.7 The Mobility of South Asian Artists and Cold War Art Worlds

The six chapters of this book trace the cultural mobilities and modalities through which art, artists, and aesthetics intersected with the discourse, ideological positions, and politics of postcolonial South Asia and post-war Czechoslovakia. The chapters follow a roughly chronological order, charting the history of individual South Asian artists and travelling art

Fig. 4 Film still from Píseň míru. 1947, direction: Kučera Jan. © Národní filmový archiv, Prague.

exhibitions as they encountered key personalities and institutions in East/Central Europe. The core of this book's narrative examines the way in which these artists' image practices were impacted by these encounters, and the way in which art collections were established as a response to these meetings, primarily in Czechoslovakia. The efforts that the Czechoslovak side made to present and project South Asia to the Czechoslovak audience is proof of the country's transregional and international orientation during the communist era. It attests to its commitment to establishing a place, a contact zone, and spaces, where history and twentieth-century arts from South Asia can be discussed, evaluated, and recognised, and brought into connection with the arts from other parts of Asia, as well as local artists and arts.

Chapter 2, "A Pakistani Artist in Prague," turns to the South Asian artist Shakir Ali, who lived and studied in Prague in the late 1940s. Ali's special bond with the country and the city stems from his experience of deciding to become a Pakistani citizen on India's independence day. On that day, Ali celebrated the end of colonial rule, together with thousands of young and progressive students from all over the world who had gathered in Prague for the first World Youth Festival. A still from a short film showing the arrival of festival participants by train (Fig. 4), and an image of the closing parade in the centre of Prague (Fig. 5), capture the spirit of excitement

Fig. 5 Image of the World Youth Festival, Prague, 1947. Courtesy of Fotobanka ČTK/Novák Rostislav, ID No. 0670076128.

behind what historian Pia Koivunen calls "the emotional and ideological rationale of the event."[81]

The arrival by train into open ground symbolises hope for what is to come (Fig. 4); and the image of the closing parade, with the "dream front,"[82] carrying a model of the Earth (Fig. 5), offers "a pattern for the global community to build the future world together," against the "Axis Powers."[83] As I argue in this book, the celebratory tone of this event, the first in a long series of similar and steadily growing international events in the socialist world, also inspired the production of culture on the Soviet model. This promised to open up possibilities for new art worlds to emerge, based on the involvement of actors whose voices may not have been heard before.[84] Shakir Ali's experience of travelling to Prague, and of living there for a time during high Stalinism, impacted his personal life and his artistic output.

Chapter 3, "Exhibiting and Collecting South Asian Art in Prague and Lidice," examines the way modernist art from India and West Pakistan/Pakistan, as well as Ceylon/Sri Lanka, was exhibited, collected, and discussed in Czechoslovakia from as early as 1955/56. Even though India gained increasing international exposure beginning in the early 1950s, art and artists from

Pakistan and from Ceylon/Sri Lanka travelled and intersected with Indian artists and art, either at different events, or within art collections. The journey and composition of the first major India exhibition, which consisted largely of modern and contemporary art, and travelled from India to Prague, and then to other venues in East/Central Europe, is the prelude to this chapter. Using numerous archival documents, I reconstruct how this exhibition came about; which bureaucratic, organisational, political, geographical, and ideological hurdles had to be overcome; and how the people involved in the venture experienced cultural and border-crossings. Even though exhibitions and collections were organised around ideas of socialist and international solidarity, personal involvement was significant in the realisation of the projects discussed in this chapter and throughout the book. This is also a reminder not to generalise cultural mobility during the time of the Cold War between the countries of the Eastern Bloc and countries that are part of the 'global majority.' A striking example of this are the two collections discussed in this chapter, namely the collection of Indian modernist art in the NGP, and the collection of South Asian modernist art in the Lidice Art Collection, which I refer here to also as the Lidice Solidarity Collection. While the former is more extensive, created with a curatorial vision over the course of several years, the latter came together through an international appeal for donations. Both collections share the fate of being stored relatively unnoticed in depots for several decades. However, the collections, as well as the exhibitions, tell different stories about a period that is too often understood with little nuance.

Chapter 4 turns to the individual journeys of two Indian artists, Ram Kumar and Maqbool Fida Husain, who travelled regularly to Prague from as early as 1950. Although, during the Cold War, any kind of mobility to East/Central Europe had to be officially approved, these journeys were marked by a friendship that was different from official friendship. In many ways, these individual journeys opened up a discursive space in which art was actively negotiated vis-à-vis location, ideology, and culture, but perhaps more so, the margins. This is how mobility contributed significantly to a reading of post-war modernist art, based on knowledge production, curiosity, and an appreciation that came from the margins. Moreover, frequent travels to Prague by these artists contributed to the formation of art worlds that lay outside the traditional art centres, such as Paris, London, and New York. The regular engagement of these artists with Prague and the Central European cultural milieu, personally, visually, and intellectually, became part of the aesthetics of some of their work. A detailed analysis of their artworks, and a social/political history

of their production and reception, along with an examination of some of their mobilities, is therefore at the core of this chapter.

Chapter 5 complicates the notion of mobility by turning to Indian artist Chittaprosad Bhattacharya's (1915-1978) "immobile mobility." From the early 1950s, Chittaprosad (he is referred to by his first name) built an international career from his one-room apartment with a terrace in the outskirts of Bombay. This is where he regularly received international visitors and local friends. The focus of this chapter is the numerous letters he exchanged with two of his Czechoslovak friends, who supported and encouraged his career. These letters reveal his personal, financial, medical, and ideological anxieties and struggles, as well as his concerns about artmaking and about post-independence art in general. Moreover, they allow us to situate Chittaprosad at the intersection of an imaginative geography that he accessed through his immobile mobility. Recently uncovered written documents and scripts about different versions of the film *Konfese indického grafika Čittaprasáda*, for which film director Pavel Hobl won an award from the World Peace Council at the Leipzig Documentary and Short Film Week for Cinema and Television in 1972, reveal much about how a group of friends from Czechoslovakia were involved in scripting out ways to give Chittaprosad a certain international visibility. While this is evidence of support for a marginalised artist, it is also an effort to add a range of voices to the Cold War art worlds and their networks.

Cold War Art Worlds concludes with Chapter 6, which, based on the book's research and narrative, summarises the composition of the Cold War art worlds, and the ways in which they were shaped by encounters that were inconspicuous, semi-official, and often fleeting, rather than planned. In doing so, it exposes the provincialism of the discipline, and addresses the problems arising from the hasty inclusion of art and artists in recent 'global' art historiography, which often tends to ignore conflict, dissonance, and convergence. An excerpt from ongoing studies of three Indian artists who studied in Prague between 1958 and 1961, and of an Indian artist who came to Prague as artist in residence in 1975, thus illustrates the need for art historians to closely examine the interactions of individuals as they travelled to, experienced, negotiated, and navigated historical and political contexts, and above all the interpersonal connections with their immediate counterparts.

In this way, the rich and understudied relationship between artists from South Asia and the worlds they initiated through their work becomes visible. In Pramod Pati's (1932–1975) training with the Czech pioneer puppet

animator Jiří Trnka (1912–1969), Trnka's original approach to puppet animation and his aesthetics are reflected in Pati's own original output. Hájek closely followed the artistic training of Ajit Chakravarty (1930–2005) (also spelled Chakraborty) and Bishamber Khanna (1930–1999) in Prague. He drew on their exhibitions and their sojourns there to make a statement about the city's transcultural artistic milieu, in which, in his view, artists from many countries, including Vietnam, India, Iran, and Egypt, contributed to create an exciting environment.[85] These environments, as Hájek describes them, constitute the art worlds of the Cold War. Artist Biren De's (1926–2011) stay in Prague from 1971 and 1975, together with the works that he made during this time in the studio of artist Hermína Melicharová at a central location in the old town, adds yet another layer to the ways in which actors met and interacted with each other and with the location.

Finally, the book turns to Miloslav Krása and the Bratislava-based filmmaker Vlado Kubenko (1924–1993), and their involvement in the production of a Czechoslovak short film about four Indian painters. The filmic portrayal of four Indian artists as representatives of the Indian avant-garde will also contribute to a broader understanding of the differences between Czechoslovak interest in South Asia and the commitment of neighbouring Central European countries to South Asia.

The conclusion of the book, therefore, invites reflection on how the different layers of the Cold War art worlds, and the project of modernism from the late 1940s to the 1980s, more broadly, might be brought together. The story of this book is not one that seeks to establish Prague as an art world that can easily be added to the standard history of modernism. The uneasy categorisation comes with the Cold War, and with how Prague, through those who convened in this Central European capital, was animated.

Prague, as examined here, provides a site for the study of modernism through a non-linear series of artistic encounters made possible by cultural mobility. The resulting art world, representative of the many art worlds that emerged during the Cold War period, is thus characterised by multi-site and multi-layered encounters, many of which remain to be discovered and connected.

Chapter 2
A Pakistani Artist in Prague

2.1 Visualising Transformation at a Crossroads in History

Independence from colonial rule and the partition of South Asia, in 1947, was brutal, causing immeasurable suffering. It triggered the genocide of up to one million people, and the displacement of an estimated ten to fifteen million more. Millions of people lost their homes or were abducted, tortured, raped, murdered, and silenced. Families were separated, many never to be united again. The two states that emerged from this trauma, the two nation states that were carved out of what had been British colonial India since 1858, were the new Indian Republic and the Islamic Republic of West and East Pakistan (which became Bangladesh in 1971). The rupture caused by the partition was both historic and political, and was thus accompanied by new beginnings that required new orientations, under new socio-political circumstances.

Fragmented postcolonial spaces emerged in the nexus of religion, nation, and state, where art sought to position itself. Institution-building became a priority across South Asia, especially in West Pakistan and East Pakistan, where a lack of institutions prompted artists to take the initiative. The so-called "euphoria of internationalism,"[1] "the trajectory of Nehruvian state," often attributed to post-independence Indian art, corresponds to the transnationalism that art historians attribute to art from both India and Pakistan of the time.[2]

The partition of South Asia, which caused massive displacement of people, along with entire communities, is also reflected in artists' lives and biographies. Artists' families were torn apart; many migrated across the newly established borders to one of the many South Asian metropolises to take refuge and start a new life. Opportunities to study in a Western metropolis, or simply set up a studio there, often in Paris or London, also contributed to the fact that an increasing number of artists were on the move and embraced voluntary mobility. This suggests that despite the borders being erected to create new territories, nations, and countries, many of those on the move felt displaced and marginal, with an emotional

status that was not yet fully defined. The question of where to belong and how to explain this belonging, whether new or old, was of paramount concern for artists, and informed and directed their concerns and actions.

Metamorphosis (Fig. 6), a painting by South Asian/Pakistani artist Zubeida Agha (1922–1997) from 1948, serves as a landmark work. It visualises transformation as a complex construction on a monotonous grey surface, where forms emerge next to and within each other. Each form is contoured with more or less strong lines, and is thus territorially independent or delimited from its neighbouring form. Territorial overlaps, however, are created by forms that are partially superimposed and contiguous, as well as by meandering lines that make connections between separated forms. These forms vary in size and shape, but can be related to each other through the connecting lines. For this reason, I view these surrealistic forms as symbolic of a radical transformation in which new connections are established, and old ones are renewed, through encounter and exchange.

Agha's artistic formation took place outside the colonial art school, the Mayo School of Art in Lahore (later to become the National College of Arts, NCA). In 1944, she trained in the studio of the artist Bhabesh Chandra Sanyal (1901–2003) in Lahore. Later, in 1946, she trained under the Italian artist Mario Perlingieri, a former prisoner of war who was held in India, in Bhopal, during World War II.[3] Whatever role the Italian artist Perlingieri may have played in Agha's career, the student–teacher relationship attests to how displacement and various kinds of mobility resulted in encounters that contributed significantly to the transcultural formations[4] of artists in places far away from the traditional centres of artistic innovation in Europe.

Zubeida Agha's painting *Metamorphosis* (Fig. 6) serves as a touchstone for making a connection between modernism in Pakistan and the events of 1947.[5] However, for Shakir Ali, who left India to join the Slade School of Fine Art in London in January 1947, the end of colonisation and the birth of Pakistan coincided with an event far removed from South Asia, in the centre of Europe. In the summer of 1947, from July 20 to August 17, the Central European capital city, Prague, became a pilgrimage site, to which thousands of young students from around the world travelled to attend the first World Youth Festival. The Soviet authorities sought political and ideological control of the event, as they had at other mass organisations at the time, such as the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the International Organization of Journalists,

Fig. 6 Zubeida Agha, *Metamorphosis*, 1948. Oil on canvas, 71 × 61 cm. From the Collection of (Late) ZISHAN AFZAL KHAN, Islamabad. Courtesy of Bano & Noorie Abbas.

the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and the International Union of Students.[6] The Prague World Youth Festival, and, indeed, the iterations that followed at two-year intervals in Budapest (1949), East Berlin (1951), Bucharest (1953), Warsaw (1955), etc., attracted young people through a strategic performance of how to enact peace and friendship during the time of the Cold War.[7] The World Youth Festivals, historian Pia Koivunen argues, became significant spaces for transnational encounters among young people at a time when travel restrictions and boundaries imposed by the Cold War resulted in restricted cultural exchange.[8]

For the Indian artist Shakir Ali, who journeyed to Prague from London with a group of South Asian students, the World Youth Festival coincided with the actual end of colonialism in India. Thus, on August 15, 1947, as Ali stated in an interview for the Czechoslovak journal *New Orient Bimonthly* many years later, he marched with fellow South Asian students in front of the Czechoslovak parliament to celebrate independence from British

colonial rule, along with the creation of the independent state of Pakistan. Shakir Ali, thousands of miles away from South Asia, decided to become a Pakistani citizen in Prague on the day of the partition of the subcontinent.

> I am quite proud to have been the first citizen of Pakistan to unfurl the Pakistan flag in Prague. Naturally, at that time I had no idea what the flag of our new state would look like, so I simply made a little green flag of the Muslim League with a white crescent and star; it was with this that I waved in front of the Czechoslovak Parliament when I and other students from India celebrated the liberation of our country from British domination.[9]

Prague and the World Youth Festival were transformative and decisive experiences for Shakir Ali. The fact that they coincided with the birth of the Pakistani nation and the end of the British Empire is significant and represents a paradigmatic new beginning. For Shakir Ali, his experience in the heart of Europe in 1947 led to a kind of romantic attachment to Prague and to Czechoslovakia—so much so that he applied for a scholarship back in London that allowed him to return to the Central European capital city two years later. Up until this point, Shakir Ali had journeyed and lived in many places across South Asia and Europe. He experienced a life in transition in a period that was marked by processes of decolonisation and post-war reconstruction, in which those who were actively involved were driven by efforts to overcome "international structures of unequal integration and racial hierarchy."[10] The efforts of the collective struggle, but also the aspiration and hope of the postcolonial and decolonising regions of the world for freedom and independence, come together in what Vijay Prashad calls not the "place," but the "project," of the Third World.[11] Thus, as a project of collective thinking, the Third World articulates "freedom time,"[12] as Gary Wilder puts it, which manifested itself as solidarity at events and places like the World Youth Festival in Prague. The marches in Prague under the banner of the participants' nations (Fig. 7) and the joint gatherings, as seen on Wenceslas Square in the centre of Prague (Fig. 8), contributed significantly to the sense of possibility that was signalled at this crossroads in history. Through the involvement of young people from all continents, youth festivals therefore became "gathering spaces for transnational and trans-systemic communication and exchange."[13]

For the participants of the Prague World Youth Festival, at any rate, the spirit of collective construction and reconstruction was fostered

Fig. 7 Image of the World Youth Festival, Prague, 1947. Courtesy of Fotobanka ČTK/ Holoubek Iljič, ID No. 0808774714.

Fig. 8 Image of the World Youth Festival, Prague, 1947. Courtesy of Fotobanka ČTK/ Holoubek Iljič, ID No. 0669786281.

Fig. 9 Photograph with Shakir Ali taking part in rebuilding Lidice, date unknown. Courtesy of Shakir Ali Museum, Lahore.

throughout the region of Central Europe by building and rebuilding initiatives in the destroyed and martyred village of Lidice (Fig. 9), twenty kilometres west of Prague, but also in the relatively distant Yugoslavia, Poland, Bulgaria, and other places.[14]

The hope that Prague embodied as both a discursive and a central geographical location was formative for Shakir Ali. It was a crossroads that had a lasting impact on both his private life and his artistic subjectivity.

In the aforementioned interview with *New Orient Bimonthly,* many years later, he told Jan Marek, the interviewer, that he "loved Prague passionately and considered it to be [his] home town, much more than [he] ever did impersonal London or Bombay."[15]

Shakir Ali's return to West Pakistan in 1951, and the role he was to play there as an artist, teacher, and head of the country's premier art institution, the National College of Arts, NCA, necessitates a closer look at the places he stayed and the institutions that hosted him prior to his return to South Asia. His artistic vision unfolded through mobility, not only between the former colony and the former empire, but also in and between geographies not usually acknowledged by accounts of post-war modernism or nationally framed art histories. This adds a layer of complexity to such accounts, and it shows us how artists from the decolonising world used post-war and Cold War cultural events and the networks they entailed to position themselves and challenge the Paris–New York–London axis, or the Bombay–London–Paris axis, which seemed to dominate routes of cultural exchange at mid-century.

2.2 Shakir Ali: Ideological Affiliations of Artist and Traveller

Shakir Ali's life and career are closely bound up in how he experienced institutions and events, journeying to and through places, and establishing friendships, as well as personal and professional relationships. These included the final years of the British Empire in Bombay (1937–1946); the post-war years in London (1947–1949); the short but decisive intermezzo at the Academy of the French artist and teacher André Lhote (1948); his first visit to Prague in 1947; his subsequent stay in Prague (1949–1950) at the height of Stalinist repressions; and his journey back to Lahore, his final destination, where he played a leading role in the direction that art was taking in Pakistan. In the monumental work *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1), executed in his Lahore studio as a donation to the Lidice Art Collection, his life and his mobility are allegorised as a flock of migratory birds moving collectively and elegantly across a vast expanse.

I have written about this painting in detail elsewhere,[16] elaborating on how the artist echoed Rainer Maria Rilke's ideas about inner space, movement, and the material world, but also on how he reflects on Julius Fučík's book

Notes from the Gallows.[17] I discussed the discrepancy between the two writers' positions—the modernist writing of Rilke, versus the very politically engaged writing of the communist intellectual Fučík, whose literary output was appropriated by the communist regime in Czechoslovakia—and the way that Shakir Ali reconciled these two positions. The importance for him, I noted, lay in what the writers' messages conveyed.[18] The apparently diametrically opposed positions represented by Fučík, on the one hand, as one of hope and resistance, and Rilke, on the other hand, as one of strict modernism, were, for Shakir Ali, lived experiences. Through his own life, informed by mobility and largely lived in transition, the artist reconciled and overcame these oppositions.

Before further contextualising this work, let us step back and reflect on Shakir Ali's experiences across geographies, starting with the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art (J.J. School of Art) and the milieu of the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) in Bombay. Ali joined the J.J. School of Art in 1938, after he had already received some art training in New Delhi at the studios of the Ukil brothers, who were known to have taught in the late Bengal style.[19] Ali spent seven years at the J.J. School of Art, "the first six as a student, and the last years as a fellow,"[20] as he explained in an interview. The few surviving works by Ali from this period reflect the curriculum of the J.J. School, which included basic compositional principles. Archived reports of the J.J. School, covering the years 1938–1947, list the subjects taught. They reveal that art lessons were didactic, and devoted to classical criteria, such as compositional drawing, object drawing, perspective and memory drawing, still life, and the living figure, as well as the living head and anatomy lessons.[21] For mural-panel classes, students were taken to study the caves at both Ajanta and Ellora.[22] Sifting through the reports from these archives provides an overview of the visual results in different sections for examinations and diplomas. An early work by Shakir Ali, *Village Scene with Three Deers* (Fig. 10), which is frequently published as an example of his Bombay years,[23] is not unlike many of the works documented in the J.J. School's archives, especially in the mural-panel section.[24] In its flattened, narrative style in gouache technique, which allows for a thin, as well as a thick, application process on paper, this early work by Shakir Ali demonstrates the coming together of a number of traditions of South Asia.

Some of the strong contour lines in this work (Fig. 10) are reminiscent of his early training in Bengal-style painting. The overall subject of the painting, however, can be linked to the Pahari miniature school,

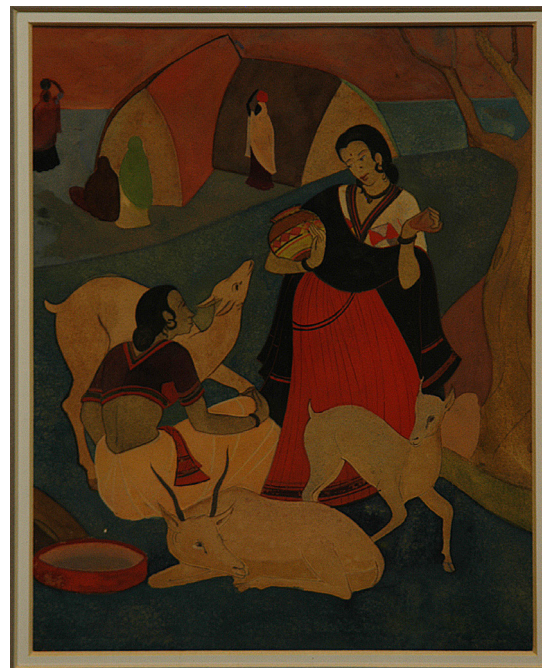


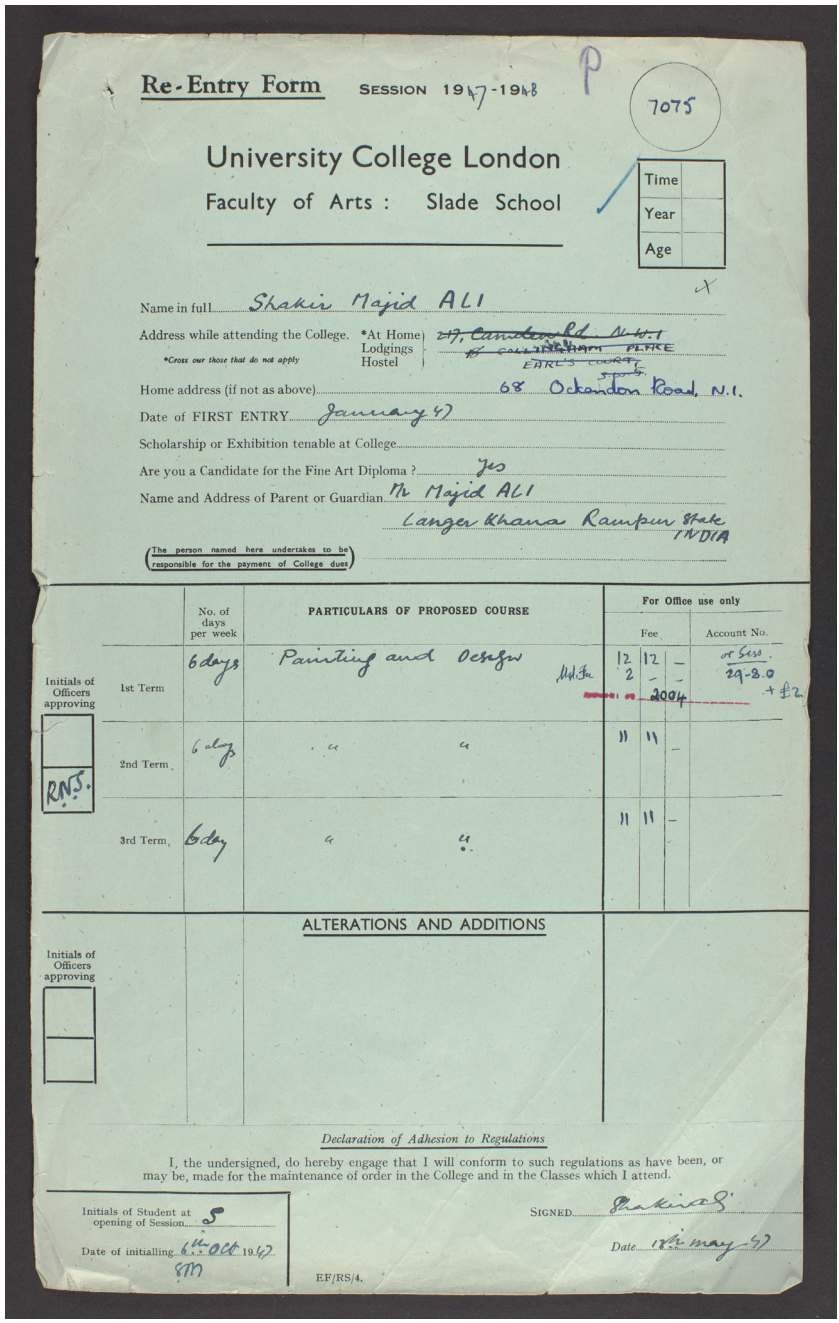
Fig. 10 Shakir Ali, *Village Scene with Three Deers,* 1941. Gouache on paper, 26 × 20 cm. Courtesy of the Rangoonwala (Wahab Jaffer) Collection.

with a likely reference to the story of Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana in exile.[25] Here, Amrita Sher-Gil (1913–1941), whose own art has delved into South Asia's traditions, including the ancient Buddhist murals of Ajanta and the miniature painting traditions of the Mughals and the Pahari region, comes to mind. Shakir Ali's work, *Village Scene with Three Deers* (Fig. 10), however, seems to correspond exactly to what the J.J. School of Art promoted and was able to convey at the time. Thus, the archive reports that speak of "a wave of modernism" in the school, according to which "modern trends and techniques gave students a chance to experiment, undeterred, which sometimes produced good results,"[26] must be viewed with scepticism. The conclusion of one such report, claiming that the modernist input "adversely affected the tradition of good drawing so ably laid in the previous regimes,"[27] suggests that modernism, in whatever restrained ways it was encouraged, occupied a difficult position. Accounts that the school had begun to promote impressionist and modernist styles[28] under the principalship (1936–1946) of Charles Gerrard (1892–1964), whose predecessor was Gladstone Solomon (1918–1936), known for advocating naturalism, therefore require reassessment.

The dissatisfaction of many art students with the colonial art school and its syllabus led those who aspired to a career as an artist, rather than as an artisan or commercial designer, to look outside the confines of the art school. Printed material offering reproductions of artists' works from elsewhere was available and a welcome source of information. This "decontextualized access to art across cultures that transcends the traditional art historical categories of nations and periods," as Partha Mitter has described it,[29] exposed Indian artists to the larger community of artistic modernism, mediating between colonial artists, western art, and art from other parts of Asia. In an interview in Mumbai in July 2017, artist Akbar Padamsee (1928–2020) told me about his interest in examining printed material across libraries in Bombay in the late 1940s. Padamsee found this much more inspiring than attending classes at the J.J. School of Art.[30]

An important framework of engagement in a discursive field outside the art school was the literary circle of the All-India Progressive Writers' Association (AIPWA or PWA) and the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA).[31] These groups were formed by Marxist intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s, and were closely connected to the Communist Party of India. The short stories Shakir Ali wrote in Urdu during his years in Bombay represented ideas inspired by these movements.[32] Ultimately, many of his subsequent political activities and ideological associations, both in London and Prague, can be linked to his leftist political outlook, which began in late-colonial Bombay.

Narrating Shakir Ali's work and life requires us to reflect on his early social and political formation, how it accompanied him across regions and continents, through major historical and social changes at 'conjunctural terrains,' and how it contributed to his experiences as a human being and as an artist on the move. When he joined the Slade School of Fine Art in London, in January 1947, he joined as a student from the colony. When he left the school in 1949, he left as a Pakistani citizen with an Indian passport. The decision to become a Pakistani citizen was made in Prague; but the process of decolonisation took time, and his attachment to London, the former imperial metropolis, stayed with him for quite a while. Returning to the archive as a repository of relevant information, we are able to trace Shakir Ali's journey and contextualise the networks of relations that he formed, and which formed him: administrative files from the Slade archive, correspondence from the archive with the artist André Lhote (1885–1962), his teacher in France, and various records from the Prague archives.



Re-Entry Form SESSION 1947-1948

7075

University College London

Faculty of Arts : Slade School

Time | Year | Age

Name in full Shakir Majid ALI

Address while attending the College. *At Home 29, Camden Rd. N.W.1
Lodgings 6 CALLINGHAM PLACE EARL'S COURT S.W.5
Hostel
*Cross out those that do not apply

Home address (if not as above) 68 Ockendon Road, N.1.

Date of FIRST ENTRY January 47

Scholarship or Exhibition tenable at College

Are you a Candidate for the Fine Art Diploma ? Yes

Name and Address of Parent or Guardian Mr Majid ALI
Langer Khana Rampur State INDIA

(The person named here undertakes to be responsible for the payment of College dues)

Initials of Officers approving		No. of days per week	PARTICULARS OF PROPOSED COURSE	For Office use only: Fee	Account No.
RNS.	1st Term	6 days	Painting and Design	12 12 – / 2 – –	or Sess. 29-3.0 + £2
	2nd Term	6 days	" "	11 11 –	
	3rd Term	6 day	" "	11 11 –	

ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS

Initials of Officers approving

Declaration of Adhesion to Regulations

I, the undersigned, do hereby engage that I will conform to such regulations as have been, or may be, made for the maintenance of order in the College and in the Classes which I attend.

Initials of Student at opening of Session S

Date of initialling 6th Oct 1947 SM

SIGNED Shakir Ali

Date 14th may 47

EF/RS/4.

Fig. 11 Shakir Ali, Re-entry form Slade School, Faculty of Arts, Painting & Design Course, with London addresses while attending the College. From the UCL Special Collections. Registry File 7075.

The Slade registration form reveals some of Shakir Ali's addresses and affiliations, and allows us to sketch out the trajectory of his mobility. His India address remains a constant one, with Langer Khana, Rampur State, as his home base.[33] His father's address, however, changes: from Langer Khana, Rampur State, in the First Entry Forms, to the North Western Hotel in Beaumont Road, Karachi, in forms from late 1947 onwards, indicating the temporary location of his family after their migration from Rampur in India, to Karachi in West Pakistan.[34] Ali's London addresses also change: from 217 Camden Road[35] to 68 Ockendon Road, London, N1,[36] and then to the Student Movement House at 103 Gower Street.[37] The Student Movement House is listed to have been a meeting place for students of colour in London, and possibly attracted left-leaning activists.[38] This record of different places and changing addresses, with only some traces visible in the archival records (Fig. 11), illustrates the migratory background, at least in part, against which the interlocking experiences of modernism, decolonisation, and mobility unfolded.

Charting some of the transitions as lived and experienced by the artist, the record of travel and mobility thus traces the evolution of India's colonial past to its fragmented, postcolonial history. Shakir Ali's remark that in contrast to Prague, he found Bombay and London impersonal,[39] may be explained by comparing the spaces and infrastructures of late-colonial Bombay and post-war London. When the artist moved in and through these spaces, he must have sensed more similarities than differences between them. This is, perhaps, why the artist sought out substitutes that signalled a break, rather than a continuity, with this development, and allowed new directions and new beginnings to emerge.

2.3 Decolonisation and Sites of Production

The art training that Shakir Ali received in Bombay and London was shaped by programmes that followed the Beaux Arts model, although with variations. The J.J. School of Art practised a conservative, but art-oriented approach, focusing on draughtsmanship: the technique of rendering given parameters, such as perspective, memory, drawing, decorative design, drawing from antique plaster casts, etc. One could say that artists were primarily trained to become good copyists, and not to contemplate whether acquiring the skill of copying was meaningful or not. At the Slade, the focus was on drawing from antique plaster casts and on drawing in

the Life Room, skills that Shakir Ali had already acquired during the seven years he studied and taught at the J.J. School of Art.

According to archived letters that accompanied his application to the Slade, we learn that Shakir Ali had begun the application process as early as 1945.[40] A letter written by Charles R. Gerrard, then director of the J.J. School of Art, lists the artist's achievements: his Government of Bombay Art Diploma in Drawing and Painting; his participation in many All India Art Exhibitions; the purchase of his works by the school's collection; and the scholarship he received for mural decoration.[41] In a letter signed by Slade Professor of Fine Art Randolph Schwabe, dated March 1947, we further discover that Ali was unable to travel to the country before January 1947, and, therefore, enrolled in the second half of the school year,[42] thus joining the 1946/47 academic year in January 1947.[43] What follows are documents proving that a request was submitted to exempt the artist from the fine art, anatomy, geometry, and perspective courses, on the basis of his previous training.[44] By the time he left Slade in 1949, he held certificates in design and the history of art, and a University Diploma in Fine Art—Painting and Drawing and Design.[45] These documents demonstrate that Shakir Ali continued in London the training he had already received in Bombay, consolidating skills through months of practice.

When he joined André Lhote's field academy in Gordes[46] in the south of France, during the summer of 1948, Shakir Ali was exposed to a kind of art training that must have come as a welcome change.[47] Apart from the difference in climate between London and the south of France, Lhote was known for his structured and reasoned approach to modernism, where the past was not seen as an obstacle, but as a base upon which to build. Lhote's attempt to reconcile tradition with modernity was a lived reality that took shape through his endeavour to restore small French villages in the south of France, where he very strategically set up his field academies. The environment that Lhote created was informal and familiar, one in which the teacher perceived himself as engaged in a constant process of learning through, and exchanging with, those who came to study with him. The following note by Lhote testifies to this attitude:

> I would be an ungrateful person, if I did not add that of all these students, I am the one who learns the most things. Indeed, by dint of abandoning in the company of these charming comrades the most diverse pictorial problems, by touching up the most different works, I was forced to go around all the pictorial

> techniques possible. I owe a great deal to those whom I teach, which is why I was tempted a moment ago to call them my collaborators. If one asked me one day why I teach, I could answer without hesitation: "to learn better."[48]

In this statement, Lhote takes a stand and situates his academy as a point of contact—a transcultural place, co-created jointly by students of different walks of life and their teachers, who derive common benefits from it. What Shakir Ali took away from his participation at Lhote's field academy is an approach to pictorial composition not based on copying, but rather on observational practice, with principles related to order, method, figure, and form.[49] Lhote's skill in offering a structured approach to art-making was further reflected in his famous 'correction classes,' where he discussed individual works created by students in front of the class. This was an important component of Lhote's teaching method. In a photograph taken by Willy Ronis in Gordes in 1948 (Fig. 12), we see Shakir Ali and André Lhote standing next to an easel with a landscape painting in front of a small group turned towards them. This photo shows a smiling group of people of different ages, female and male, casually attired, in a room flooded with light. The photograph was taken by Willy Ronis (1910–2009), who, together with his wife, the artist Marie-Anne Lansiaux (1910–1991), had bought a house in Gordes around this time. In this photograph, all eyes are on Lhote, who speaks to the group. The landscape painting being discussed could be Shakir Ali's, as he is standing next to it, smiling.[50] The light that enters the room gently, most likely through an open window, creates an atmosphere that recalls *Nu provençal*, the famous photograph by Willy Ronis in 1949 of Marie-Anne Lansiaux in their house in Gordes. What these photographs capture more than anything else is the easy feeling of Provençal life, something that must have attracted Shakir Ali.

When Lhote spoke to his students about the coherent organisation of their compositions, he often referred to the geometrical laws applied by masters such as Cézanne, and others. His analytical gaze was also turned to ancient Egyptian art, however, which he regarded as a precursor to Cubist art.[51] The landscape painting with a battle scene, a painting of Indian origin, which we see in Willy Ronis's photo (Fig. 12), placed on the wall behind Shakir Ali and André Lhote, is further evidence of Lhote's interest in Indian art. Lhote's various cultural appropriations are therefore based on his curiosity about the structures of pictorial compositions as they appear across cultures. He turned to European art and to the Old Masters, but he also looked beyond geographies of nation and culture.

Fig. 12 *Chez André et Simone Lhote, Gordes (Vaucluse)*, 1948, photograph. © Ministère de la Culture—Médiathèque du patrimoine et de la photographie, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn/ Willy Ronis, © ADAGP.

For Shakir Ali, the experience at Lhote's field academy in Gordes was a time filled with study and producing work; but perhaps, even more, it was an experience of a different style of life, based on a geographically decentred and non-hierarchically organised infrastructure. Let us return to the arrangement of the group captured in the photo by Willy Ronis (Fig. 12). The group gathers loosely around André Lhote, who is standing in the centre. In comparison with other photographic group portraits of André Lhote and his students, both at his academy, but also at his field academies (Fig. 13, Fig. 14), we can conclude that this was his preferred angle of self-representation.

Lhote's preferred arrangement shows him amid his students, thus avoiding clear hierarchical structures.[52] If we compare these images with the preferred formal self-representation of group photographs taken every year outside the Slade School,[53] a structural difference immediately becomes clear. There, the large group of students and professors are lined up rather rigidly; here, in Lhote's academy, the teacher and students mingle in a small and intimate group, and can hardly be distinguished from one another. The fact that Lhote chose to be photographed at work,

Fig. 13 Group portrait with André Lhote and students in Gordes/Mirmande. © Archives André Lhote.

Fig. 14 Group portrait with André Lhote and students in Paris ca. 1930. © Archives André Lhote.

whether in the studio of the academy in Paris, or outdoors in the south of France, testifies to his commitment to his profession as an artist. Here, in the south of France, the emphasis is on art as a collaborative effort, while at the Slade, the institutional structure is paramount. For Shakir Ali, this marks a moment when he experienced the difference between the "hierarchised spatial politics [that existed] between South Asia and Britain,"[54] and an environment that offered itself as an alternative—one in which the priority was the collective effort to produce modernist paintings. The location of Lhote's field academy, peripheral in a geographical sense, but nevertheless part of the established infrastructures of modernism, through Lhote's own involvement, as well as through those who came to participate, opened up an alternative route and vision for Shakir Ali, one that lay off the beaten track of East–West connections.[55]

After returning to London, Shakir Ali began his diploma year at the Slade, graduating with a university diploma in Fine Art, Painting, Drawing, and Design in 1949.[56] During this time, he applied for a scholarship in textile design with the Czechoslovak Ministry of Education, so that he could return to Prague. He was one of eight 'British' students who were accepted.[57] One of his motivations for returning to Prague could have been his friend Masood Ali Khan, whom he knew from London, and who had already established himself in Prague, in October 1948.[58] Shakir Ali arrived in Prague on September 8, 1949,[59] and remained there until late 1950.[60]

While in Prague, he studied at the Academy of Arts, Architecture & Design (UMPRUM/Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová v Praze), and attended courses by artists Emil Filla (1882–1953) and Alois Fišárek (1906–1980); the latter's name appears in Shakir Ali's student registration card from UMPRUM.[61] Since he held a scholarship for textile design, he spent time visiting a small textile company approximately fifty kilometres southwest of Prague, which could have been at Hořovice.[62] An example of a design he made for the Czechoslovak textile industry is reproduced in an 1950 edition of *Nový Orient* (Fig. 15).

In this design, the artist uses motifs of Indian figures in dancing poses, holding musical instruments, and depicted in a courtly manner. Additionally, there are stylised plant and vegetative forms, as well as a strikingly large number of geometric patterns in the figures' clothing, but also on other elements, such as the architecture. The outermost edge of the

Fig. 15 Shakir Ali, Textile design for the Czechoslovak textile industry. Reproduced in *Nový Orient* 12 (1950), fifth annual volume, no. 11, 245.[63]

square-shaped textile is decorated with an interlinked rhombic pattern. A sequence of figures, plants, architectural elements, and patterns runs along the four sides of the fabric. In the innermost space of the textile is a square with geometric lines. The lines making up the design partly follow individual patterns between and around the figures. This results in a variation of traditional motifs with inventive design possibilities. The area of the inner square, in particular, with a strongly reduced geometric pattern, creates a contrast to the figurative accentuated pattern surrounding it. Although such contrasts are common in South Asian textile design, they take on modernist features in this work by Shakir Ali, allowing us to make a connection with his works on paper and on canvas. In a previous edition of *Nový Orient* from the same year, an image of a painting by Shakir Ali, in which he depicts life in an Indian village in a style reminiscent of Pahari miniatures (Fig. 16), recalls motifs in *Village Scene with Three Deers* from 1941 (Fig. 10).

It is unclear whether Shakir Ali was invited to prepare a design for a mural to be realised in Prague. Judging by the image, it is more likely that it was an assignment as part of his training at UMPRUM.

Život na indické vesnici. – Návrh na nástěnnou malbu pákistánského malíře Šakíra Álího, který letos studoval na Vyšší škole uměleckého průmyslu v Praze.

Fig. 16 Shakir Ali, *Life in an Indian Village*. The design for a mural by Pakistani painter Shakir Ali, who studied this year at the Higher School of Art Industry in Prague. *Nový Orient* 12 (1950), fifth annual double volume, no. 9–10, 220.[64]

The works of art that were shown in *Nový Orient* served mainly decorative purposes and were a way for artists to gain a little bit of income. However, the geographic range of the artists included was often connected to the content of the issue. In the case of the earlier edition, Shakir Ali's image (Fig. 16) is followed by a report from the Tadjik journalist Mirzo Tursun-Zade, who attended a visit by the Soviet writers' delegation to Pakistan in 1949. The later 1950 issue, with Ali's textile design (Fig. 15), was primarily devoted to Indian students and peace movements.

Apart from the reproduction of these two works, there is no art that can be attributed to Shakir Ali's Prague period. Therefore, the painting he produced many years later in Lahore, as a donation to the future Solidarity Collection in Lidice, provides a framework for looking back at his experiences in Prague (Fig. 1). My assessment of this work goes back to the time when I discovered it in 2014 in the Lidice Collection.[65] Since then, I have been able to locate a series of documents from various archives in Prague, of which those from the police headquarters and the former secret police are of particular value for further assessing Shakir Ali's stay in Prague and some of the work that he made thereafter.

The archive collection of the Prague police headquarters contains quite a bit of information about Shakir Ali's move from London to Czechoslovakia. These documents list various London addresses, as well as his Prague addresses, but also the exact date of the application procedure for moving to Prague, which began at the Czech Embassy in London. The time requested for the duration of his residence permit kept changing—from one year, which was approved, but then crossed out and rejected—and included an evaluation of his person, for internal purposes, as the report states. The document also shows that he did not pay any visa fee, and that it was a single-entry visa. The date on which the residence permit expires was changed several times, but we can assume that December 31, 1950, was the last possible date for his departure from Prague. What is perhaps more interesting is his religious affiliation, which is given as "indifferent," as well as his mother tongue, which is registered not as Urdu, but as Hindi. The only income given is his scholarship from the Czechoslovak government. On the last of seven pages, it is noted that he has been active in the Communist Party in England for two years, and a possible date for his leaving the country for Pakistan is listed as October 3, 1950.[66] According to his student card from UMPRUM, he left Czechoslovakia for India on October 27, 1950.[67] We can thus conclude that Shakir Ali stayed approximately one year in Prague, before returning to London, and then on to Pakistan.

If we turn to yet another source for information, the archive of the former security service in Prague,[68] we glean further knowledge about Shakir Ali's stay in Prague, and his journey to Pakistan via England. He made this journey together with his Czechoslovak wife, Marie Petranová, whom he met and married while living in Prague.[69] The plan to go to Pakistan after the end of Ali's academic year in Prague was already noted at the application stage in London. Prague thus becomes part of his itinerary, and marks the crossroads at which he returns to South Asia after almost four years of absence. The South Asia that he returns to, however, is a postcolonial landscape: changed and divided, both culturally and politically, with new borders and undefined margins. In Pakistan, politically, there was uncertainty between a newly formed, volatile centre, and the provinces.[70] Culturally, the absence of any form of institutionalised structure[71] opened the possibility of embracing the margins from all sides. It is within the space of these margins that Shakir

Ali and his wife Marie end up and try to position themselves, eventually at the cost of their marriage.

The security police report reads like an assessment of Ali and his wife Petranová as possible agents in Pakistan. It begins with Mrs Petranová's visit to the Czech security agent in Prague, and ends when she and her husband disembark the ship in Karachi and enter Pakistan. It is clear from this report that both have been under surveillance, from the time Shakir Ali applied for a scholarship in London to the time he, together with Marie, journeyed back to Pakistan.[72]

The report is also based on conversations that took place, primarily between Petranová and the agent, rather than with Ali, possibly because Shakir Ali did not speak Czech or Slovak (as noted in the file).[73] Whether it is true that the agent met the two travellers on the ship *en route* to Karachi "by chance,"[74] as he/she describes it, cannot be clarified; but it reinforces the overall impression of mistrust expressed in the language of this report. The mistrust is primarily characterised by the question of whether the two persons under surveillance qualify as trustworthy communists, and may thus be considered for cooperation. The report shows that suspicion is directed mainly toward Mrs Petranová. The agent does not seem to believe in her alleged party affiliation, despite the badge she wore at the meeting in Prague.[75] Shakir Ali, on the other hand, was assessed as a very "progressive" person—"modest," "quiet," "hard-working and popular."[76] His media-related cooperation with "RP" (possibly *Rudé Právo*) and with an undefined radio station are mentioned.[77]

The report further states that Ali was referred to the writer of the report through the recommendation of Krása. It then says that the Alis would eventually be sending reports and materials from Pakistan to someone who is mentioned in the report with the code INFIMINI*, written in capital letters. This, as well as another code name, appears throughout the report, allowing us to assume that this could refer to secret collaborators. The suspicions of the agent, who happened to be journeying with the Alis on the ship to Karachi, were further fuelled when he/she asked Mrs Petranová what she and her husband had been doing since the time of their last meeting in Prague, and now, during the past three months. Her explanation of the difficulties they had faced at the hands of the English authorities did not seem to satisfy the agent, so he/she followed up and asked how they were keeping their heads above water financially. Her

statement that she worked at Centrotex, with the help of the trade attaché Kadlec, was recorded as a note.[78]

The distrust, however, only increased after their arrival in Karachi, where the Alis were apparently seen in the company of an American officer (which made the two very uneasy, according to the author of the report). So-called "local friends" then warned the agent to be particularly careful of Mrs Ali, as they now viewed her unequivocally as an Anglo-American spy. In addition, information circulated about another Czechoslovak woman in Lahore, who was also allegedly involved in Anglo-American espionage. The author of the report, therefore, called for both INFIMINI* and others who might come into contact with the Alis (i.e. Krása, from the government) to be vigilant and forewarned about them. The copy of the report is dated April 30, 1951, and signed with the name Schovánková.[79]

2.4 Codes of Affiliation

The pages of these reports, from the Slade archives, as well as the Prague archives, reveal a perpetual process of applying and reapplying for travel documents, which defined Shakir Ali's experience from the time he left Bombay. They also reveal his financial difficulties. In sum, they register the character of the artist's life as a migrant, and demonstrate the ways he experienced the uneven spaces of modernity, between colony and imperial metropolis, between former colony and former imperial metropolis, and between political and ideological blocs, as they emerged in the aftermath of World War II. Moreover, these archival records give us a glimpse into a life of transition, instability, and uncertainty, a life of temporal adjustment, and into the complexities of claiming citizenship in a country that had only recently come into existence.

Although the archived documents from the Slade and from Prague are essentially different in nature—on one hand, the administrative information of an art academy; on the other, documents from the consular and secret police department of a communist country—these documents suggest that the artist's journey as such was defined by affiliations and codes that Ranajit Guha, in his important text *The Migrant's Time*,[80] has defined as "codes of belonging," and which can here be modified as "codes of affiliation." While belonging can be more clearly identified with codes

that establish a connection to a community, affiliation is more appropriate for the kinds of codes that underpin Shakir Ali's mobility. Although this mobility is characterised by "solidarity and exchange" and "alliance,"[81] distance, distrust, suspicion, and uncertainty denote an affiliation that is slightly different from the more familiar "belonging." As opposed to belonging, affiliation is here seen as more fluid and active, which is where the "contrapuntal" and the "conjunctural," together with the codes that define Mercer's ideas about different kinds of exchange, help to inform the Central European crossroads.

The application process for the Slade was primarily concerned with the assessment of the artist's professional abilities and achievements. The Prague documents, on the other hand, paint a very different picture. Here, the documents no longer focus on the professional ability of the artist (although they concern a visa for a scholarship for an art school); rather, the documents focus primarily on the applicant's political attitudes. The codes of affiliation recorded in these documents reflect the changing political landscape, with continuities of hierarchical structures, but also with hopes for alternative futures. These hopes were fuelled through events of international significance that created new geographical links and promised transformative change.[82] In this sense, Prague and the World Youth Festival was particularly appealing for participants from the decolonising regions of the world, in their collective desire to remake the post-war world. The hardship and distress involved in crossing borders, the endless applications for permits, visas, passports, and scholarships, and the often precarious living conditions had to be endured, and were part of the effort. The collective effort and reconstruction programmes carried out, for example, by the World Youth Festival in Lidice, transformed these aspirations into an example of a living practice.

If we revisit the work *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1) and consider the traces of information gathered from the archival sources presented above, we may be able to add another layer of interpretation, connected to Shakir Ali's vision of modernism, informed by his mobility across geographies and across the ideological post-war blocs. When Shakir Ali and his Czechoslovak wife Marie Petranová arrived in Pakistan in 1951, it was initially difficult for them to gain a foothold in this still very young country. Marie soon left him for one of his friends,[83] which leads us to wonder if this had anything to do with the surveillance by the Czechoslovak agents,

or with the unproved allegations of collaboration and espionage for either side of the political spectrum. The idea that the couple, when they disembarked from the boat in Karachi, were courted by the communists as well as by the Americans and the British certainly suggests that the Cold War was a shadow under which the new state developed. The Alis seemed to have been followed by this shadow.

In any case, after making a minimal living as a drawing teacher in Karachi, Shakir Ali's appointment as a lecturer at the Mayo School of Art in Lahore in 1952 must have come as a welcome opportunity. His transfer to Lahore connected him with a group of artists, with whom he formed the Lahore Art Circle.[84] As the only artist with an international career and transregional experience, he became influential in the development of these artists and others in Lahore. He shared with them his vision of modernism, as it was lived and experienced across geographies and institutions. Many Lahore-based artists, intellectuals, and writers were progressive and left-leaning, and they frequently gathered at iconic venues, such as the Pak Tea House and the Coffee House, both situated on Mall Road near the Mayo School of Art. These locations served as vibrant hubs for cultural and intellectual exchange, fostering discussions that significantly influenced the artistic and literary landscape of the time. Art exhibitions, including those of the Lahore Art Circle, were held at the United States Information Center in Murree,[85] as well as at the Russian Cultural Center in Karachi, and at the office of the American Friends of the Middle East in Karachi. This is somewhat consistent with the image of Shakir Ali and Marie Petranová leaving the boat in Karachi under the watch of the communists and the Americans, both sides readily offering their support in countering the perceived threat from the enemy, and in the race to gain a foot on the ground. According to Salima Hashmi, Shakir Ali's first solo exhibition in Lahore was visited by the country's own Central Investigation Department, who inquired with suspicion about his modernist works of art, and asked whether he was "sending secret messages to the Communists through his art."[86]

Suspicion and distrust, it seems, were the order of the day, not least because of the landmark Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case of 1951, in which members of the Communist Party of Pakistan were tried for conspiring to overthrow the government. As a consequence, the All-Pakistan Progressive Writers' Association and the Communist Party were banned in 1954, and Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911–1984), the important writer and figure of the progressive cultural movement of the left, was jailed from 1951 until 1955.[87] Shakir Ali's

association with progressive writers and their meetings and discussions in Lahore's cafés has been detailed in particular in Iftikhar Dadi's account of the artist's literary output.[88] Dadi connects "the sense of newness" that Shakir Ali's arrival in Lahore brought to the Urdu literary intelligentsia "with the artist's refusal to enunciate his views in café discussions,"[89] in reference to Ali's contemporaries, Intizar Hussain and Muhammad Hasan Askari.[90] In the face of this split reality, exacerbated by various intelligence surveillances and suspicions, the line between reality and abstraction is by no means clear-cut. Given this scenario, the works of art and practices of Shakir Ali and of many of his contemporaries must indeed be situated at the intersections of ideological, social, and political codes of affiliation.[91]

Shakir Ali's work from the 1950s on is characterised mainly by still lifes and works with the motifs of masks[92] and the bull,[93] and also works such as *Figures with Cattle* (1957) and *Village* (1962). In these works, the artist closely follows painterly rules as proposed by Lhote's methodologies, as well as the French artist and teacher's ideas about equilibrium and stability in compositions. It is these works of formalist painterly modernism that helped artists in Lahore, especially those from the Lahore Art Circle, to establish their modernist positions and aesthetic practices. In the 1960s, Shakir Ali subsequently worked on a series of paintings, often in large format, in which the human figure appears repeatedly. Furthermore, flowers and birds become a recurring feature,[94] as do the motifs of the sun and the moon.[95] As opposed to the Lidice painting *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1), however, these works often portray birds isolated on a monochrome painted surface (Fig. 18, Fig. 19) or as stylised birds and stylised flowers, in combination with abstract female figures.[96] The reproduction of a painting in *New Orient Bimonthly*,[97] entitled *Birds in Flight* (Fig. 17), is therefore helpful for reconsidering the parameters of the Lidice painting (Fig. 1).

Here we see two birds, two flowers, and a shape reminiscent of a semicircular moon. These motifs are partly painted over a lighter-coloured rectangular area within the canvas. But, unlike the two pairs of birds in the *Two Birds in Space* diptych (Fig. 18, Fig. 19), which are static, the birds in *Birds in Flight* (Fig. 17) are depicted in motion, indicated by their crossing the lighter-coloured space below them.

The diptych (Fig. 18, Fig. 19) has been associated with works created in the 1970s, which show individual objects on similarly shaped and monochrome canvases.[98] There are correspondences, especially in the

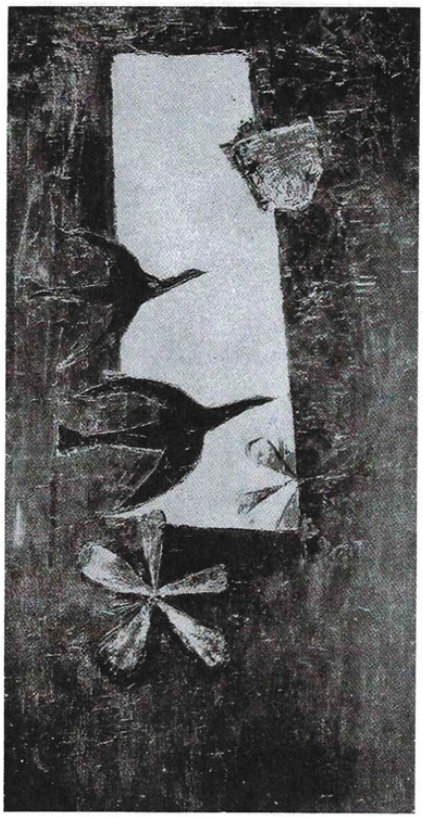


Fig. 17 Shakir Ali, *Birds in Flight*. Oil on canvas, *New Orient Bimonthly* (1967), vol. 6, no. 4, 116.

distribution of the objects on the canvas. However, the diptych can also be linked to the artist's still lifes of the 1950s, where the placement and distribution of objects was of equal importance. What is structurally striking in the two canvases with bird-pairs in red and white and black and white (Fig. 18, Fig. 19), however, is the colour-coordinated horizontal stripe at the upper edge of the canvas: black in the red work, and red in the black work. This stripe on the horizon creates spatial conditions from which the birds, self-contained, are not distracted. The same applies to the flight of the birds across the picture plane in Fig. 17. These stripes and areas structure the canvases and build the framework for what moves or is immobile.

In contrast to the works already discussed here, the Lidice painting (Fig. 1) is characterised, above all, by the movement and group dynamics of the bird migration. The movement of the flock of birds extends across the

Fig. 18 Shakir Ali, *Two Birds in Space*, 1966. Oil on canvas, 178.40 × 86.30 cm, one part of a diptych. Photograph courtesy of Shakir Ali Museum, Lahore.

Fig. 19 Shakir Ali, *Two Birds in Space*, 1966. Oil on canvas, 178.40 × 86.30 cm, one part of a diptych. Photograph courtesy of Shakir Ali Museum, Lahore.

canvas, and across a vertically drawn strip. In my earlier writing about this work, I interpreted the vertical division of the space as a form reminiscent of a tree trunk.[99] This allowed me to make connections with the writing of Rilke, whose magical sense of space ("magisches Raumgefühl") is informed by the perception that nothing in space is static.[100] Rilke's position as a poet, according to Beda Allemann, is not that of an observer, but of a writer who participates in these processes, so that these movements are his own overcoming of barriers.[101] The movement of the birds in the Lidice painting can therefore be seen as Shakir Ali's own movement, his mobility across geographies, across political blocs, ideologies, and national borders, of his experience of undefined margins in which excitement for newness was a possibility.

The Lidice work (Fig. 1) underwent fundamental restoration in 2005, due to major flood damage to the storage place in Prague, where it had been kept for more than thirty years.[102] This allows us to see quite clearly some of the painterly processes that are not visible in other works, due to the patina that has come to cover these paintings over the years. The contrasting brushstrokes, in lighter to darker shades of blue, serve to build a material structure on which the birds can freely migrate. This work demonstrates Shakir Ali's highly skilled and experienced use of the brush, due in no small part to his long training and experience in the many art academies and studios that framed his journey towards a highly personal artistic modernism. This journey is characterised, above all, by mobility, and the movement of birds can be seen as synonymous with this. The fact that the birds move from left to right, from west to east, from bottom to top, from south to north can be understood as indicating directions related to the experience of the artist. This reading allows for a decentralised understanding of modernism that can be tied neither to national borders, nor to any of the traditional modernist centres of the mid-twentieth century. *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1) is, therefore, an exemplary work that speaks of experiences at the crossroads of mid-century modernism, with Prague as a pivotal site. Shakir Ali, through personal involvement, co-created the art worlds that his extensive mobility allowed him to access and experience. Thus, Shakir Ali's mobility, and the different codes of affiliation that informed his journey across empire, nations, continents, and ideologies, have direct bearing on the migratory aesthetics discussed here.

Chapter 3

Exhibiting and Collecting South Asian Art in Prague and Lidice

In the post-independence period, India was quick to organise national survey art exhibitions that were sent to different parts of the world. Claire Wintle has written about the scope of some of these exhibitions, pointing to the importance of the nation in these transnational ventures.[1] Nationally organised art exhibitions were a way of forging connections and raising the visibility of a nation. This calls to mind Benedict Anderson's seminal text on the nation, and how it is imagined. He sees material culture in terms of "state regalia," and thus as an important way to legitimise the nation itself.[2] Exhibiting India abroad thus became a diplomatic tool. It enabled the country to represent itself across post-war divides, with the aim of developing international exchange, fostering economic ties, and bypassing ideological alignments.

State sponsorship of the arts was also on the agenda of Pakistan's nation-building project. However, having inherited almost no infrastructure for the arts, its investment in institution-building, which it viewed as a component of nation-building, was prioritised. There were plans to organise and send to Rome an early state-sponsored travelling exhibition in 1954; but these plans were put on hold by those who spoke for and about the art world in Pakistan. In his book about the formation of the National College of Arts, historical anthropologist Nadeem Omar Tarar writes that Abdulla Chughtai, Shakir Ali, and Mark Sponenburgh considered "contemporary art in Pakistan [...] as yet insufficiently determinate and distinguished to exhibit in the leading European centers of art."[3] According to Tarar, the trio believed that exposing contemporary Pakistani art, at that moment, could lead to "positive harm to a future reputation of promise."[4] For this reason, we may conclude, the travelling exhibition was not organised.

While it is unclear what kind of "positive harm" could result from supporting initiatives in the realm of a contemporary art exhibition, Pakistan was not yet in a position to put together a state-sponsored national survey exhibition, with Europe as its destination. Large and representative national

exhibitions, such as India had organised and sent to many countries for the purpose of consolidating both the nation and its economic and cultural relations with other nations, were only organised by Pakistan much later.[5] Individual artists, and smaller groups of artists, however, exhibited internationally—at biennales in Paris, Venice, São Paolo, Fukuoka, Brisbane, Ljubljana, Cairo, and many other places across post-war divides, some of which have yet to be thoroughly researched and written about.[6]

In contrast to Pakistan, India gained much more international exposure from as early as the 1950s, when exhibitions of Indian modernist and contemporary art began to tour to North and South America. Most especially, however, they toured Southeast, East/Central and Western Europe, as well as across Asia and Africa.[7] Indian art was promulgated not only through nationally organised group exhibitions, but also through the participation of individual artists at biennales, international conferences, artist camps and residencies, and state and private galleries. Many of these exhibitions were organised and made possible by the government of India, in collaboration with the governments of the host country. Even though state-sponsored national survey exhibitions were not organised by Pakistan until much later, we can still say that a large number of careers of South Asian artists of the postcolonial era were characterised by an increased mobility.[8] The mobility of artists from across South Asia was facilitated through study in art schools, but also through artistic practice unrelated to their studies, taking them to destinations such as London, Paris, Rome, Milan, Prague, Warsaw, North and South America, and many other places and regions across the globe.[9]

Artists from newly decolonised countries, such as India, Pakistan, and Ceylon/Sri Lanka, were able to cross political divides more easily than their counterparts from Western countries, in many cases. The encounters and exchange afforded by mobility are the lens through which I will view and discuss exhibitions and collections of South Asian art in East/Central Europe in general, and in Prague and Lidice in particular. While one of the purposes of this chapter is to reconstruct the two major Indian exhibitions, as well as the two most important public collections of Indian and South Asian modern art in Czechoslovakia, I will do so by examining the tension between the presentation of national art, albeit internationally, and the international solidarity that was a touchstone of the era. I will also ask to what extent these exhibitions are comparable to analogous initiatives devoted to South Asia, but also regions beyond.

3.1 Indian Art Exhibitions in Czechoslovakia and an Indian Art Collection in Prague

This chapter will consider the politics of the Cold War, the nascent Non-Aligned Movement and the post-war period as a framework in which the desire of East/Central European states to engage with India grew considerably. At the same time, it will examine how India positioned and navigated the nation across these political and ideological divides, and the ways it benefited from its position of non-alignment.

Focusing on two significant exhibitions, in 1955 and 1956, as well as one from 1979, this chapter will discuss the organisation of these exhibitions, their long journey across borders from India to Central Europe, and their display. I will then look at the acquisitions that were made through these exhibitions, and examine how this led to the foundation of a collection of Indian art in Prague, in light of the cultural and political agenda in Czechoslovakia. Focusing on the National Gallery in Prague (NGP) as a case study will prompt questions about the intentions behind the official purchase of individual works of art from the travelling exhibitions, and later from individual artists, as well as about their integration into the existing collections at the NGP. The far more modest number of artworks from India, Ceylon/Sri Lanka, and Pakistan in the Lidice Solidarity Collection raises important questions about Czechoslovakia's cultural policy, as well as its ideological adherence to political principles vis-à-vis personal commitments. This chapter will also attempt to think about curatorial and exhibiting practices, together with institutional analysis, through archival study and research.

3.1.1 Mobility across Waters and Divides

The 1950s witnessed a veritable flood of activity in recognising and promoting Indian art abroad. In retrospect, it seems, European countries were lining up to host one of the many exhibitions organised by Indian experts and bureaucrats, under the umbrella of the All-India Fine Arts & Crafts Society (AIFACS) and the Lalit Kala Akademi (LKA) in New Delhi, with the help of regional arts organisations across the country. AIFACS had been established in 1928 by the brothers Barada, Ranada, and Sarada Ukil, who had already successfully established the Sarada Ukil School of Art in 1926.[10] The LKA came into being as the National Academy of Fine

Arts in 1954, the same year that the National Gallery of Modern Art was opened in New Delhi. A demonstrable increase in government support for the arts dates to this time.

Some Indian art was exhibited in the MDM Gallery in Warsaw as early as 1951 (though, to date, I have been unable to uncover more details about this exhibition).[11] In 1953, the Exhibition of Indian Art, organised by AIFACS, was shown in Warsaw and in Kraków. Gabriela Świtek refers to this exhibition and mentions that it was previously shown in the Soviet Union.[12] It is possible that this exhibition was originally planned to arrive in Czechoslovakia. An archived correspondence between the Czechoslovak Embassy in Delhi and AIFACS, however, suggests that the exhibition never reached Prague; it appears that the volume of the exhibition had been halved during the course of its travels. According to the Indian authorities, the governments that purchased the works along the exhibition route had requested to receive the pieces by the end of that year.[13] The letter indicates that the Indian side first tried to compensate for the pieces of art that had been sold. The plan was that what was left of the exhibition would be sent to the Indian Embassy in Brussels, there to be restocked with works from India. Thereafter, it would be shown in Belgium, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. This raises the question of whether all these countries were to have hosted the exhibition that went to the USSR, Poland, and West Germany in 1953.[14] In any case, it leaves us with the impression that India had difficulty meeting the demands of post-war European countries for exhibitions of Indian art. Whether for logistic or diplomatic reasons, it is interesting to note that the itinerary for the 1953 exhibition crosses the dividing line of the emerging bipolar conflict. It can thus be said to prefigure India's path towards non-alignment.

Now let us return to the correspondence between the Czechoslovak Embassy in Delhi and AIFACS. To compensate for the missed opportunity of these countries to mount an exhibition of Indian art in 1953, the Indian government offered to send other works of art instead: "[T]o serve as a background of Indian Art from ancient times to the present days,"[15] the government letter read. It proposed to send an extensive exhibition of Indian art comprised of paintings, graphics, and sculptures, large-scale photographs of ancient monuments, as well as a series of colour reproductions of Ajanta Frescoes, and Rajput and Moghul prints. The

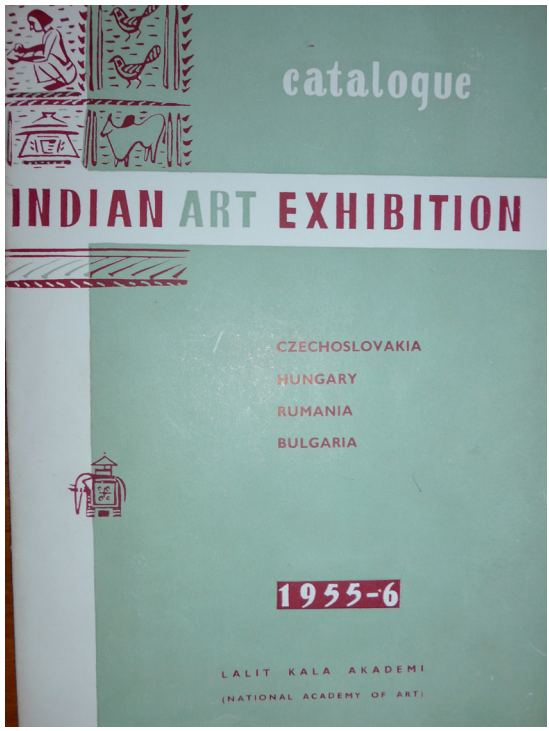


Fig. 20 Cover of the catalogue for the travelling exhibition of Indian art, 1955/56. Archive of the National Gallery in Prague. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

presentation of India as a nation with a rich cultural background, whose contemporaneity is firmly rooted in its traditions, informs this proposal, and reflects, as well, the Prime Minister's nationalist ideological perspective. The curatorial idea for the proposed exhibition can be traced back to an exhibition of masterpieces of Indian art in London's Royal Academy of Art, displayed immediately following independence, from November 1947 to February 1948.[16] An exhibition at the Government House in New Delhi, titled "Masterpieces of Indian Art," which took place immediately after the London exhibition, may also be seen as a precursor to exhibitions such as the one proposed to the Czechoslovak government.[17] The exhibition that was ultimately sent to Prague, from where it then travelled to Bratislava, Budapest, Bucharest, Sofia, Moscow, and Warsaw (Fig. 20), was, nevertheless, a very modified version—more modest in scale and far more invested in contemporary art. From a financial point of view, as well as in the interests of conservation, it was certainly easier to ship contemporary art abroad than to send ancient sculptures. However, the emphasis on contemporary art is evidence of how, as anthropologist Manuela Ciotti put it, "the Indian modern" increasingly "found a stage outside of India."[18] The

fact that India also found a showcase in East/Central Europe has not, until recently, been widely examined. Fine art, like literature and print culture, as South Asian literary scholars Francesca Orsini, Neelam Srivastava, and Laetitia Zecchini have observed, was taken "seriously" during the Cold War, and throughout the period of decolonisation[19] and nation-building, especially in communist Europe.

The exhibition catalogue (Fig. 20) of the 1955/56 India exhibition lists 145 artworks, of which 106 works were by contemporary and modernist artists, or by twentieth-century artists, respectively. This section included works by Rabindranath Tagore, Abanindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil, Jamini Roy, and Krishnappa Venkatappa, but also works by Vasudeo Santu Gaitonde, Sushil Sen, S. S. Anandkar, Nandalal Bose, Ramkinkar Baij, Ram Kumar, Sarada Ukil, Maqbool Fida Husain, Dattatray Gundo Kulkarni, Hari Ambadas Gade, Kanwal Krishna, Kattingeri Krishna Hebbar, Laxman Pai, Badri Narayan, Biren De, Avinash Chandra, and many more. Most of these works were priced, and thus for sale; only a few were tagged "not for sale," mostly because they were on loan from private collections or from the collection of the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi. The next section lists sixteen works on paper that represented a cross-section of Rajastani and Pahari painting schools, as well as Mughal miniatures. Together with two bronze sculptures, and six made in different kinds of stone, these were loaned by the National Museum of India, New Delhi. From the Fort Museum, Red Fort, in New Delhi, came, in addition, seven Mughal miniature paintings; and from the Punjab Government Museum in Simla came eight miniature paintings adding to representation of the Pahari painting school.

The Indian catalogue ends there. An internal list prepared by the Czechoslovak side for both the Prague and the Bratislava iteration of the exhibition, however, reveals another set of works: twenty-one pieces from the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay. They included a mix of works from different miniature schools, seven copies of Ajanta cave frescoes, two more bronze sculptures, and two works by Bhabesh Chandra Sanyal, which were added to the list in handwriting. According to this list, the exhibition comprised 168 works, twenty-three more than the Indian exhibition catalogue contained. The Indian catalogue includes a brief greeting from Indian Prime Minister Nehru, and a plea for friendship, followed by a two-page introduction, without an author, briefly describing the country's history of art, and the objects that form part of the exhibition. The text ends with the usual official acknowledgments, and the remark that

after the exhibitions that had already been sent to London, Afghanistan, Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, China, Japan, Australia, the USA, the USSR, Poland, West Germany, Italy, and Yugoslavia, this would be the first exhibition organised by the Indian government after the establishment of the LKA.[20]

The exhibition that was sent to East/Central Europe in 1955–1956 can therefore be seen to signal a new phase in India's encounter with the world. Almost exactly eight years after the exhibition of masterpieces of Indian art in London, India presented itself confidently as a nation with an artistic modernity and contemporaneity—rooted, however, in its own tradition. At this point, I would like to introduce a question that I will further explore in this chapter: namely, whether the staging of Indian modernism across geographies of East/Central Europe was essentially different from country to country, and whether it differed from how other friendly countries were exhibited and how collections were thus built.

The India exhibition was accompanied by the artists Bhabesh Chandra Sanyal (1901–2003) from Delhi, and Hari Ambadas Gade (1917–2001) from Bombay. Their roles were to oversee the freight, supervise the exhibition, deliver speeches and lectures at the respective venues, and partake in the many cultural and social events that the host countries organised. While Sanyal and Gade took on the task of representing India abroad, they became "cultural brokers," in Mari Carmen Ramírez's[21] description of the work of curators, but also in Höh, Jaspert, and Oesterle's understanding of the term, as applied earlier to Miloslav Krása.[22] In return, through their encounters and engagements with a range of individuals and institutions, such as local artists, curators, Indologists, and official cultural representatives, as well as translators, art schools, and local museum collections across East/Central Europe, their mobilities also impacted their understanding of art and culture from this region.[23] Santo Datta, who edited Sanyal's memoirs and recordings of this extensive journey, commented about how language, from Russian, to Czech, Romanian, Bulgarian, and German, filtered into Sanyal's writing, saying that it "naturally rubbed off on him during his travels."[24] The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, also to assess the extent to which Sanyal's and Gade's mobility led to an understanding of cultural forms and concepts to which they may previously have had less access. The prevailing form of art education in British colonial India provided them with very limited exposure to East/Central European arts and culture. The journeys of individual artists to Prague, then, will also be a central focus of Chapter 4.

For Sanyal and Gade, the entire journey, from boarding the ship in Bombay to the last leg of the exhibition in Warsaw, took eleven months. Thanks to B. C. Sanyal's travelogue-like notes,[25] we know much about the itinerary, and official and personal meetings; but we also learn about political realities that accompanied this long journey across waters and continents, through nations and countries, and shifting political blocs. Sanyal, who migrated from Lahore to Delhi during the fateful time of partition, had, through his art education in Calcutta (Kolkata, after 2001), his teaching experiences in pre-partition Lahore, his experience as a founding member of the Delhi Silpi Chakra,[26] and his role as a signatory of the LKA's constitution, collected a range of skills that made him a suitable candidate for accompanying this exhibition. We can only speculate about how Sanyal's early exposure to left-wing and progressive ideas dating back to his Lahore days[27] influenced the decision to send him to East/Central Europe. However, the fact that Sanyal, like many Indian artists whose careers were formed from the 1930s onwards, was adept at thinking and conversing about issues of decolonisation and left-wing politics, may have been helpful in the journey that he undertook. In a final report on the "Indian Fine Art" exhibition and on the official delegation that accompanied it, Sanyal was viewed very favourably by the Czechoslovak authorities, as a progressive man whose political views and activities had been highly appreciated during his time in Lahore.[28] Gade, on the other hand, was judged less favourably in the same report, and elsewhere, primarily because he showed little interest in politics, and avoided political conversations altogether. It was also mentioned that he rejected the idea of the national character of fine arts, from which it can be concluded that he expressed his own views in this regard.[29] This is, indeed, something that Lubor Hájek addresses many years later, when he recalls that Gade resisted the demand that a work of art must be defined by a national cultural tradition.[30]

Gade was a founding member of the Progressive Artists' Group and the Bombay Group,[31] and perhaps the least written about artist of this iconic artistic formation.[32] From Sanyal's assessment of Gade, we may gather information about who this artist was in the early 1950s. Sanyal refers to Gade as his "companion,"[33] an artist who "was then one of the up-and-coming artists of Maharashtra."[34] Sanyal adds that "[h]e was well educated […] and was comparatively more articulate than the average painters of the time,"[35] an opinion that S. A. Krishnan also shared, claiming that Gade was one of the most widely read of his contemporaries.[36] Although the two were quite

different, Sanyal's respect for Gade is evident, when he says that he "did not find it an impediment in developing a warm friendship with him."[37]

Sanyal referred to the long journey of almost a year, which the two artists embarked on from India aboard the Italian steamship *Asia,* as his "first voyage,"[38] by which he presumably meant his first trip abroad on a ship. He writes about the value of journeying by water, and the advantage of enjoying the company of "fellow travellers" in a "fraternal atmosphere," with "good food and beverages."[39] What follows are memories of some of the people he met aboard and ashore, and of places that he was able to visit on the ports of call.

The first stop was Karachi, where he was able to meet some of his Pakistani friends. "The warmth of friendship had outgrown the bitterness of the Partition memories,"[40] he wrote, describing in a conciliatory tone his brief stay in Karachi, eight years after his departure. Other stops took Sanyal to Aden, Cairo, and Naples, where he visited a number of cultural sites and museum collections, but also experienced more mundane sides of life, such as "thugs at Aden"[41] and "prostitutes and pick-pockets"[42] in the port of Naples. When they finally disembarked the ship in Genoa, the journey developed in a new direction. Up until that point, the exhibition and its contents, the "eleven large crates containing solid cultural property of India,"[43] had not featured in Sanyal's accounts. However, when they left the ship in Genoa, the need to keep an eye on the cargo, which had to be transferred to various trains and pass through various customs and countries, became a matter of urgency. Sanyal writes about the "complicated itinerary,"[44] and the fact that between Genoa and his destination, Prague, it was necessary to change trains twice, in both Venice and in Vienna. Here, once again, his Lahore connections were useful. For example, one of his former students from the Mayo School of Art in Lahore, Madanjit Singh (born in 1924 in Lahore), who now worked as First Secretary of the Indian Embassy in Rome, helped solve the question of where to stay unexpectedly in Genoa. Singh was also responsible for organising India's first Pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale, in 1954, for which he had travelled all over India to assemble approximately fifty works of art.[45] Since these works had been shipped from India to Italy, Singh had acquired experience in how to handle and work with port authorities.

Sanyal's assessment of Venice as a place where, he believes, there are more statues than people, is insightful. He perceived it as having been

"transplanted" from places across South Asia, such as Kathmandu, Srinagar, Vatgaon, Pattan, Tanjore, and Madurai.[46] Venice may have been deserted on a late November day in 1955, but the "transplantation" of South Asian cities, and their re-contextualisation into the city of Venice, transpired, for Sanyal, under the impression of its "petrified people."[47] This suggests a connection with Andreas Huyssen's view of cities as "palimpsests of history," and as "incarnations of time in stone."[48] It frames Sanyal's understanding of Venice as a transcultural place, located at the crossroads between East and West.[49]

Further to the north, in snow-covered Vienna, at the last change of trains on this long journey to Prague, the meaning of the intersection of East and West in a political-ideological sense became manifest. The last Russian soldier—representing the Allied Forces occupying Austria since the end of World War II—left Vienna on October 26, 1955. As a borderland, Austria escaped its potential fate of becoming part of the Soviet bloc; but it was, therefore, perched at the western extremity of the Iron Curtain. The train from Venice, carrying Sanyal, Gade, and the eleven crates containing the Indian art exhibition, arrived at Vienna's Südbahnhof. Then, the passengers and cargo were transferred to the Nordwestbahnhof, and from there continued to Prague. Only a few days before, Vienna had still been occupied territory.[50] Though both train stations were located within the former Russian sectors of the city, they had no direct rail connection to each other. The occupation had ended prior to the arrival of the Indian men and their crates. Nevertheless, the split character of the city seems evident in Sanyal's observation that "the railway system and its movements were undependable for crossing the borders between the capitalist and socialist countries."[51]

Recalling his journey through Vienna, therefore, he writes that "[t]he entire eastern Europe seemed to have been enveloped in an invisible barrier, so was I told when no information was forthcoming, if a train was due to cross over to Prague, if so, at what time or at what spot of the railway yards."[52] Last-minute support came from Amiya Sen, yet another former Lahore connection of Sanyal's, who was in Vienna as part of her work for the World Peace Council.[53] Nevertheless, Sanyal's notes express a degree of concern not limited to his cultural goods, packed in eleven crates and in need of care. His insecurity was shared by many residents, not only of Vienna, but of the entire region, on both sides of the recently erected invisible and visible barrier. The fact, however, that mobility across this

barrier—the Iron Curtain, or the Cold War divide—was possible, becomes manifest when Sanyal says in a mantra-like tone that "[he] trusted the capitalist-communist systems to honour the socialist Indian consignment of cultural treasure in reaching its destination."[54]

In contrast to the part of the journey spent on board the ship, where good food and fellow travellers made for a "relaxing mode of journey,"[55] the obstacles, complications, and uncertainties that had to be overcome as challenges on the mainland seem like a return to a reality shaped entirely by the Cold War. The last train and station-change in Vienna is therefore emblematic of the transition from one political system to another. The fact that there had been, and would be even more such crossings of Indian delegations in the coming years—individuals and collectives, artists, writers, students, etc.—is due, not least, to India's advantageous positioning as a non-aligned nation.

3.1.2 Exhibiting India as a Collaborative Effort

For Sanyal, Gade, and their freight, Prague signalled both an arrival and a departure. It was a base from which the exhibition journey from India, travelling further into East/Central Europe, began and eventually came to an end. When the crates with the exhibits arrived, Lubor Hájek, together with Regina Kopačková, both from the Department of Oriental Art at the NGP,[56] took charge of organising the display of the exhibition at Obecní dům (Municipal House). According to the final report by the Czechoslovak government, the exhibition was originally expected to arrive in January 1956, but it had been sent by the Indian side as early as November, without notification.[57]

There is no record about whether Sanyal and Gade were involved in the curatorial decisions concerning the exhibition, but it is most likely that they were not. Due to the involvement of both sides in facilitating the exhibition, however, from the selection of the artwork and the logistics, to the production of a catalogue with illustrations on the Indian side, the organisation of the exhibition in Prague and Bratislava, and the accommodation of the accompanying persons on the Czechoslovak side, one can certainly speak of a collaborative project, in which both sides contributed to the realisation and success of the undertaking.

The exhibition, writes Zdenka Klimtova, happened at a "dizzying pace […] open for a mere thirteen days in Prague (6–18 December 1955) and then another fourteen days in Bratislava (22 December 1955–4 January 1956)."[58] The journey for the two-member Indian delegation was filled with official meetings, and excursions to other regions in Czechoslovakia—first to South Bohemia, and then on to what is today Slovakia. Their excursion was filled with a rich cultural programme, which was intended to introduce the Indian guests to the cultural offerings of the country and its "cultural values."[59] Through these interactions, the Czechoslovak public was to gain familiarity with Indian culture and its fine arts.[60] The people that Sanyal and Gade interacted with were from across the official cultural sector. One of them was Miloslav Krása, whom Sanyal already knew from Krása's many visits to India. In his memoirs, Sanyal also names Prof. Haftmeister[61] of the Union of Czechoslovak Fine Artists, the organisation that supervised and controlled all exhibitions organised outside state galleries. Moreover, they were introduced to Jiří Trnka (1912–1969), famous for his stop-motion puppet animation, with whom, only two years later, the Indian artist Pramod Pati (1932–1975) would receive practical training in the framework of an exchange programme with the government of Czechoslovakia.[62]

Sanyal and Gade also visited art exhibitions, such as a large national exhibition that happened to coincide with their stay in Prague.[63] Noting that the "credo of Socialist Realism in art"[64] was faithfully followed by the exhibiting artists, Sanyal was prompted to state that "[i]f all art was propaganda, here was propaganda with [a] singular manifestation."[65] However, throughout this journey, he also had a chance to meet with what he called "non-conformist" artists, such as the artist who paid him an unexpected visit at his Prague hotel.[66] These were artists who operated outside the structures of state funding.

Hájek's personal copy of the exhibition catalogue[67] (Fig. 21) is decorated on the second page with an intervention by the Slovak graphic artist and illustrator Ľubomír Kellenberger (1921–1971). In caricaturist style, as noted by Klimtová,[68] Kellenberger portrays Hájek in profile to the left; František Komzala (1898–1980), the then-ambassador of Czechoslovakia to India,[69] in the upper part; and Gade in the lower part.

The scene that inspired Kellenberger's intervention may well have been directly taken from the opening ceremony of the exhibition at the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava, where we see, in the photograph in Fig. 22, Hájek and Gade in almost the same posture as depicted by Kellenberger.

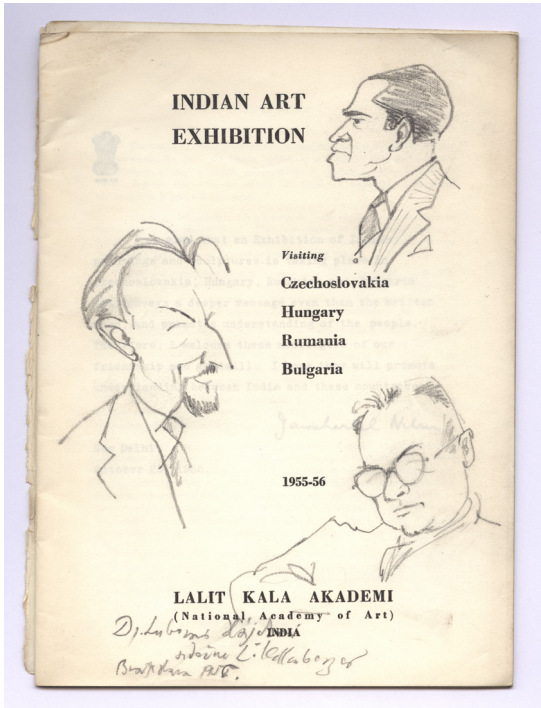


Fig. 21 Title page of the catalogue for the travelling exhibition of Indian art, featuring drawings by Ľubomír Kellenberger, 1955/56. On the left is a portrait of Lubor Hájek. Archive of the National Gallery in Prague, Fonds: Lubor Hájek. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

The third person, František Komzala, was also present at the opening of the exhibition. Komzala's distinctive profile while delivering his speech is clearly recognisable in the photograph in Fig. 23.

I would like to consider the portraits of these three men on the cover of the Indian art exhibition catalogue, however, not just as spontaneous profile sketches of a group of men gathered for the same occasion, but as a historical reminder of a collaborative and transnational effort. Moreover, it is a confirmation of the purpose of the exhibition: namely, to engage and interact with one another on a social, cultural, and artistic level. This engagement and interaction, therefore, was not simply a necessary requirement of the organisers of the exhibition on both the Czechoslovak and the Indian sides, but can also be qualified as transcultural contact, not least because both sides play an active part in a discursive and engaged reading of one another's art and culture.[70] The contact and engagement that resulted fostered exchange and further interaction, thus inaugurating an era of friendly relations between the two countries at a confluence of multiple currents. We are reminded that anti-imperialism and de-Stalinisation reached their peak in 1955, the year of the Bandung conference,

Fig. 22 Photograph of the opening ceremony of the exhibition of Indian art in Bratislava. Image courtesy of AVU SNG, *Albumy výstav, Indické umenie, 1955–1956.*

Fig. 23 Photograph of the opening ceremony of the exhibition of Indian art in Bratislava. Image courtesy of AVU SNG, *Albumy výstav, Indické umenie, 1955–1956.*

which took place in April, followed by Nehru's visit to Czechoslovakia in June. There, he was welcomed to Prague by President Antonín Zápotocký.

In November of that same year, Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Alexandrovich Bulganin and Communist Party Secretary Nikita Khrushchev paid a diplomatic visit to India. The visit attracted worldwide attention, and was crucial for the development of cultural connections and an agreement to foster partnerships built on mutual respect.[71] The India exhibition must therefore be viewed in light of this opening on the cultural front. The fact that on the cover of the exhibition catalogue, Moscow and Warsaw were not featured, but that the exhibition eventually came to be hosted there, is a sign that between the time when the exhibition was being designed and prepared in New Delhi, and the actual journey of the exhibition, the course of global politics and the political orientation of the exhibition had changed significantly.

From the point of view of art history, the exhibition displayed an eager challenge to the limited knowledge and understanding of modernist artistic practices located at the peripheries of mid-century global modernism. From today's perspective, we are urged to delve into, and think through, questions from within both the discipline of art history and political geographies.

Examining the contents of the exhibition as depicted in the catalogue, a picture emerges of the composition of the "solid cultural property of India" contained in the eleven large crates. As stressed in the introduction of the catalogue, the exhibition "is almost evenly drawn from examples of classical and contemporary Indian art" deriving from collections of "the National Museum, the National Gallery of Modern Art, the Red Fort Museum, the Government Museum, Simla, the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, and Ajanta Pavilion Museum, Hyderabad."[72]

The contemporary section of the exhibition offered a broad spectrum of twentieth-century Indian modernism by many artists whose work has been taken up into art history. None of the works in the Indian exhibition catalogue are dated, but if we turn to the Czech list, we find important information. A work by Sarada Ukil (1888–1940) from 1921 and one by Gaganendranath Tagore (1867–1938) from 1920 are among the earliest in the modern section. Works by K. Venkatappa (1886–1965), Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951), Asit Kumar Haldar (1890–1964), Kshitindranath Majumdar (1891–1975), and Amrita Sher Gil, although undated, also belong

Fig. 24 Photograph of the 1955 India exhibition opening ceremony in Prague, with B. C. Sanyal in the second row, and Gade sitting in the first row, middle. The handwritten inscription names Sanyal as the head of the Indian delegation. Fond Krása, box no. 8, inventory no. 257, no. 44. Photo courtesy of the National Museum of the Czech Republic-Náprstek Museum, Prague.

to the earlier phase of Indian modernism. It can therefore be said that modern Indian art of the twentieth century was represented through works from the 1920s onwards, which in turn suggests a narrative that was forming in India at the time: namely, that artistic modernism took on Indian forms in the 1920s. Partha Mitter has even suggested "December 1922 as a convenient entry point for modernism in India," taking the Bauhaus exhibition in Calcutta as a significant event.[73]

A photograph from the Prague opening of the India exhibition gives us an idea about the attendees making up the audience (Fig. 24).

Here, we see Sanyal and Gade seated in a large room packed with a group of people of mixed cultural backgrounds. There are a number of attendees who appear to be Indian, both male and female, possibly connected to the Embassy. The final report of the "India Fine Art" exhibition informs us about the opening speeches delivered by "Ladislav Štoll, Minister of Culture; the Indian Embassy representative, Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of India, Jagan Nath Khesla; head of the official delegation of Indian fine artists, Bhabesh Chandra Sanyal; and Director of the National

Gallery, Dr. Vl. Novotný."[74] It then names some of the officials attending the opening, such as "the Chairman of the National Assembly, Zdeněk Fierlinger; President of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Zdeněk Nejedlý; Minister of Justice, K. Bartuška; members of diplomatic corps in Prague, together with other distinguished representatives of our political and cultural life."[75] A day before the exhibition closed, on December 17, 1955, the exhibition was visited by President Antonín Zápotocký, accompanied by Party and government representatives, such as Prime Minister Viliam Široký, Deputies of the Prime Minister Dr Čepička and V. Kopecký, Ministers L. Štoll and V. David, First Secretary of ÚV KSČ A. Novotný, and ÚV KSČ Secretary J. Hendrych.[76]

Despite the exhibition's high official level of sponsorship, which included a banquet on the final day organised by the Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of India, Mr J. N. Khosla,[77] it attracted a total number of 13,200 visitors, which, as the final report says, "equates to approximately 1,000 visitors per day."[78] These numbers reflect considerable public interest in India. The exhibition was also widely publicised, both on television and on radio.

For both the Prague and the Bratislava iteration of the exhibition, Czechoslovak State Film even produced a short newsreel.

The Bratislava exhibition followed similar protocols. If we turn to the photographs in Fig. 22 and Fig. 23, and then to two more photographs, Fig. 25 and Fig. 26, taken at the National Museum in Bratislava, we can form a picture of the main hall, where some works were displayed to accompany the opening ceremony. Thus, on the wall behind Hájek and Gade (Fig. 22), we see, from left to right, Gade's work *Midday Meal* (55.5 × 76 cm), and Sanyal's work *Villager* (75 × 60 cm). These works were acquired by the NGP, but were later destroyed in a fire.

On what appears to be a movable wall in the photograph in Fig. 25, we see two works by Ram Kumar (1924–2018): to the left, *A Worker's Family*, and to the right, *In the Streets*.

We see further works on display on the wall behind the speakers, where we saw Komzala speaking (Fig. 23), and where now, in Fig. 26, Sanyal is giving a speech, while Regina Kopačková stands next to him. Considering that 168 works of art were exhibited, these photographs provide only a glimpse of how one nation was celebrated by another. However, the fact that the opening ceremony was framed by modern works of art, rather than by Indian sculptures or miniature paintings, is telling. It illustrates

Fig. 25 Photograph of the India exhibition opening ceremony in Bratislava, with works by Ram Kumar. Image courtesy of AVU SNG, *Albumy výstav, Indické umenie, 1955–1956.*

Fig. 26 Photograph of the India exhibition opening ceremony in Bratislava. Image courtesy of AVU SNG, *Albumy výstav, Indické umenie, 1955–1956.*

what I have suggested earlier: namely, that India saw the development of its modernist art as representative and important, in contrast to Pakistan, which was not yet confident about how and when to present to the world its modern art, as representative of the nation. While the Czechoslovaks were in agreement about the placement of Indian modernist and

contemporary art, they further contributed to the framing of the India exhibition as a collaboration. There were thus twelve flags each, from both countries, as well as an Indian and a Czechoslovak banner. These were sent by the House of Exhibition and Information Services in Prague as auxiliary decoration material. Along with the works of art, it conveys an idea of the celebratory character of the whole initiative, which was viewed as a joint venture.[79]

3.1.3 Fostering "Indicki-Czech[oslovak] Bhai-Bhai"

The exhibition poster for the India exhibition, designed in Prague, as evidenced by the inscription in the left-hand lower corner, also takes on celebratory features, as it juxtaposes a South Indian Devi bronze with K. K. Hebbars contemporary work, *Lord of the Land* (Fig. 27).[80]

The placing of a South Indian Devi bronze alongside the work of a contemporary artist echoes the Indian organisers' wish to show India as a nation with a long artistic past that informs its thriving present. Appreciation of Indian art as such, a demand that Partha Mitter saw largely unfulfilled in his important study of the history of the European response to Indian art in 1977,[81] seems to be a prerequisite here. The formal aspect of Indian art, its aesthetics, is, as the poster implies, connected and entangled through time. There is another important factor that needs to be acknowledged here, however, namely the realist-figurative aspect of both the ancient sculpture and the modern work of art.

Given the context and the purpose of the exhibition—to foster "Indicki-Czech[oslovak] Bhai-Bhai," as Sanyal formulated it in his memoirs[82]—the socialist country's organising committee was most likely pleased about a contemporary work of art in which the peasant, or farmer, featured prominently. The intertwining of classical Indian culture, represented by the Devi sculpture, with the rural everydayness of the contemporary, can thus be read, on the one hand, in terms of how Sanjukta Sunderason views the uses of primitivism in early postcolonial Indian art, as valorising both pre-modern sites and practices, and peoples who are remote to modern and urban temporalities.[83] On the other hand, it is possible to interpret the Czechoslovak poster as suggestive of the potential to derive socialist ideologies from folk aesthetics, in both form and content.

Compared to the cover of the exhibition catalogue (Fig. 20) provided by the LKA, which contains a limited number of local signs and graphics,

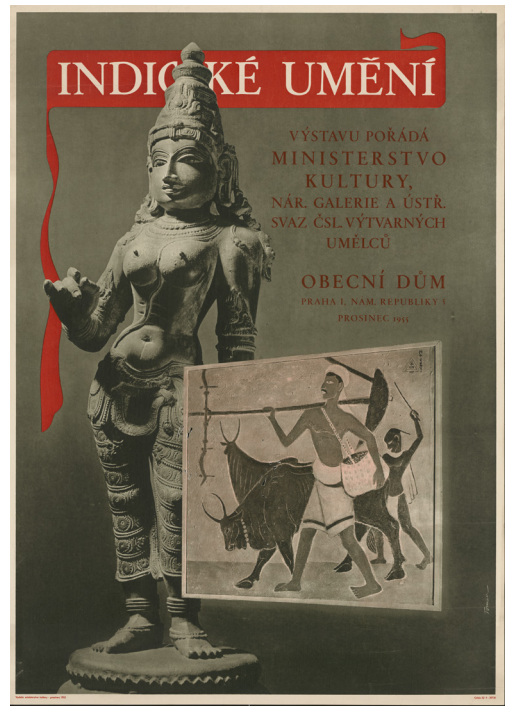


Fig. 27 Exhibition poster of the India exhibition 1955/56, Prague edition, featuring K. K. Hebbar's work *Lord of the Land*. Image courtesy of the NGP, Collection of the Archive of the NGP, Trade Fair Palace Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

the Czechoslovak poster conveys a certain degree of drama and urgency. This is expressed primarily by the dark grey tones, in combination with the gaze of the two protagonists, Devi and the farmers. According to an index card from the archives of the NGP featuring an image of the work of K. K. Hebbar, we learn that the image was used for the poster in reverse.[84] Although it is possible that the image on the index card is laterally reversed, the use of the visual material suggests a political-ideological reading and presentation. Moreover, the title of the exhibition, *Indické Umění*, is underlaid with a red banner with wavy ends. The colour red thus acquires meaning, especially in contrast to the sculpture, which is dramatically illuminated by artificial light and shadow. Through the soft touch of Devi's hand upon the ends of the red banner, as well as through her gaze, and that of the marching farmers or workers, the colour red signals the attraction of a bright future glowing red in the spirit of a communist globality.[85] Apart from the political and ideological underpinnings, the cultural contact between the two countries through the exhibition was also intended to foster connections in economic terms, a strategy that had already been developed during the interwar period.[86]

The aesthetics of the poster, with its rhetoric of a "sound-and-fury" struggle attending the national liberation movements of the 1950s and 1960s, remind us of the visual language that had already been employed for covers of *Nový Orient* from around that time.[87] As part of the official rhetoric of the cultural-political agenda and its propaganda, with a focus on the new 'Orient' as a place, region, and concept, both geographically and politically, Czechoslovakia's orientation toward India was significant in building communist alliances that were envisioned to eventually cover all of Asia. In view of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Prague in June of that year, and India's role in the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement, the India exhibition in Czechoslovakia and the attention it received were politically significant at a historical moment of confluence of multiple currents. This moment, according to Dipesh Chakrabarty, was marked by, and overlapped with, "currents of deep and widespread sympathy with newly independent nations" and "those of the Cold War."[88]

This appreciation, sympathy, and perhaps even more, curiosity, is also reflected in the way that the media responded to the exhibition in both Prague and Bratislava. In *Új Szó*, a Hungarian-language daily newspaper published in Bratislava, the emphasis was on the connection between the old and the new, from Gandharan art to reproductions of Ajanta cave paintings, to the various miniature painting schools. When the writer Imre Jankovich compares works by Jamini Roy and Kulkarni with the work of the Alexys (Janko and Šára Alexy), and Arup Das's *Village* with Brueghelian style,[89] we get the impression that the works of art on display had been scrupulously studied (Fig. 28). Imre generally makes a great effort to single out particular artists and their works, and to categorise them according to his Central European perspective on art history. He thus sees all contemporary artistic movements in the India exhibition represented, but 'filtered' through the 'Hindu spirit'—and, I would add, further filtered through the writer's Central European stance.

Works by Kumár (Ram Kumar), Santós (Gulam Rasool Santosh), and Nikann (S. G. Nikam), are therefore perceived as cubist, while Har Krishan Lal's *Fairytale* (Har Krishan Lal, *Gossip*), Gopal's *Twilight* (H. V. Ram Gopal, *Evening glow*), Avinash Chandra's *Snow in Pehalgam* (Kashmir), and also his *Trees*, as well as Lál Gága's *Gold of the Earth*, possess the "flavor of impressionism."[90] Jankovich continues by stating that Sanjal (B. C. Sanyal) and Kulkarni (D. C. Kulkarni) are "realists," whereas Anandkar's *Fear*, he writes, shows tendencies towards surrealism. This author was most captivated by Pilei's (R. P. Pillai) *Crows*, in which he values the strong ability to communicate his impressions.[91]

ÚJ SZÓ 1955. december 31.

India képzőművészete

A Szlovák Nemzeti Képtár helyiségeiben megrendezett kiállítás túlnyomórészt India modern képzőművészetével foglalkozik, ízelítőt ad azonban a régi India jellegzetes műalkotásaiból is. Ezt a körülményt csak helyesellhetjük, hisz a tradíciók ismerete nélkül nemigen férközhetnénk az új művészet közelébe. Az összefüggések felismerése végett, — helyes a tárlat megtekintése előtten betartani a kronológiai rendet és előbb a régebbi részzel foglalkozni. Az indiai művészet legjelentősebb ágával találkozhatunk itt, — a szobrászattal, freskóval és a miniatűr festészettel.

A buddhizmus idejében a képzőművészet teljesen a vallás szolgálatában áll. Szoros kapcsolatban van az építészettel és a tipizáló tendenciák miatt egyéni vonások alig érvényesülnek benne. Ebből a korból a szobrászat néhány alkotásával ismerkedhetünk meg, melyek jellemző sajátossága a fafaragásra emlékeztető forma, — bizonyos mértékig naiv naturalizmus és a túltömött díszítés. Két teljesen különböző művészeti irányból, — az ősi közép-ázsiaiból és a Gandharaba átültetett görög-rómaiból táplálkozva fejlődött ki a népi faragásból — évszázadok folyamán a nemzeti stílus.

Az indiai monumentális festészet legrégibb és legjelentősebb emlékeinek, az Adzsanta-i barlangtemplom freskóinak másolatai szintén megtalálhatók a tárlaton. Ezek szintén a már nagyvonalúkban jellemzett művészetet képviselik és a buddhizmus ideáljait szolgálják. A kompozíció szigorúan alá van vetve a barlangtemplom architektúrájának. A tartalom legnagyobbrészt optikai jellegű és legendajeleneteket örökít meg. Később a festészet hanyatlásnak indul, csak a XVI—XVII. században, a mongolok uralkodása alatt virágzik fel újra a perzsa hatás erősödése következtében.

Számos iskola alakul a miniatűr festészet ápolására. A legnálódb a fel Sull Szarkar „Szarvasat"-t — „Radzsputáni" iskola, amely a legközvetlenebben törekedett a nemzeti irány kifejlesztésére és egyszerre mind a legtöbbet őrzött meg a régi indiai festészetből. A perzsa miniatűr festészettől főleg a részletek elhanyagolásában és a tájkép szeretetében különbözik. A miniatűrnél általában jellemző a történelmi események ábrázolása, melyeknél a mellékesre van helyezve a súly, úgy hogy a történelmi festészet tulajdonképpen genre-festészetté válik. Ami az ábrázolás módját illeti, nagy tökéletességre jut a két dimenzió által kifejezés, — jellemzők az élénk, pompás színek és az új ornamentális kidolgozás.

A mai festők egy része szintén a miniatürökből kifejlődött nemzeti irányzatra támaszkodik, annak kereteibe illesztve a modern India és a saját ideáljait. Példának hozhatnánk fel Sull Szarkar „Szarvasat"-t — D. G. Kulkarni: „A föld istennője"-t, — Laksman Pai: „Piroskendős aszszonyá"-t, vagy a „Falusi nő"-jét. Dzsamini Raj: „Bengál asszony" és „Ülő asszony" elnevezésű temperái leegyszerűsített, egysíkú kifejezési módjukkal a szlovák Alexyre emlékeztetnek, míg Apur Das „Falusi piac"-a szinte Bruegel-i hangulatú.

A kiállításon megtaláljuk a világ modern festőművészete majd minden irányzatának vonalát, — átszűrve a hindú lélek filterén.

Har Krisan Lal: „Mese" című képe, H. V. Ram. Gopal: „Alkonyat"-ja, Avinas Csandra: „Hó Paleal Gamban" és „Fák", valamint Madan Lál Gégu: „A föld aranya" elnevezésű művei impresszionista ízlést. Ebben a csoportban a legelragadóbb R. P. Pillei: „Varjak" című képe, — mind a kifejezés erőteljessége, mind a megragadott hangulat őszinte tolmácsolása következtében.

B. Cs. Sanjál, K. S. Kulkárni realista művészetükről tesznek hitet műveikben. S. S. Anandkar: „Félelem" című műve azonban a szürrealizmus felé hajlik.

A kubizmust Ram Kumár, Santóe, Frilól, S. G. Nikann alkotásai képviselik.

A grafika főleg a bengál iskolával van képviselve. A már említett miniatürök hatása ebben a szakban a legközvetlenebb, ez azonban természetes is, hiszen mind a küldetés, mind a kifejezési technikák terén itt van a legközelebbi rokonság.

India modern szobrászását két női akt és egy portré mutatja be, az egyik Sanku Csaudhuri, a másik pedig — rézdomborítás — Dhanrázs Bhagat műve. Deej Prasádraj Csaudauzi portréjában szinte rodini erő és szenvedély található.

Jankovich Imre.

Nilratan Csapperdzsi: Szantali lány.

Fig. 28 *Új Szó* newspaper article. December 31, 1955, 8.

Another article, published in the Slovak newspaper *Sloboda*, refers to the contemporary Indian artist's expressionistic character, and observes that the old illustrations and miniatures resemble Gothic art[92] (Fig. 29). The writer does not name any particular artist's work, but the link between expressionism and medieval art in a Central European context[93] is compelling, and could be explored further through a cross-cultural examination.[94]

Új Szó (Fig. 28) published an image of Nilratan Chatterji's work *A Santali girl*, whereas *Sloboda* opted for a group photo of the opening, with Indian and Czechoslovak officials posing for the camera (Fig. 29). For a more broadly informed, transregional art historical reading of the exhibition, however, we must turn to Hájek, who began to engage with and write about Indian modernist art at around this time. Hájek, in his role as an Indologist and comparative religious scholar, as a founding member and regular contributor to the journal *Nový Orient* beginning in 1945, and as the first head of the newly established Department of Oriental Art at the NGP, delivered an informed discussion of Indian art. Even if his approach to Asian art was somewhat "unsystematic[…]" and

Sloboda, 1/1-1956 +

Výstava indického umenia v Bratislave

Poverenícтvo kultúry usporiadalo v Slovenskej národnej galérii výstavu indického umenia. Inštaloval ju vynikajúci český orientalista dr. Ľubor Hájek, autor knihy „Čínske umenie". Na otváraní prítomní boli povereník kultúry Andrej Klokoč a predseda Sboru poverenícov Rudolf Strechaj, ako aj iní predstavitelia nášho politického a kultúrneho života. Prišla aj delegácia indických výtvarníkov na čele s riaditeľom maliarskej školy v New Delhi B. Č. Sanjalom. Vo svojej otváracej reči dr. Ľubor Hájek poznamenal, že hostia z Indie s veľkým záujmom sledujú vývoj čs. umenia, pobudli aj v Jindřichovom Hradci v dielni N. H. Teinitzerovej, kde ich prekvapila originalita a krása slovenských gobelínov, ktoré sa robia podľa návrhov Janka a Šáry Alexy, Ľudovíta Fullu a Ley Mrázovej. Výstava indického umenia v Bratislave udivuje svojou originalitou. Zaujímavé sú hlavne staré ilustrácie, iniciálky a miniatúry, pripomínajúce naše gotické umenie. Tieto diela pôvabné sú vo farbe. V kresbe sú milé svojou detinskou jednoduchosťou a úprimnosťou. Diela súdobých indických umelcov ovplyvnené sú európskou kultúrou, sú expresionisticky chápané, no vidno, že indickí výtvarníci v každom prípade bojujú o osobitný výraz, o prenikavú pôsobivosť farieb a o dekoratívnu plošnosť. Po skončení výstavy v Bratislave časťka exponátov bude vystavená v Obrazárni Petra Bohúňa v Liptovskom Mikuláši.

Záber z otvorenia výstavy indického umenia. Od ľava do prava dr. Ľubor Hájek z Prahy, inštalátor výstavy, B. C. Sanjál, riaditeľ maliarskej školy v New Delhi, H. A. Gade, maliar z Bombay a zaslúžilý umelec Janko Alexy

Fig. 29 *Sloboda* newspaper article with photo from the exhibition opening. From left to right: Dr Lubor Hájek from Prague, who installed the exhibition; B. C. Sanyal, the art school director from New Delhi; H. A. Gade, a painter from Bombay; and Janko Alexy, a celebrated artist. Fund of the Slovak National Library.

"fragmentary,"[95] he was nevertheless invested, through his first-hand contact with artworks, artists, and intellectuals over a long period of time, in contributing to an engaged reading of art from Asia, which Hánová has defined as "interdisciplinary" and "global."[96] The interdisciplinary character of this engagement can perhaps best be understood in terms of Hájek's vision and curatorial approach, which, as Hánová has elaborated, involved contemporary Czech artists such as Květa Horáková (1927–1981) and Václav Rykr (1927–1991), who worked together with Hájek on the installation of the permanent display of *Masterpieces of Chinese Art* at the Château in Benešov nad Ploučnicí, where the collection of Asian art was stored and partly exhibited between 1961 and 1969.[97]

3.1.4 Appreciation from the Margins

Before discussing the Indian modernist art collection, within the collection of Asian art at the NGP, however, let us turn to some of Hájek's early writings on Indian art. These writings demonstrate a fairly broad

and deep knowledge of Indian art, which allows the author to point out ruptures caused by, and reactions to, colonial academic art. He is also able to make connections between various Indian traditions and schools of painting, along with broader twentieth-century art movements. Hájek makes important observations at the beginning of an article he wrote for *Výtvarná práce* as an exhibition review in 1955.[98] He praises the fact that the India exhibition, prepared by the LKA and organised by the Ministry of Culture in India and the NGP, together with the Union of Czechoslovak Fine Arts in the Municipal House in Prague, achieved a substantial overview of periods and trends in Indian art, setting it apart from previous exhibitions on Indian art[99] in Czechoslovakia. In Hájek's view, what sets this exhibition apart is its focus on contemporary painting. He thus sees the contemporary represented quite adequately, but he regrets the fact that Indian folk art and academic art, as taught at British colonial art schools, is missing. The reason he regrets the absence of these two trends is that he presumes the Czech visitor will ask about how Indian contemporary art connects with both local and international art.[100] According to Hájek, Indian art strongly resisted academic art as "a symbol of foreign rule," and he views this defiance as having enabled the "liberation movement" and the "first attempts of the artistic enlightenment," as developed around the "intellectual milieu of the "gifted family of Thákurs."[101] Hájek then continues by contextualising Indian twentieth-century art, which he sees as being shaped significantly by the Indian countryside, the metropolises, and the Bengal school, the latter of which he views as existing somewhere in between.[102] Hájek considers the Bengali artist Jamini Roy's work, included in the exhibition, to be representative of this trend. For Hájek, it is thus Roy who links the majority of Indians living in the countryside with the urban population, by means of artistic form.[103]

What filters through here is the celebration of the folk, the popular, the tribal, and the everyday. While still referring to trends that marked the 1930s, Hájek continues to point out the singular position held by Bombay as a cosmopolitan city with significant connections to the West, where "most abstract tendencies took root," and where "national traditions" were "with the greatest unwillingness" opposed.[104] He continues to observe that in post-partition India, "certain excesses of Western modernism limited but also channelled a more nation-oriented and more original way of expression."[105] As representatives of this current, he names artists included in the exhibition, such as Hebbar (K. K. Hebbar), Abani Sen,

Sanjál (B. C. Sanyal), Ram Kinkar, Gade, and others. He concludes by suggesting that contemporary Indian art is only in its beginning stages, with "themes, techniques, views or forms still running in various directions, resembling a new-born foal."[106]

Hájek writes as a fairly well-informed observer of Indian art, past and present. His background in Indology and comparative religion, as well as his effort to study art history by attending a series of lectures at Charles University,[107] shaped his approach to art. Parts of his writing, particularly as it relates to national liberation movements against foreign rule, as well as his admiration for Indian artists who turned to folk art and the everyday, can be attributed to a socialist perspective. His contextualisation of Bengali art as in between the city and the countryside, and therefore as an art that he thinks possibly "provoked a reaction to the slowly dying Indian feudal classes,"[108] can be read along these lines, as well. At the same time, his writing demonstrates an understanding of folk art, and by extension primitivism, in India, as a means to resist "Western rationality and urban modernity, and that of the Western modernists,"[109] as formulated by Partha Mitter. In this way, Hájek makes a connection between his own position, and that of the Indian modernist painter, both located at the margin of Western modernism. Whether this constitutes the "global" art historical understanding that Hánová spoke of[110] must be examined by looking at some of Hájek's other writings.

It may be said that Hájek's degree of engagement with and understanding of twentieth-century Indian art was not characteristic of Europe in the 1950s. For comparison, let us turn to the British art historian William George Archer (1907–1979), who served in the Indian Civil Service in India between 1931 and 1947, and published widely on Indian regional painting schools. About his influential 1959 book on Indian modern art,[111] Partha Mitter has argued that Archer failed to see beyond style as a category for viewing art. Mitter further noted that Archer's evaluation of the Indian modernist artist with reference to Picasso's precedent inspired him to conclude that the Indian artist is simply not good enough, and will thus always be an artist *manqué*.[112] Compared to Archer, the art historian and Indologist from Prague does not speak from a position of superiority, even while still using style as a category, but from a position of appreciation that comes from the periphery.[113] While still based on value and judgment, Hájek's observations reveal a general enthusiasm for the art of

India, coupled with an appreciation that grew over the years, and steadily expanded his knowledge. Views such as Hájek's were shared by other art critics, as well, who followed exhibitions of Indian artists and their artwork over the years, as did the Czechoslovak audience.[114]

3.1.5 Mobility across a "Curtain of Lace"

Meanwhile, however, the India exhibition accompanied by Sanyal and Gade came to an end in Bratislava. According to Sanyal's account, the two returned to Prague, from where they boarded a train to Budapest, and the exhibition continued along its scheduled journey.[115] Sanyal also writes that he received an invitation by Miloslav Krása to return to Prague "after the round of exhibitions was over for a short relaxing stay."[116] As it happened, Sanyal did return after almost eleven months of journeying, as he put it, "behind the Iron Curtain," which seemed to him like "a curtain of lace."[117] While I will not further elaborate on the journey of the India exhibition to East/Central Europe in 1956, since this is a topic for another publication,[118] I do wish to draw upon insights offered by Sanyal's report, and propose that through his mobility across land and waters, across political divides, as well as across nations that were collectively perceived as being "behind the Iron Curtain," he was able to speak from an informed position. During his journey, Sanyal's intensive and extensive exposure to places on both sides of the Iron Curtain, from India to Italy, to Austria and Czechoslovakia, to Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, then further to what he referred to as the Soviet land,[119] and finally to Poland, allowed him to gain an informed perception of a world that was inaccessible to many. It was Sanyal's dislocated experience and his extensive mobility that enabled him to perceive the curtain as permeable—consisting of interruptions, breaks, and passages.

While Sanyal's and Gade's journey, and the mobility it involved, contributed to their own understanding of the different kinds of cultural frameworks they encountered and moved through, the exhibition and the objects of art they accompanied, and their exposure to, and interaction with, various people and new contexts, also "set in motion"[120] the way that the new collection of Indian modernist art at the NGP came to be arranged and displayed.

3.1.6 Establishing a Collection of Modern Indian Art in Prague

Through the initiative of Hájek, the NGP acquired ten paintings from the 1955/56 India exhibition, which laid the groundwork for a slowly growing collection of modern Indian art. These included the works *Matka s dítětem/Mother and Child* by Badri Narayan; *Bohyně polí/Mothers of Field* by D. G. Kulkarni, visible also in the photograph of the opening reception in Bratislava in Fig. 23; *Na venkovksé káře/Cart* by K. Sreenivasulu; *Třpyt v temnotách/Glittering Darkness* by S. S. Anandkar, seen here reproduced in *Nový Orient* (Fig. 30); *Dělníci/Workers* by V. P. Trivedi; and *Večer/Evening* by V. S. Gaitonde (Fig. 31). Four more paintings entered the collection, but were destroyed in an unfortunate fire in 1969 at the Château in Benešov nad Ploučnicí, the location where the collection of Asian art was stored and temporarily exhibited.[121] These were the works *Vesničan/The Villager* by Sanyal; *Oběd v polích/Midday Meal* by Gade; *Bengálská žena/A Woman of Bengal* by Jamini Roy; and *Rolník/Lord of the Land* by K. K. Hebbar (1911–1996), which was featured on the poster for the India exhibition

Fig. 30 S. S. Anandkar, *Třpyt v temnotách/Glittering Darkness*, early 1950s. Tempera on paper, 35.5 × 43 cm. *Nový Orient*, volume 11, no. 2, 1956, 29.

Fig. 31
V. S. Gaitonde, *Večer/Evening*, early 1950s. Tempera on paper, 56 × 43 cm. NGP, inv. no. Vm 926. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

(Fig. 27).[122] The documents recording the sale of the works were prepared by the LKA, and exchanged with the NGP via the Cultural Ministry in Prague and the Czechoslovak Embassy in New Delhi.[123]

The nature of the acquisition of works of modern Indian art for the NGP must be viewed vis-à-vis the composition of the India exhibition, which offered, as mentioned earlier, a broad spectrum of Indian art, representing its development from pre-modern to modern times. With the larger part being the "contemporary section," representing Indian modernist art from a current perspective, it is also clear that it was from this section that purchases could be made, since it contained works of art which were intended and designated for sale. Moreover, the paintings that Hájek acquired as the foundation for a collection of modern Indian art for the NGP must also be viewed in connection with the composition of the Asian Art Collection at the NGP, and its establishment as the Department of Oriental Art in 1952.[124]

From the outset, artistic connections between Asian regions were visualised, and connections with European art were also fostered, a point that Markéta Hánová has clearly stressed in her account of the genesis

of the Asian Art Collection at the NGP.[125] The selected works of Indian art can generally be said to represent one trend of Indian modernist art, namely rural, as opposed to urban. In the works *Bohyně polí/Mothers of Field* by D. G. Kulkarni, *Dělníci/Workers* by V. P. Trivedi, *Večer/Evening* by V. S. Gaitonde (Fig. 31), *Vesničan/The Villager* by Sanyal, *Třpyt v temnotách/Glittering Darkness* by S. S. Anandkar (Fig. 31), and *Oběd v polích/Midday Meal* by Gade, but also in the work *Rolník/Lord of the Land* by K. K. Hebbar (Fig. 27), intimate scenes of the rural landscape, the countryside, and labour, are depicted as being performed in rituals, mainly by women, in settings that are clearly distant from the modern city. It is, thus, the local Indian, rural, and regional reality, rather than the national reality, that is the focus of these works, in which tradition and modernity do not contradict each other. In connection with the collection of modern Chinese art, with representative works by artists such as Qi Baishi (1864–1957), Wu Changshi (1844–1927), Ling Fengmian (1900–1991), and Xu Beihong (1885–1953), amongst others,[126] we arrive at a picture of a collection of modernist art from Asia that presents itself against the international logic of abstraction.

3.1.7 Curatorial Efforts to Foster Friendship

It is unclear in which way Hájek, in his position as director of the Department of Oriental Art, intended to present the collection of Indian modernist art within the museum's collection. We know that the Asia collection was transferred in 1960 from the Troja Château on the northern outskirts of Prague, to the Château in Benešov nad Ploučnicí, in north Bohemia. There, Hájek was able to present a long-term exhibition of *Masterpieces of Chinese Art* in the Lower Château, in 1961; a significant curatorial achievement.[127] It can only be speculated that he intended to curate the India collection at the Upper Château in Benešov nad Ploučnicí.[128] However, the fire of 1969, which damaged a considerable number of works of art from the Asia collection, prevented a possible permanent display of Indian modernist art. If we turn instead to an exhibition Hájek initiated in Brno in 1961, we get some idea of how Hájek might have envisioned the display of Indian art in the framework of the Collection of Asian Art.

In an exhibition at the Dům Umění (House of Art) in Brno (Fig. 32), a selection from the collection of Asian art from the holdings of the NGP and the Náprstek Museum in Prague was showcased.

Fig. 32 Photo from the exhibition *Umělecké Památky Asie* and its display in one of the rooms at Dům Umění (House of Art) in Brno. Photograph Jaroslav Hochman. Image courtesy of the archive of Dům Umění, Brno.

The exhibition was realised by Hájek in collaboration with Milena Horáková[129] and Charlotta Pocheové,[130] with the help of the architect Milos Treskov, and it was praised as one of the best exhibitions shown in the Dům Umění.[131] The exhibition included works of art from Burma, China, Persia, Egypt, Japan, Syria, and India, countries that were largely part of the idea of the New Orient. From the India collection, works by modernist artists such as Gaitonde and Ajit Chakravarti were included, in what seems otherwise to have been an exhibition of traditional art. From newspaper articles we gather that the exhibition was well received, and that the audience in Brno had already encountered some Asian art. Vojtěch Chytil's (1896–1936) contribution, bringing two exhibitions of Chinese, Tibetan, and Japanese art to Brno in the 1930s, is mentioned, along with a series of exhibitions of what this writer refers to as "New Art of Old China, Liberated China, Indian Sculpture, Japanese Woodcut, as well as, a year ago, on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Republic of China, an exhibition of the greatest contemporary Chinese painter Čchi Paj-š'ho,"[132] by which the writer surely meant the artist Qi Baishi, whose work is well represented in the Asia Collection of the NGP.

Fig. 33

Fig. 34

Figs. 33-34 Photo from the installation of *Masterpieces of Chinese Art,* Château in Benešov nad Ploučnicí, 1961–1969. Archive of the NGP, Documentation of the NGP exhibitions (1959–1964), inv. no. 165. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

From a photograph from the exhibition (Fig. 32), we get the impression that the display in Brno followed a similar curatorial aesthetic to that which characterised the installation of the *Masterpieces of Chinese Art* at the Château in Benešov nad Ploučnicí (Fig. 33, Fig. 34).

The sculptures were displayed on metal rods, and objects were shown in what looks like glass display cases.[133] Hájek's curatorial signature seems to filter through in these display decisions. This signature is characterised by an effort to give space to objects, and, where possible, to connect them with the architectural details of each exhibition space.[134] By setting out to establish a connection between the art object and the location/space, and therefore with the respective cultural context, Hájek, according to Hánová, allowed "the artistic quality of the Renaissance spaces [of the Château in Benešov nad Ploučnicí] to stand out in between the objects on display," and thereby "created an exceptional artistic [curatorial] solution."[135] This, together with the work of Czech artists that was featured, became, in the words of Hánová, a "Gesamtkunstwerk."[136]

In significant ways, Hájek's curatorial approach draws on older exhibition concepts, such as the third exhibition of the Group of Fine Artists at the Municipal House in Prague in 1913.[137] The representational strategies applied by Hájek in the 1960s may therefore be viewed as a strategy to engage larger concepts concerned with world art,[138] or, as art historian John Clark puts it, a "worlding of the Asian Modern," in a geo-historical sense.[139] However, given the geopolitics of the Cold War, the careful

creation of a spatial as well as situational symbiosis between Asian art and the Czechoslovak space, such as the Renaissance castle, needs to be viewed as an intention to foster friendship and to demonstrate a hospitable and engaged environment. Hájek's own assessment of his curatorial achievement was judged as the creation of "an unexpected harmony."[140]

Following the fire misfortune, the Asian Art Collection was moved to the Zbraslav Château on the southern outskirts of Prague. There, Hájek was visited by friends and artists such as M. F. Husain, a topic I will address in more detail in the following chapter.

Hájek's insight into Indian modernist art grew over the years. He witnessed a number of Indian artists visiting Prague, and followed their study sojourns at different institutions. Together with Krása, he facilitated stays for these artists, and generally kept close ties with them, as well as with Indian writers, filmmakers, musicians, and intellectuals. By the time the last Indian national survey exhibition arrived in Prague, in 1979, the NGP had been able to increase its collection of modernist Indian art significantly. From the initial ten paintings, the collection had now grown to a substantial seventy-one works of art, comprising works on paper and on canvas, amongst which are linocuts, etchings, oils, aquarelles, temperas, and felt pen drawings. Most of these works will be discussed in the following chapters.

3.1.8 The 1979 Indian Art Exhibition: Modernist Art at Home in Prague

In contrast to the 1955/56 India exhibition, the exhibition that arrived in Prague in 1979 focused exclusively on modern and contemporary Indian art. According to files from the NGP archives, the exhibition *Moderní indické umění/Modern Indian Art* (Fig. 35) was organised by the Embassy of the Republic of India in Prague and the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi, in cooperation with the NGP. The exhibition opening took place on January 26, 1979, at the Municipal Library in the centre of Prague, timed to coincide with India's Republic Day.[141] Unlike the India exhibition of 1955/56, which was only on display in Prague for a few days, this exhibition was on view for over a month.

This exhibition was prepared in New Delhi, from where it travelled in 1978 to Teheran and Damascus, and then on to Warsaw.[142] It included

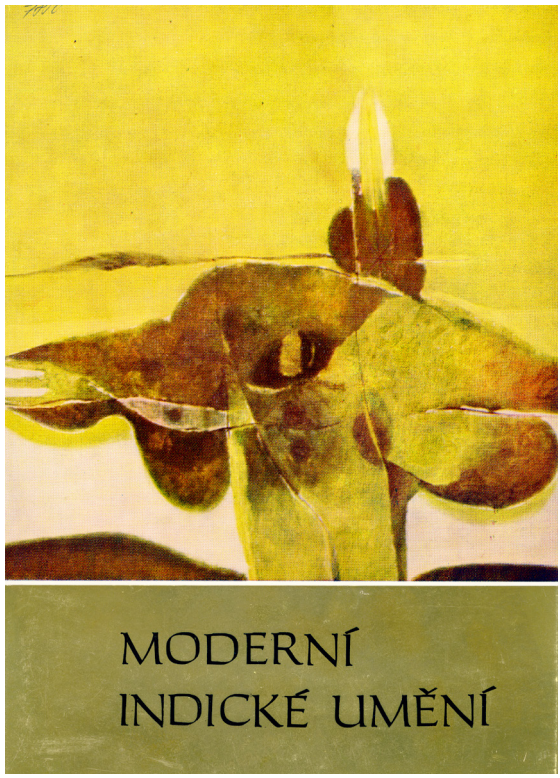


Fig. 35 Cover of the 1979 India exhibition catalogue with a work by Bimal Dasgupta (1917-1995), *Landscape*, oil on canvas, 1971, 122 × 121 cm. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

VÝSTŘIŽEK Z ČASOPISU

Lidová demokracie, Praha

ze dne 1. II. 1979

LIDÉ • VĚCI • UDÁLOSTI

Moderní indické umění

V malířské výstavní síni Sbírky moderního malířství Národní galerie se do 4. března nabízí návštěvníkům k prohlídce pozoruhodná výstava nejvzácnějších přírůstků Národní galerie moderního umění v Novém Dílí. Pracovníci této instituce ji koncipovali tak, aby vybraná díla vytvořila co možná nejúplnější průřez moderní indickou tvorbou od dvacátých let našeho století — obrazy, kresbami, grafikou a plastikami. Tento vskutku reprezentativní a počtem vystavovaných děl monumentální výběr (je tu k zhlédnutí sto exponátů) představuje návštěvníkům v širokém záběru obdivuhodné úsilí indických tvůrců vyrovnat se — zejména v posledních dvou dekádách — s rozličnými proudy západního moderního umění tak, aby se jejich díla stala nedílnou a rovnocennou součástí moderní produkce současného světa.

Když vstoupíme do výstavních prostor Sbírky moderního malířství, obklopí nás osvědčil, jež nám není zcela neznámé. Československo má ve vystavování indického moderního umění, zejména malířství, už svou tradici: od poslední souborné výstavy tohoto umění v r. 1955 jsme měli možnost čas od času vidat díla jednotlivých osobností indického moderního umění v pražských výstavních síních, grafiku v Holleru, obrazy a plastiky poměrně, např. U Řeckých, v Mánesu, Prágnerově galerii. Z malířů, jejichž práce jsou zastoupeny i v současné expozici, tu vystavovali K. H. Hebbar, Kumár Rám a především M. F. Husain, který je velmi populární v Americe a jenž si naši zemi tak oblíbil, že se do ní opětovně vrací a čerpá v ní podněty k novým dílům. Praha naučila dnes už klasik moderního indického malířství N. S. Bendre a malíř tantrického směru Birén Dé, který tu před několika lety pobýval jako host ministerstva kultury. K důvěrně nám známým patří velký básník — a také malíř — Rabindranáth Thákur.

Z ostatních umělců jsou zvláště zajímavé ti, jejichž moderní díla obohacují o názorové či formální vztahy k domácí indické tradici nebo užívají tradičních technik, materiálů a novým způsobem je kombinují (např. Piradži Ságara, koláž z kordíků, typických pro gudžarátskou výšivku, na řezbu do dřeva; K. S. G. Paniker, použití písma a symbolů indického rukopisného textu k obrazu Slova a Symboly apod.).

K výstavě vydala Národní galerie pěkný katalog s nevšedním a krutičky zaměřeným úvodním slovem dr. Lokkhi P. Sjhdrího, ředitele Národní galerie moderního umění v Novém Dílí.

M. F. HUSAIN: Višvamitra, olej na plátně

H. KNÍŽKOVÁ

Fig. 36 Article by H. Knížková in *Lidová demokracie*, Prague, February 1, 1979 with a work by M. F. Husain, *Višwamitra*, 152,3 × 122,3 cm, oil on canvas, 1973. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

Fig. 37

Fig. 38

Fig. 39

Fig. 40

Figs. 37-40 Documentation of the 1979 exhibition *Moderní indické umění* (*Modern Indian Art*) (inv. no. 1979/24/349), photographs of the installation, photo by Národní galerie v Praze, Fotografická dílna, Jaroslav Jeřábek (without inv. no.). Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

one hundred works of art—a mix of paintings, drawings, graphic art, and sculpture. All the works were from the collection of the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi, and were therefore not for sale. The catalogue was prepared and designed in New Delhi. However, unlike the 1955/56 exhibition, the Czechoslovak side had enough time to work on a Czech version of the catalogue; this is why the text, and all the art works in the exhibition catalogue, were translated into Czech. The extensive introductory text accompanying the catalogue was written by Dr Lakshmi P. Sihari. The exhibition included works by some of the most eminent Indian artists, who collectively contributed to define and give direction to India's pre- and post-partition artistic modernism. Although the works of Gaganendranath Tagore, Amrita Sher Gil, Rabindranath Tagore, and Jamini Roy are not dated, we can assume that they were included to represent pre-partition modernism. Further selections included works by artists from New Delhi

Fig. 41

Fig. 42

Fig. 43

Fig. 44

Figs. 41-44 Documentation of the 1979 exhibition *Moderní indické umění* (*Modern Indian Art*) (inv. no. 1979/24/349), photographs of the installation, photo by Národní galerie v Praze, Fotografická dílna, Jaroslav Jeřábek (without inv. no.). Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

and Bombay, with former members of the Bombay Progressive Artist's Group (PAG). However, there were also works by artists from Baroda, Goa, and Calcutta, as well as diaspora artists. Press reviews reported extensively on the exhibition, many voices proudly proclaiming that Czechoslovak audiences had long been familiar with modern Indian art, having viewed the exhibition dating back to 1955/56 (Fig. 36). Accordingly, some of the attendees had met some of the artists in person in Prague, during their study sojourns, or on visits over the past three decades, as the writer of the article notes.

Hana Knížková, who wrote regularly about Indian art, especially for *Nový Orient* and *New Orient Bimonthly*,[143] emphasised the familiarity with the works and the atmosphere they created for the visitor to the exhibition in Prague (Fig. 36).[144] In contrast to reviews of the 1955/56 India exhibition, in which the general consensus was that Indian art was still searching for a future direction, the prevailing opinion at the 1979 exhibition was that

contemporary Indian art had made a distinctive contribution to, and was on an equal footing with, modern art worldwide.

A series of photographs from the exhibition opening show how the works were displayed and arranged across exhibition rooms (Fig. 37-44).

The display of paintings and works on paper, in combination with single sculptural works, is reminiscent of Hájek's curatorial approach from earlier years at the Dům Umění (House of Art) in Brno in 1961 (Fig. 32), or later at the Château in Benešov nad Ploučnicí (Figs. 33-34).[145] Here, as before, care is taken to give space to the individual works of art. Instead of metal steles, however, sculptures are now presented uniformly on white plinths, some of which are placed freely about the room, and others on the wall. The contemporary and modern character of the works on display is clearly central. The overall impression of the exhibition conveyed by the photographs is that non-figurative works seem to dominate, as reflected in the abstract landscape on the cover of the catalogue (Fig. 35) by Bimal Dasgupta. There is, however, a mix of figurative and abstract works in the exhibition, and the back cover of the catalogue (Fig. 45), as well as the exhibition poster (Fig. 46), are evidence of that balance.

The 1979 India exhibition is a self-conscious representation of India as a nation that views its modern and contemporary art as part of an international discourse and artistic developments. The inclusion of diasporic artists, such as Krishna Reddy and Zarina Hashmi (known as Zarina), emphasises this. The official character of the exhibition, like the previous one from 1955/56, is documented with photographs from several opening speeches delivered by representatives from both the Indian and the Czechoslovak side (Fig. 54, Fig. 55).

After 1979, exhibitions of modern and contemporary Indian art in Prague and in the Czechoslovak Republic declined significantly. In October 1979, in March 1980, and in the following year, three exhibitions in memory of the late artist Chittaprosad took place in Prague, Litomerice, and Brno. These will be discussed in Chapter 5. Thereafter, there was no more acquisition or exhibition activity. It almost seems as if a long and intense episode of mutual exchange and appreciation began, ineluctably, to wane.

While the exhibitions, collecting activities, and nurturing of friendships and contacts between Praguers and Indian artists that this entailed took

Fig. 45 Back cover of the 1979 India exhibition catalogue, with an image of *Camels*, by Amrita Sher Gil, 1941, oil on canvas, 74.8 × 100.5 cm. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

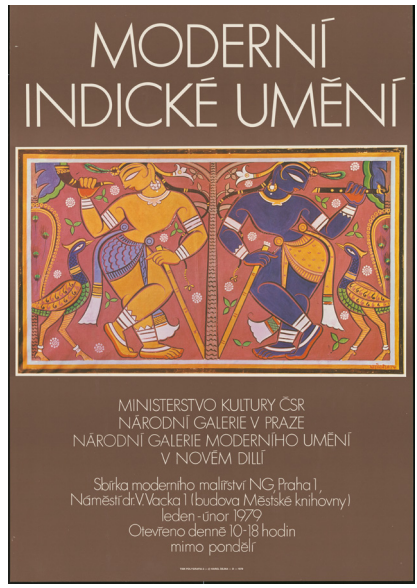


Fig. 46 Exhibition poster of the 1979 India exhibition, with an image of *Krishna and Balarama* by Jamini Roy, tempera on canvas, 146 × 84 cm. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

place under state control, the personal engagement involved in all this went far beyond political propaganda. The Indologist Hájek, and the idealist and communist Krása, played a decisive role here. It may have worked to their advantage, giving them, for example, the opportunity to travel to distant places and lands, which was not possible for the majority of citizens, as Jaroslav Strnad tells it.[146] They both managed, however, to balance personal interests and professional responsibilities to an extent that led to an exceptional and fruitful engagement, unique in the region of Central Europe, where exhibitions of Indian modern and contemporary art were widely nurtured.[147] In Warsaw, exhibition activities took place on a similar scale to those in Prague. The collection of Indian modern art that was created there, however, is in no way comparable to that of Prague, either in quality or in quantity.[148] Hájek's and Krása's genuine interest in modern Indian art contributed to creating a place for Indian art and artists in Prague in the post-war period, which enriched the possibilities of personal mobility[149] for both themselves and the Indian artists.

3.2 A Solidarity Collection in Lidice

The collection of international modern art at the Lidice Memorial, north of Prague, clearly illustrates the degree of personal commitment that Hájek and Krása invested in collecting and exhibiting Indian modernist art.

The Lidice Art Collection of global post-war art has its origins in 1967, when an international appeal for donations was made and the collection was set up for a future museum.[150] At this point, the village of Lidice had already become a symbolic place of resistance, dating to the time of World War II, when Czechoslovakia was occupied by the Nazis. The assassination of Reichsprotektor Reinhard Heydrich on May 27, 1942, in Prague, resulted in Nazi retaliations, particularly against the village of Lidice.[151] It saw the mass killing of all its men, the deportation of its women to concentration camps, and the destruction of the entire village, as well as the erasure of the name Lidice. These atrocities, along with the tragic fate of its children, sparked immediate outcry, outrage, and great sympathy and compassion around the world.[152] The British medical doctor and politician Sir Barnett Stross (1899–1967), who was of Polish/Jewish origin, acted immediately, and established the *Lidice Shall Live* movement. Before he passed away in 1967, he made a call to artists internationally to donate artworks, which became the basis for a collection that, by the late 1960s, already comprised of 273 works of art. According to the team of curators working in the Lidice Art Collection, there were three 'waves' of donations coming to Czechoslovakia between 1967 and 1969.[153] In 1967, artists from across Eastern and Western Europe, Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, including India and Pakistan, donated works. The second round of donations came in 1968, with works of art from across the world, including from Ceylon/Sri Lanka. In 1969, further works from India, Mexico, and the Federal Republic of Germany were donated, the latter consisting of the first donation from the West Berlin-based curator René Block's important initiative.[154] Stross's appeal for donations reached artists around the world, primarily through the network of foreign embassies, which reached out to artists and organised the shipping of the donated works to Prague. This is how the artist Senaka Senanayake from Ceylon (born 1951), then still a teenager, heard about the call. In a private conversation with the artist in Colombo in 2017, he told me that he had heard about a "peace museum," and that this had moved him to contribute one of his works on Buddhist philosophy[155] (Fig. 47).

Fig. 47 Senaka Senanayake, *Buddha's Disciples in Argumentation*, 1960s. Oil on canvas, 88 × 104 cm. Inv. No. VU 156/67, acquisition—donated by the artist in 1967. Courtesy Lidice Art Collection, Lidice Memorial.

Senanayake's work *Buddha's Disciples in Argumentation* (Fig. 47) reflects on the interactions of the Buddha with his contemporaries. The painting's expressionistic application of oil on canvas shows a preaching Buddha in the foreground, with a village family and an enlightened Buddha in the background, immersed in meditation. In a series of articles from the artist's personal archive in Colombo (Fig. 48), we see him clockwise from left, working on the painting, explaining the work to the Czechoslovak Ambassador to Ceylon, Jaromir Stertina, and his wife, and posing with his work for the camera before handing it over for donation.

When Senanayake donated his work, he already had an impressive international career as a child/teenaged artist. He had toured the United States, London, West Germany, and Moscow with his works of art for exhibitions and commissions.[156] The young artist's exposure to the wider world through his early childhood travels taught him to experiment with different modernist styles from observations. However, as opposed to his later, mature work, which is primarily marked by colourful depictions of

Fig. 48 Collection of newspaper clippings from the personal archive of Senaka Senanayake, Colombo. Photograph Simone Wille, 2017. Courtesy of Senaka Senanayake.

tropical vegetation and wildlife in a realist style, his early work reflects a preference for expressionism.

On January 17, 1968, Senanayake travelled to Czechoslovakia for an exhibition of his work in Prague and in Olomouc. The Prague exhibition was widely covered by the press. An article in *Rudé Právo* reported that the exhibition was realised in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Information and the Embassy of Ceylon.[157] The exhibition was held at the Palace Dunaj, and was comprised of twenty-four oil paintings and ten works on paper. As was customary for invited guests from abroad, Senanayake was taken to Lidice, which had become a place of pilgrimage, co-opted by the communists for promoting solidarity. A black-and-white photograph of Senaka Senanayake with Gerhard Richter's work *Onkel Rudi* (Fig. 49) survives in the archive of the Lidice Museum.

Gerhard Richter's work was part of the collection of twenty-one works that René Block brought from West Germany to Prague in 1968 to donate to the Lidice Art Collection. Although the Czechoslovak cultural authorities had little interest in presenting avant-garde works of art by West German artists, gallerist Jindřich Chalupecký managed to exhibit the art works on his

Fig. 49 Senaka Senanayake photographed in front of Gerhard Richter's work *Onkel Rudi (85)* (*Uncle Rudi*) in 1968. Václav Spála Gallery, Prague. Courtesy Lidice Art Collection, Lidice Memorial. © Gerhard Richter 2025 (31072025).

premises, the Václav Špála Gallery, in the centre of Prague. The exhibition opened on July 3, 1968; thus, there was a long interval between Senanayake's exhibition in January and the exhibition of the German works. Nevertheless, it must be assumed that the photo with Senanayake and Richter's work was taken as part of this exhibition. René Block, who was personally present at the exhibition, remembers that the Prague Spring ended just a few days later, with the invasion of the troops of the "socialist brother states," and that the exhibited works had to be brought to safety.[158] In a collaborative act, Chalupecký, together with Jiří Kohoutek, the director of the Central Bohemian Gallery in Prague, who was responsible for the future Lidice Art Collection, were able to hide the works in a castle in Nelahozeves, north of Prague. The collection remained there for the next three decades.[159] When Block travelled to Prague many years later, in 1997, he remembers that the storage place within the castle was filled with hundreds of donated works of art from all over the world.[160] The photo with the young artist from Ceylon standing next to the painting of Gerhard Richter, taken shortly before the Soviet troops entered Prague, can therefore be seen as a significant moment of encounter between artists and works of art at the crossroads of world history.[161]

Shakir Ali's painting *Birds in Flight and Flowers* (Fig. 1) was collected in Lahore from the artist by Jan Marek in 1967.[162] Dr Marek remembered the

artist from the period when he lived in Prague in 1949 and 1950. In Lahore, he met the artist at the National College of Arts, from where he also received the large-scale painting, rolled up for transportation. However, Marek remembered taking away not only Shakir Ali's work for donation, but others as well.[163] According to research in Lidice, it turns out that the two other works that Marek collected in Pakistan were works by the artist Sheikh Ahmed (1915–1986) from Karachi (Fig. 50, Fig. 51).

Sheikh Ahmed taught at the Karachi Institute of Arts and Design. His wife, the artist Anna Molka Ahmed (1917–1995), headed the Department of Fine Arts at the Punjab University in Lahore for many years. Ahmed was primarily known for his contributions to education and design, including book design.[164] The works that he donated to the Lidice Collection differ considerable in style. *Man with a Monkey* (Fig. 50) is more expressionistic, whereas *Old Man with a Child* (Fig. 51) is a depiction of a scene which he may have used for educational purposes. It clearly shows his ability to depict human figures and proportions with skill, however.

In India, artists Kattingeri Krishna Hebbar (K. K. Hebbar, 1911–1996) and Chintamoni Kar (1915–2005) donated works to the Lidice Collection. Hebbar, whose work is in the collection of the NGP and was also featured on the poster of the 1955/56 India exhibition (Fig. 27), sent a painting titled *Dancer* (Fig. 52).[165] Chintamoni Kar donated one of his signature wooden sculptures titled *Odalisk* (Fig. 53). The Indo-Czechoslovak Cultural Society had already actively promoted the commemoration of Lidice Day in India since the 1940s. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Lidice tragedy, on June 10, 1967, there appeared several articles across the Indian press in different languages.[166]

When the works by artists from India, Pakistan, and Ceylon arrived in Prague, they joined the rest of the collection in the repository in Nelahozeves, where they remained, partly forgotten. Luba Hédlová, former curator of the Lidice Art Collection, writes that "until 1973, some of the works (mainly those from the Eastern Bloc and kindred countries) were exhibited in the community centre in Lidice."[167] She also adds that the Central Bohemian Gallery in Prague, which was initially responsible for the collection, occasionally exhibited selected works in regional galleries until 1973.[168] In the aftermath of the Cold War, within Czechoslovakia, Lidice was largely considered as a place that was used as a stage by the communist regime. This is why there has been little interest in its art collection, which was transferred to the newly founded Lidice Memorial,

Fig. 50 Sheikh Ahmed, *Man with a Monkey*, 1960s. Oil on canvas, 74 × 95 cm. Inv. No. VU 102/67, acquisition—donated by the artist in 1967. Courtesy Lidice Art Collection, Lidice Memorial.

Fig. 51 Sheikh Ahmed, *Old Man with a Child*,1960s. Oil on canvas, 66 × 52 cm. Inv. No. VU/ 101/67, acquisition—donated by the artist in 1967. Courtesy Lidice Art Collection, Lidice Memorial.

Fig. 52 K. K. Hebbar, *Dancer,* 1960s. Oil on canvas, 66 × 51 cm. Inv. no. VU 101/67, acquisition—donated by the artist in 1967. Courtesy Lidice Art Collection, Lidice Memorial.

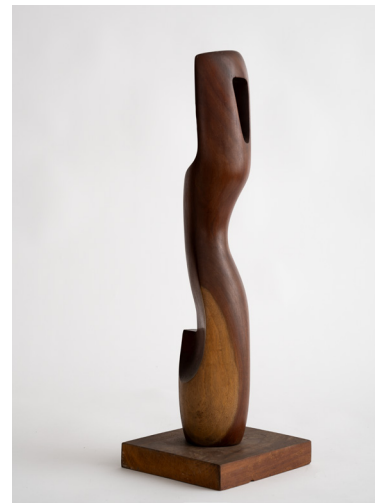


Fig. 53 Chintamoni Kar, Dancer, 1960s. Mahogany wood, 58 × 10 × 10 cm. Inv. no. VU 322/69, acquisition—donated by the artist in 1969. Courtesy Lidice Art Collection, Lidice Memorial. Photograph Lukáš Havlena.

in the former Lidice Community Center, in 2003. On June 9, 2017, guests from across the world travelled to Lidice to remember the tragedy, and Stross's call from 1967. This is when René Block's third donation, works by forty-four artists from around the world, was revealed.[169] However, the lack of representatives of the Czech art world suggests that many people are not even aware of this collection of international post-war art, a fate it shares with the collection of Indian modernist art in the NGP.

It is gestures of solidarity that inform the large collection of global post-war modernist art in the Lidice Memorial. Apart from the West German collection, a result of René Block's initiatives, there was no coordination in what would eventually come together as the Lidice Art Collection. Many artists, like Ahmed, Hebbar, and Kar, donated work that did not necessarily have a direct connection with the tragedy of Lidice. Shakir Ali's work surely is an exception. He had personal memories of the place, and could therefore directly relate to its history. Senanayake's work, in terms of its subject matter, can also be said to convey a message that connects with the call for peace. The Lidice Art Collection can therefore best be

compared with collections such as the Skopje Solidarity Collection, which came together after the 1963 tragedy caused by a massive earthquake in Skopje, in the former Yugoslavia. Albeit much larger in scale than the Lidice Art Collection, both the foundation of the museum of contemporary art and its collection was created through a call for international solidarity.[170] In reference to the collection in Skopje, the curatorial team of the Kunsthalle Vienna writes that "unlike most modernist art collections based on private tastes or national representation, this collection emerged from the history of the city and the ambition to rebuild it for a new, socialist society."[171]

Apart from Block's donation, the remaining works of art in the international collection of the larger Lidice Art Collection can likewise be said to have come together not so much as a result of 'private tastes,' but out of international solidarity acknowledging the tragedy of Lidice, and from the desire of artists to be part of a common cause.

3.3 Exhibiting and Collecting South Asian Art in Socialist Central Europe

Cultural exchange with friendly and brotherly states included the organisation and implementation of sometimes extensive exhibition projects. During the Cold War period, many exhibitions of modern and contemporary art from Asian, Latin American, and African countries were held not only in Czechoslovakia, but across East/Central Europe. The composition of these exhibitions was always determined by the sender, thus of the countries preparing and organising the consignment. If we investigate the way in which the International Biennial Exhibitions of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana handled the many contributions from member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, we gather that these countries were invited to present whatever art they chose.[172] Curators Piškur and Merhar thus conclude that in Ljubljana, "basically everything" came to be exhibited,[173] not only in terms of countries, but also in terms of the works of art and what they represent. Up until now, only a select few international exhibitions held in East/Central Europe have been researched.[174] The 1978/79 India exhibition in Warsaw serves as a case in point. For the cover of the Polish version of the exhibition catalogue, a fragment of the work by Jamini Roy, which later featured on the exhibition poster for the Prague exhibition (Fig. 41), was used.[175] In contrast to the figurative and folkloric image by Roy, the Czechoslovak version of the exhibition catalogue is more daring,

Figs. 54-55 Documentation of the 1979 exhibition *Moderní indické umění* (*Modern Indian Art*) (inv. no. 1979/24/349), photographs of the opening, photo by Národní galerie v Praze, Fotografická dílna, Vladimír Fyman (without inv. no.). Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

featuring an abstract work by Bimal Dasgupta (Fig. 35). From photographs from the opening ceremony of the exhibition in Prague, we gather that Dasgupta's work[176] was hung next to a work by M. F. Husain,[177] and that these two paintings were used as a backdrop for the opening speeches (Fig. 54, Fig. 55). Husain's work, titled *Višwamitra*, is also reproduced in Knížková's exhibition review (Fig. 36). On the wall to the right of the two speakers we see the works *Lidská Krajina/Human Landscape* (175 × 105 cm, oil on canvas) by Tyeb Mehta, and next to it the work Štěkající Stín/*The Drip Shadow,* also known as *Barking Shadows* (136 × 176 cm, oil on canvas) by Rameshwar Broota.

In Prague, we may conclude, the decision to use an abstract work for the cover of the catalogue was seen as a logical one, based on the assumption that the content of the exhibition prepared by the Indian side was made up of large sections of modernist works, which were not realist, nor simply figurative, but instead a mixture of both. In both Poland and Czechoslovakia, the Indian exhibition catalogue with English texts was translated, and names and places transcribed into Czech and Polish, accordingly. The translations into the language of the host countries read very naturally. Although this has led to some dissonances and divergences, it allows us to attribute a transcultural intention to these projects, with an engaged reading of the works of art on display. Moreover, it contributed to a deterritorialised reading of Indian modernism.

However, if we were to compare the approach and understanding of South Asian/Indian art in Prague with other countries of the Eastern Bloc where Indian art exhibitions were held, we may find it useful to turn to

these countries' collecting activities. Given the regular presence of Indian art exhibitions in several countries of East/Central Europe, the question arises whether and how Indian art was collected by local museums. The Dresden exhibition *Revolutionary Romances?* addressed this question in the last chapter of the exhibition, which was titled "Brüderlich gesammelt" ("Collected in a Brotherly Spirit"). Regarding the German Democratic Republic, and in particular the collection of the Albertinum in Dresden (SKD), the authors of the exhibition conclude that works by artists from India, Iraq, Burma (Myanmar), Indonesia, Cuba, and North Korea were not actively collected, but rather gifted to the museum. In some cases, individual works of art were donated to the museum by the Ministry of Culture.[178] This is how the Dresden collection came to be made up of a combination of works of art from former "brotherly countries." There was clearly no collecting or research strategy.[179]

There were, however, collecting activities, which stand out as strategic. In her text about the collection of Chinese art at the National Museums in Berlin, German Democratic Republic, curator Uta Rahman-Steinert presents one such example.[180] The collection of modern Indian art that came together at the National Museum in Warsaw lends itself to comparison with the collection of modern Indian art in Prague.[181] Both collections came into being at around the same time. They both acquired works from the first India exhibition in 1955/56. However, the Prague collection stands out, distinguished by a collecting strategy that was led by people who had engaged and studied the art of India, and were able to follow its development and its position in relation to other modernist developments in the world. The collection of modern Indian art at the NGP bears the unique stamp of Hájek's and Krása's involvement. The fact that it grew significantly over the years was a result of both Hájek's and Krása's initiative to acquire works by Indian artists who came to study and exhibit in Prague or had built personal relationships with the city.

In general, national survey exhibitions of Indian art came to Prague and to other cities in East/Central Europe through cultural exchange programmes, and were, thus, politically motivated. There is, however, a tension between showcasing a national art internationally, and the international solidarity of that era. "For artists working in these new nations," therefore, as Chelsea Haines and Gemma Sharpe suggest, "modernity and modernism, as well as nationalism and internationalism, operated hand

in hand."[182] Whether through national survey exhibitions or solo artists' exhibitions, international participation, brought about through mobility, immobility, and travel, allowed these artists and their artwork to participate in the creation of emergent art worlds.

Chapter 4
Individual Journeys to Prague

Apart from state-organised group exhibitions, two of which were discussed in detail in the previous chapter, individual artists' journeys from South Asia to Prague were quite frequent. These journeys allow us to frame the Central European capital city of Prague as a significant destination, and for some artists from India, Pakistan, and Ceylon/Sri Lanka, even a regular one in the period after independence. Individual artists' journeys to Prague were also part of official exchange programmes, which were organised between Czechoslovakia and the South Asian nation states of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon/Sri Lanka, with the aim of fostering friendship and developing mutual cultural, educational, and economic exchange. As we shall see when introducing the journeys to Prague of individual artists, this kind of mobility to Central Europe was part of their unfolding careers during the postcolonial era. The scepticism of South Asian artists toward colonial art education, and its formal nature, in combination with increasing opportunities to meet international counterparts and to view art exhibitions both at home and abroad, exposed them to new ideas, possibilities, and geographies. It allowed them to take part in international developments, and positioned them as active co-creators of post-war modernist art and post-war modernist art worlds.

The first World Youth Festival in Prague in 1947 was a key event, and was possibly the first opportunity for a South Asian artist to travel to Prague after World War II. Not unlike Moscow, often described as "the undisputed center of the communist world,"[1] Prague became a centre of gravity after World War II for a number of artists from newly independent South Asian countries, who consciously set out to position themselves in the world, as I argue in this book.

One of the South Asian artists who came to Prague to study and live for a period of time was Shakir Ali. As outlined in Chapter 2, for Ali, Prague became a point of reference in both his artistic practice and his later teaching career in Pakistan. For some of these artists, as for Ali, Prague

also became an emotional anchor. In an attempt to overcome cultural bureaucracy and the Cold War climate, they sought a romantic, libidinous, and emotional engagement with Czechoslovak culture and the city of Prague. I therefore see here a connection between what historian Mark Bradley considers "the imagined physicality of geopolitics" and "the structure of feeling,"[2] and an affective relationship with the time and the world which they encountered. In other words, these artists were living in their time, with affect, emotion, and heightened experience. To what extent their experiences were part of their artistic orientation is part of what this book project seeks to ask, with an approach that views this not as a marginal phenomenon, but as part of the larger arthistorical narrative.

4.1 Ram Kumar (1924–2018): Voyaging into Communism

Ram Kumar is one of India's post-independence artists whose early mobility took him to Paris, in 1949. He stayed in the French capital for almost three years.[3] While there, he came into contact with the French Communist Party, which he found easily accessible.[4] Even before he turned to painting in India, Kumar had developed a passion for literature, which he shared with his brother Nirmal Verma (1929–2005). Nirmal Verma was a notable Hindi writer, who lived and studied in Prague for an extended period of time, between 1960 and 1968.[5] Prague exerted an attraction on both brothers. According to a letter from Miloslav Krása in Prague to Ram Kumar in Paris, dated December 30, 1950, the artist had been in Prague earlier that year. Krása thanks Kumar for his letter and a Christmas card, and returns to him two of the short stories that he had left with him in Prague.[6] Krása also tells him that he looks forward to reading his new short stories, but even more to the articles he had written about Warsaw and Czechoslovakia in "Naya Sahitya."[7] Krása also congratulates him on hearing that he is back in Paris to prepare new paintings for the exhibition.[8] We do not know which exhibition Krása is referring to, but it could well be that an exhibition of works by Ram Kumar in Prague was discussed between the two men when they met.

Kumar probably came to Prague for the Peace Movement in 1950.[9] He had already attended similar events, for it seems that he travelled to Warsaw for the World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace in August 1948. This suggests that he was one of the many attendees, whom Leow described

Fig. 56 Photograph with Richard Wiesner, Ram Kumar, and Madjih Rahnema (from left to right). Courtesy of Fotobanka ČTK/Koláček, ID. No. 0897334068.

as "'conference-hopping' from one to the other."[10] In a photograph from November 30, 1951 (Fig. 56), we see Kumar, together with the Czechoslovak artist Richard Wiesner (1900–1972) and the Iranian artist and writer Madjih Rahnema,[11] visiting an art exhibition. According to the caption under the photograph, the exhibition was organised by the Union of the Czechoslovak Fine Artists at the Art and Culture Club at Mánes Gallery.

In Paris, Ram Kumar learned French. His literary activities, along with his connection to the French Communist Party, brought him into contact with writers and artists. Louis Aragon, Paul Éluard, Pablo Neruda, Jorge Amado, and Rufino Tamayo are frequently named in writings about Kumar.[12] Through both his writing and his artistic practice, Kumar participated in discourses that engaged with vectors of post-war humanism and existentialism.[13] Since the nature of post-war humanism was marked by both aesthetic and political/ideological battles, the contested terrain in the field of fine arts was, to quote art historian Natalie Adamson, "the real, exacerbated by the ideological and geographical division of the Cold War."[14]

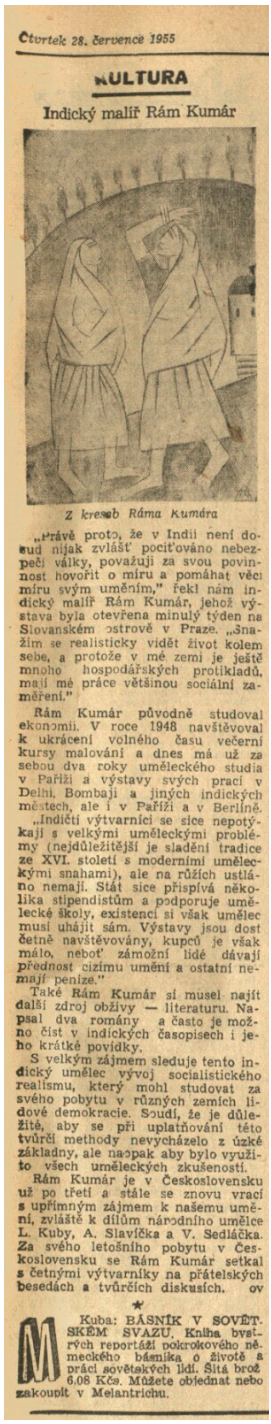
Nirmal Verma has written about Kumar's concern for the "human condition," which, as he writes, Kumar explored "through his voyage into communism, Europe, the mid-century existential ferment."[15] Some of this is reflected in Ram Kumar's paintings from this period. These works are mostly figurative, with either landscapes that are constructed of geometric

shapes, or cityscapes built of dense architectural forms, in which lonely figures or groups of figures appear lost and alienated. In works such as *Dream* (early 1950s) and *The City* (1958), the individual figure is pushed to the edge of the picture, from where she/he looks at the viewer with a worried or empty gaze. In works such as *Sad Town* (1956) and *A Worker's Family* (1955) (Fig. 26),[16] the desperate situation and existential crisis of the individual is reinforced through multiplying the number of figures to three. In other works from the 1950s, such as *Untitled (Man and Woman Holding Hands)*, large figures occupy the picture's surface, so that the landscape or the space behind the figure is reduced to unidentifiable planes.

Kumar's painterly depiction of the oppressed and the poor urban working class surely attracted attention in the communist Eastern Bloc countries, where he was soon invited to hold exhibitions. His active involvement in various communist-led forums suggests that his visual language at the time was inspired by the recognisable "visual representation" that these mega-events promoted.[17]

The works on view in an exhibition that took place in Prague in July 1955 were clearly informed by this concern. Held at the small exhibition hall at Slovanský ostrov, an island in Prague's Vltava River with an impressive park, Kumar exhibited fifteen oil paintings and twenty-five watercolours/gouaches. In a review about this exhibition from July 28, 1955 (Fig. 57), the artist is quoted as having spoken about the message of peace in his art, and his intention to address the economic contradictions in his country, in realistic ways.[18]

In the newspaper article, Kumar speaks further about the financially difficult situation for artists in India, with few buyers willing to invest in Indian art. Ram Kumar, the article reports, has already visited Czechoslovakia three times, and has expressed a serious interest in artists such as Ludvík Kuba, Antonín Slavíček, or Vojtěch Sedláček. During the current trip, it goes on to say, Kumar had many meetings with artists, and attended "friendly debates or creative workshops."[19] Part of the requirement for artists who were invited for an exhibition in Czechoslovakia was that they carry out a so-called 'study tour,' and/or often attend meetings with local artists, carefully chosen by the Union of Czechoslovak Fine Artists.[20] We can assume that exhibitions by artists from distant countries inspired general interest, and were relatively well attended, not least because of a curiosity about unknown places. And this, even though it was clear that these artists were responding to an official invitation from the



Čtvrtek 28. července 1955

KULTURA

Indický malíř Rám Kumár

Z kreseb Rámа Kumára

„Právě proto, že v Indii není dosud nijak zvlášť pociťováno nebezpečí války, považuji za svou povinnost hovořit o míru a pomáhat věci míru svým uměním," řekl nám indický malíř Rám Kumár, jehož výstava byla otevřena minulý týden na Slovanském ostrově v Praze. „Snažím se realisticky vidět život kolem sebe, a protože v mé zemi je ještě mnoho hospodářských protikladů, mají mé práce většinou sociální zaměření."

Rám Kumár původně studoval ekonomii. V roce 1948 navštěvoval k ukrácení volného času večerní kursy malování a dnes má už za sebou dva roky uměleckého studia v Paříži a výstavy svých prací v Delhi, Bombaji a jiných indických městech, ale i v Paříži a v Berlíně.

„Indičtí výtvarníci se sice nepotýkají s velkými uměleckými problémy (nejdůležitější je sladění tradice ze XVI. století s moderními uměleckými snahami), ale na růžích ustláno nemají. Stát sice přispívá několika stipendistům a podporuje umělecké školy, existenci si však umělec musí uhájit sám. Výstavy jsou dost četně navštěvovány, kupců je však málo, neboť zámožní lidé dávají přednost cizímu umění a ostatní nemají peníze."

Také Rám Kumár si musel najít další zdroj obživy — literaturu. Napsal dva romány a často je možno číst v indických časopisech i jeho krátké povídky.

S velkým zájmem sleduje tento indický umělec vývoj socialistického realismu, který mohl studovat za svého pobytu v různých zemích lidové demokracie. Soudí, že je důležité, aby se při uplatňování této tvůrčí methody nevycházelo z úzké základny, ale naopak aby bylo využito všech uměleckých zkušeností.

Rám Kumár je v Československu už po třetí a stále se znovu vrací s upřímným zájmem k našemu umění, zvláště k dílům národního umělce L. Kuby, A. Slavíčka a V. Sedláčka. Za svého letošního pobytu v Československu se Rám Kumár setkal s četnými výtvarníky na přátelských besedách a tvůrčích diskusích. ov

★

Kuba: BÁSNÍK V SOVĚTSKÉM SVAZU. Kniha bystrých reportáží pokrokového německého básníka o životě a práci sovětských lidí. Šitá brož. 6.08 Kčs. Můžete objednat nebo zakoupit v Melantrichu.

Union of Czechoslovak Fine Artists, and that their art therefore adhered to certain criteria.

In a letter written by artist Mikuláš Medek (1926–1974) to a friend in Bratislava, we hear from a less official voice about how Kumar's work was perceived in Czechoslovakia. Medek was an important artist of Czech post-war modernism. He was the son of the officer and writer Rudolf Medek (1890–1940), grandson of the impressionist painter Antonin Slavíček (1870–1910), and brother of the music theorist and well-known dissident Ivan Medek (1925–2010). Due to his concerns with the impact of the Cold War, the Stalinist terror, and an increasing lack of perspective for artists in Czechoslovakia, he was in constant conflict with the communist leadership. In the letter, he advises his friend Zbyněk to visit the exhibition of the painter "Ram" when in Prague. While he expects that Zbyněk might enjoy some of the exhibited works, and one in particular, he looks forward to hearing from Zbyněk about what he thinks. Moreover, Medek says that he does not understand why works of "such horrible formalism" were even exhibited here.[21] Medek's dismissal of Ram Kumar's work may have something to do with a general rejection of officially sponsored art events. His own work in the 1950s, following a surrealist phase, was characterised by highly reduced figurative compositions. It is not unlikely that the lack of sympathy and understanding on the part of the Czechoslovak artist is connected to the fact that the Indian artist seems to be uncritical of the political reality in Czechoslovakia.

Fig. 57 "Kultura: Indický malíř Rám Kumár" (Culture: Indian painter Ram Kumar), *Svobodné Slovo*, July 28, 1955.

In the newspaper article mentioned above (Fig. 57), one work, indicated as a drawing, is reproduced. In it, we see two large female figures facing each other, but gazing upwards. Barefoot, and dressed in skirts that reach just below the knee, their attire suggests a European style of clothing. The upper bodies are covered with cloaks or shawls, which are also used to cover the head—a reference to Indian clothing. The two figures are placed in a landscape that is reminiscent of Indian miniature painting, particularly due to the circular framing with plants or trees in the upper part. The partial view of the building in the background on the right cannot be assigned any geographical origin. In an assessment of Kumar's early work, art critic Richard Bartholomew speaks of "marionette-like figures, suspended before the next act," which "convey a sense of arrested animation."[22]

What is interesting to note in Kumar's early work, such as the one depicted along with the newspaper article (Fig. 57), is how he connects and mingles different landscapes and cultural codes to articulate the threatening isolation and suffering of humans. This visual concept creatively responds to the diverse cultural and political contexts the artist encountered and engaged with through his mobilities.[23] It is, therefore, also connected to his vision of modernism, which, as a consequence of his extensive exposure through mobility, was not informed by one single place and ideology, but instead by connections that he was able to visually establish between different places and different ideological settings.[24] Through Kumar's exposure to, and active involvement with, formations of post-war modernism and Communism in Paris, but also in places such as Prague, Budapest, and Warsaw, he gained access to a world that was rich with possibilities; consequently, he was able to establish connections between geographies and art movements in an unprecedented way.[25] In this sense, the suspensions between acts of "arrested animation" of the "marionette-like figures," to which Bartholomew refers, gains significance apropos their relationship to pictorial space. The marginalised figures, either pushed to the edge of the painting or squeezed in so that they barely fit the surface or frame of the painting, represent the collective conflicts and struggles experienced and witnessed by the artist. Voyaging into Communism thus came with rich experiences of inhabiting the time of the present, instead of being confined to the "waiting room of history."[26]

4.1.1 "Displaced Things": Stranded between Locations

When Ram Kumar's Prague exhibition from 1955 ended, he requested that these works be sent back to India. This is the point from which a long story of tragic loss unfolds. From a series of letters and notes kept in the archive of the Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic), dating from between January 1956 and June 1961, we learn, in part, about how and why his artworks, along with a ceramic tea set and some pieces of cut glass that he had purchased in Prague, were stored in perpetuity with the port authorities in Bombay before they were "spoiled,"[27] as Krása put it, by the forces of nature during the monsoon. The last letter written by Kumar about this matter is from September 8, 1960, while the earliest activities by the Czechoslovak authorities concerning this case date back to January 16, 1956, shortly after the shipment was waylaid in customs.[28]

In a letter dating from 1960, Kumar reiterates the case of his artwork, which by that time had been stuck in customs in the port of Bombay since its arrival in December 1955.[29] In this letter, he explains that after his exhibition in Prague in 1955, he travelled through Europe. He had therefore asked the government of Czechoslovakia to take care of his paintings, as well as the tea set which he had bought in Prague. Because he mentions the tea set in each of his letters, we gather that it was valuable to him. For a mobile person, possibly without a permanent residence or place to stay, a tea set signified comfort, warmth, welcome, hospitality, and home. Considering Kumar's financially precarious situation, the purchase of a tea set must also have been an investment about which he thought twice before making. In his letter from February 1960, Kumar summarises how it came to be that his paintings and the tea set were still held at the Bombay port customs.[30]

Over the years—and this is confirmed by further correspondence between the port authorities and the Czechoslovak Embassy in New Delhi—there were repeated unsuccessful attempts to expedite the handover of the works of art. At times, the authorities cited a lack of the correct papers and incorrect declaration of the goods; at other times, they claimed that the artist had not responded to inquiries addressed to him for a long period of time. In any case, all of these requests led to enormous delays, which ultimately meant that neither the Czechoslovak Embassy, nor the artist himself, could afford to pay the resulting high demurrage fee at the

port of Bombay—something that Kumar also mentions in the letter from February 1960.[31] The artist also points out that some of the forty paintings had already been purchased by friends prior to the exhibition in Prague. For this reason, he now had to compensate them by returning their money. As someone who can verify the case and provide further details, he names "Dr. Mita Krása," whom he refers to as someone he has known for ten years.[32] The fact that he names Krása by his nickname, Mita, suggests that he was on familiar terms with him.

In the copy of the letter from September 1960, Kumar suggests ways that the Czechoslovak Embassy can compensate him for his loss.[33] We thus gather that it was by now clear to everyone involved that the paintings were irreparably damaged. Already in a letter that the artist wrote in November 1956 to the Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí/Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague, Kumar expressed concerns, saying that "[i]f the paintings remain in the present situation, then the chances are high that they will get spoiled."[34] He therefore requests compensation for at least five paintings that belonged to friends, in the amount of 1,500 Indian Rupees. For the remaining loss, Kumar said that it would be "a gesture of goodwill" if the Czechoslovak government would provide him with some canvas that he could use for painting. For the lost ceramic tea set, as well as the cut glass, which he refers to as decorative pieces, he requests replacements, saying "[t]hese things can be easily replaced." The fact that he bought them "with so much love and passion" is, if anything, a reminder of his close connection to Prague, and an appeal to the Czechoslovak side not to forget this.[35] Whether or not he ever received any compensation is unknown.

The abundant correspondence that has been preserved in the archive regarding the loss of Ram Kumar's paintings further reveals that a number of books were also sent along with the artist's work. It is unclear who the books were intended for, but since these were seven Czech book titles, they probably had little to do with the Indian artist. He does not mention this in any of his letters. In any case, from the beginning there were ambiguities regarding the customs clearance. Along with the fact that the artist was often not available, and was therefore not informed in time to be able to respond to queries, one might conclude that this was an unfortunate confluence of intergovernmental bureaucracy and the port authorities.[36] However, the loss of forty works of art can also be connected to what Stephan Greenblatt calls "the unintended consequences"[37] of

cultural mobility, which may be charted as "specific instances of cultural mobility,"[38] and as "microhistories of 'displaced' things."[39]

The unfortunate fate of Kumar's paintings, stranded between locations in the port of Bombay, where they were destroyed by humidity, sadly reminds us of how the Lidice Collection was also affected by the floods in Prague, and some works of the India collection of the National Gallery in Prague (NGP) were destroyed in a fire in the Château in Benešov nad Ploučnicí.[40] Kumar's displaced paintings led to an awareness among the Czechoslovak authorities about avoiding future shipments of that kind. In an archive entry by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from February 23, 1957, a concern is raised about a private shipment on behalf of the painter Husain. It reports that the Ministry of Education and Culture facilitated the shipment by declaring it as diplomatic mail. This, the archive entry says, has already caused trouble in the past with the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with a similar kind of shipment for the painter Ram Kumar. In order not to violate Indian regulations again, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs requests the Ministry of Education and Culture not to make such promises again.[41] The note is personally addressed to "Comrade Krása."[42]

In a short text that Krása wrote many years later for the exhibition *Ram Kumar: A Journey Within* in New Delhi, he reminisces about Kumar as "the very first ambassador of modern Indian painting in Prague, where the interest in everything coming from India had become almost proverbial."[43] In summing up the artist's engagement with the city of Prague, Krása mentions the exhibitions that took place even before the officially sponsored India exhibition, in which his work was included, arrived in Prague. Krása also mentions the tragedy that befell the paintings many years before, when they were caught in a tangle of bureaucracy and damaged by the monsoon. "Everybody was shocked and I considered it to be a personal tragedy, an irreparable cultural loss. The only man, however, who seemed to be stoically unconcerned was Ram Kumar. I never came across a man with such faith, nay conviction, in his own creative potential and ability, or such indifference towards an abandoned and surpassed artistic vision."[44] From the numerous letters preserved in Prague, which document the artist's constant endeavours to preserve his paintings and the objects he acquired in Prague, it can be concluded that he was not as "unconcerned" as Krása says. The artist did, however, at around this time, surpass his artistic vision.

4.1.2 Two-Person Exhibitions

Kumar went on to express his earlier concern for the downtrodden, the underprivileged, and human tragedy in general, through non-representational forms. His first encounter with the holy city of Varanasi[45] in 1961, where he created a series of richly textured works with composite architectonics, is well known. Where once the figure dominated the surface of the painting, there is now a conglomeration of geometric shapes, carefully placed and linked together to form a vibrant yet serene corpus, in a balance of different shades of colour. The landscape, once pushed to the background, has now become the focus of the artist's attention.

Apart from his solo exhibition in 1955, the connection that Ram Kumar established with Prague and some Praguers over the years resulted in a pair of two-person exhibitions.[46] Moreover, his work was also included in the 1955/56 India exhibition, as well as in the exhibition of modern Indian art in 1979. In 1967, his work was shown, together with that of M. F. Husain, at Gallery U Řečických (Fig. 58).[47] According to Zdenka Klimtová, this was the result of yet another joint effort by Hájek and Krása.[48] As indicated in the exhibition folder, Kumar exhibited eight drawings and Husain was represented by sixteen paintings.[49] In a photograph from the opening (Fig. 59), we see Nirmal Verma, together with Miloslav Krása, standing in

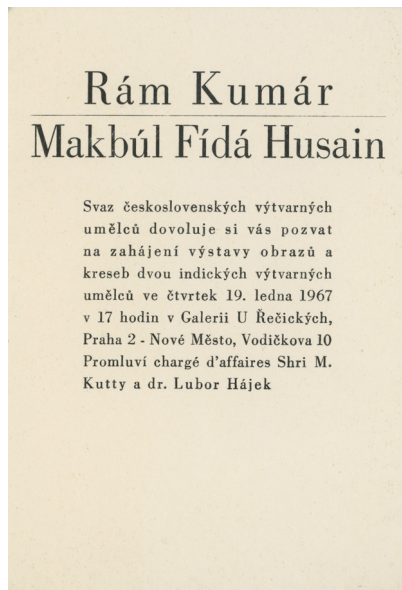


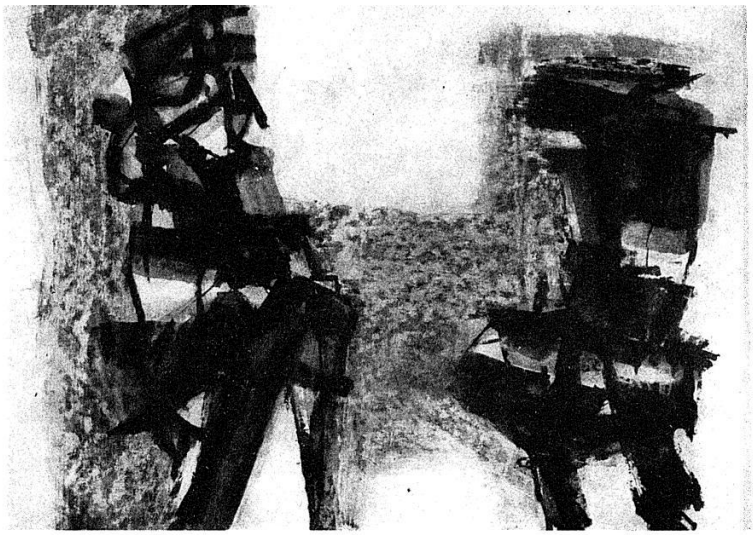
Fig. 58 Exhibition announcement of Ram Kumar and Maqbool Fida Husain's exhibition at Gallery U Řečických in Prague, 1967, opened on January 19 on Vodičkova Street. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

front of a work by Verma's brother, Kumar.[50] Neither of the two exhibited artists were present at the exhibition opening. Hana Knížková, in a review for *Nový Orient*, wrote a lengthy article about the two artists' work, and their past exhibitions in Prague; she mentions the one from 1967, emphasising that the Prague audience is familiar with their work.[51]

Ram Kumar, unfortunately, was unable to attend what was announced as yet another joint exhibition with Husain, almost ten years later, in 1976, at Jaroslav Fragner Gallery in Prague. However, Husain, who was present, included his artist friend by painting a spontaneous oil portrait of Kumar, "ostensibly," as Krása put it, "in Ram Kumar's own late-fifties style."[52] Krása further reminisces that this is how "Ram Kumar was present after all and his portrait welcomed the visitors right at the entrance to the exhibition hall."[53]

The playfulness and joy with which these art exhibitions were often adapted, improvised, and carried out collaboratively between artists and key figures in Prague, of whom Krása and Hájek were the most important, were among the features that contributed to the formation of Prague as a location and destination of significance for a number of Indian modernist artists. In particular, the individual exhibitions by artists, in contrast to the more formal and larger national art exhibitions, together with the presence of artists, helped to strengthen friendships on a more personal level.

Fig. 59 Photograph from the opening of the joint exhibition of Ram Kumar and M. F. Husain at Gallery U Řečických in Prague, 1967. From *Ram Kumar: A Journey Within*. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.



RÁM KUMÁR, IMAGINATIVNÍ KRAJINA I, TEMPERA, 1966

RÁM KUMÁR, IMAGINATIVNÍ KRAJINA II, TEMPERA, 1966

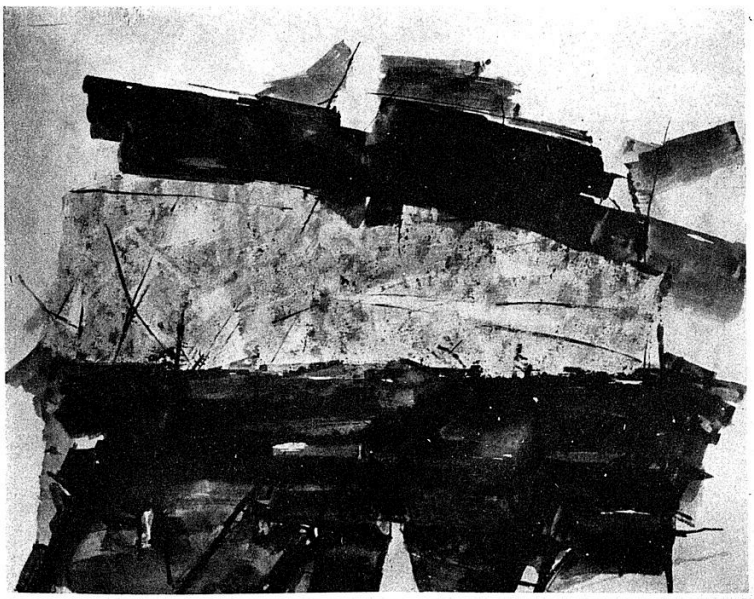


Fig. 60 Ram Kumar, *Imaginativní Krajina I + II* (*Imaginative Landscape I + II*). Tempera, 1966. *Nový Orient*, no. 2 (1967), 40a.

Moreover, it also worked to continue building and expanding knowledge about Indian modern and contemporary art in Czechoslovakia.
In 1968, the Collection of Modern Indian Art of the NGP acquired an oil painting by Ram Kumar, dated 1965. *Vesnice v horách* (*Village in the mountains*) is consistent with the work Kumar had begun to develop in Varanasi. Whereas the architectural forms take up most of the space in the works on Varanasi, in *Vesnice v horách* (*Village in the mountains*) the forms are reduced, giving space to a landscape that is not fully defined. The geometric shapes that form the village space are centered in the lower part of the rectangular canvas, but extend beyond it, up and down. Landscape formations and village structures form a structural network, and support the harmonious rhythm of the composition. The two works *Imaginativní Krajina* (*Imaginative Lanscape*) (Fig. 60), which are reproduced in Knížková's article, take this artistic approach a step further towards what Knížková sees as an "abandoned form."[54] The geometric shapes that loosely structured the surface of the painting *Vesnice v horách* (*Village in the mountains*) have now, in Fig. 60, become more solid and pronounced, with thick strokes of tempera dominating to define what can be viewed as an imagined landscape. Here, the broad brushstrokes along with the distribution of paint creates surface and connections. These surfaces support the composition and ensure that forms are not separated or abandoned.

Ram Kumar, not least due to his early and frequent visits to Prague, became a link for Krása, who aspired to enlarge his network of Indian artists and friends. Krása, therefore, mentions the many Indian artists that he was able to meet with the help of Kumar, and he points to his work that is to be found in the collection of the NGP, as well as in private collections.[55] The fact that Kumar's brother, Nirmal Verma, had lived in Prague for an extended period of time helped keep Ram Kumar's connection with Prague alive.[56]

4.2 Maqbool Fida Husain's Prague Connection: Mobility and Art Worlds

In an interview with Yashodharia Dalmia, Kumar said that in 1955, he travelled with Husain in a group to Helsinki and to Russia for the Peace Movement, and shared a room with Husain.[57] According to Kumar, this is when the two artists got to know each other.[58] By 1955, Husain was already a nationally celebrated artist. He was a founding member of

the famous, but short-lived, Progressive Artists' Group (PAG), a group of six artists that was formed shortly after India's independence in 1947.[59] Kumar commented about the PAG, saying that they were less important as a group, and that he rather valued each individual artist's contribution to Indian modernism.[60] In any case, what united the PAG artists as a group was their collective rejection of both the Bengal School style of painting and academic art practice, as it was taught and practised at the J.J. School of Art, and supported by the Bombay Art Society.[61]

Many Indian artists whose careers began at around the time of India's independence shared a desire to leave the country and the nation behind, and to establish, often temporarily, a base elsewhere. Opportunities to do so increased during this time. Artists could apply for scholarships to study abroad; but there were also other opportunities for artists to travel and connect with artists and intellectuals more globally. As elaborated in Chapter 2, the World Youth Festivals were such an occasion, as well as the World Peace Movement, and other festivals and events that were organised and championed by one of the two political blocs during the Cold War. This increased the possibility for young people's mobility in general, and for artists from the decolonising world, in particular, these platforms offered opportunities to overcome travel restrictions and boundaries that the Cold War world created.

M. F. Husain's early travels are connected to such initiatives. He received an invitation to the 1952 Asia-Pacific Peace Conference in Beijing, where he travelled with an Indian delegation. As I have elaborated elsewhere, in reference to art historian Susan S. Bean, this is how Husain was able to meet the Chinese artists Qi Baishi (1864–1957) and Xu Beihong (1895–1953), whose calligraphic brushstrokes impressed him greatly.[62] When Susan S. Bean notes Husain's rejection of socialist realism,[63] it echoes, I would suggest, Sanyal's rejection of it only a few years later.[64] Husain's travel to Beijing, however, exposed him to ideas and artistic visions outside of India, and outside the parameters to which he, thus far, had had direct access. As a Muslim, he was interested in the effect Communism had on religion, and he thus looked, as he said, for the nearest mosque to attend prayers.[65] But, at the Peace Conference, he must also have seen the massive display of reproductions of Picasso's *Dove of Peace* from 1949, which originally illustrated the Peace Congress in Paris in 1949, as well as Diego Rivera's *Nightmare of War, Dream of Peace* (*Pesadilla de guerra, sueñoz de paz*) from 1952, a work that was displayed in Beijing next to Picasso's work towards the end of the conference. According to the Vice-Chairman

of the All-India Peace Council, Damodar Dharmananda Kosambi, who travelled to Beijing, these two works featured as fitting backgrounds for the demonstration of peace.[66]

Picasso's simple but naturalistic drawing of a white dove against a black background was subsequently simplified by the artist into a graphic line drawing. This is how it is mostly remembered today. Picasso's dove, as is well known, was a present from Henri Matisse, whose ink drawings and *gouaches découpées* from around this time were also based on lines that worked to expand space through minimal means. The inspiration of simplified and reduced minimal lines, which Picasso drew from Matisse, is something that Husain also developed, especially after he visited Khajuraho in 1954, where he studied the complex monument group that dates from between the tenth and the twelfth century. Instead of simply copying sculptural details from the Khajuraho complex, he dissected single statuary forms through reduced line drawings.[67]

The distinct, pure lines drawn with ink create volume both within and beyond the bodies they delineate through an exploration of formal means. Husain's travel to Khajuraho, not unlike his travels to countries and regions across the globe from early on in his career, had a significant impact on his artmaking. Indeed, we can confidently say that Husain explored various traditions and versions of modernism, both in form and in content. As a result, his reference points were not only Indian, but global. This assessment contrasts with readings of Husain that have mostly contextualised him as an artist whose work is "national in content, international in form."[68] These assessments assert, following art historian Karin Zitzewitz, that his "list of influences is short but carefully chosen," so that it "includes the *tribhanga* form of figuration found in classical Gupta sculpture; the palette of the Basohli school of miniature painting; and the 'spirit' or sometimes 'innocence' of folk art."[69]

I agree that Husain—more, perhaps, than other artists active during the first decades after independence—was the most celebrated of them, because he drew from "the figures of Hindu mythology […] spirited horses […] bullock carts, rustic figures and the burlesque of the bazaar to the faces and persona of contemporary history."[70] I would add, however, that part of what made him a nationally acclaimed artist was based precisely on his international fame. This fame did not begin, as Monica Juneja concludes, after his participation in the 1973 São Paolo Biennale,[71] but much earlier.

This is a matter that Susan S. Bean has aptly addressed.[72] How, then, do we view the significance of the frequent travels and exhibition activities in Central Europe of Husain, and, indeed, of other Indian artists? Are we to view them only, as Bean claims, as "prompted by cultural diplomacy rather than interest in Indian art"?[73] Or do nuances emerge in how Indian artists were perceived, discussed, and appreciated, when we focus on specific locations, especially those places that found themselves as much on the margins of Western modernism as India? In what way did the mobility of these artists, and their journeys to emerging art worlds in the Cold War era, contribute to the perception of these peripheral locations as central and significant?

4.2.1 The Perception of the Margin

M. F. Husain first travelled abroad when he visited Beijing in 1952. This was followed, as Bean observes, by his first trip to Europe in 1953.[74] The European trip was made possible by the sale of some of his paintings to one of his Indian patrons, Badrishival Pitti.[75] During this trip, Husain studied art, cinema, and street life more comprehensively, in the French capital Paris, but also in Italy and Switzerland. He selectively chose what interested him most.

According to art historian Atreyee Gupta, the artist also travelled to Egypt, in 1953, where, as this author observes, "Egyptian figural imagery of the pharaonic periods [...] had captured the artist's imagination."[76] It can be assumed that Husain's journey to Egypt was linked to his voyage to or from Europe that same year. Ships travelling from India to Europe inevitably interrupted their journey in Egypt. This is how, more often than not, artists travelling from South Asia to Europe in the early years of the 1950s often had a chance to see parts of Egypt and its archaeological collections.[77] The visits to Egypt of many artists, especially before 1955, therefore have less to do with the Bandung Conference of summer 1955, as Gupta perceives it,[78] than with infrastructural necessity. Nevertheless, these stopover visits made the potential and significance of the formal language of Egyptian art accessible, which also attracted artists from other parts of the world.[79] In this sense, Egypt can be seen to mark a moment of transition for artists on the move to and from Asia and Europe, serving as an important crossroads, where mobility led to valuable encounters.

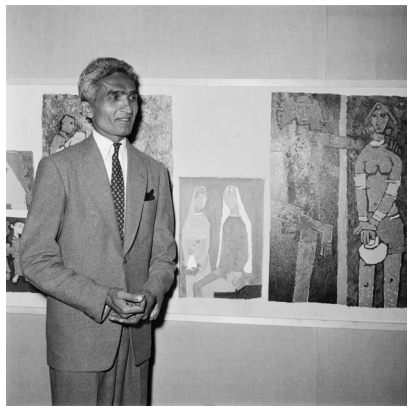


Fig. 61 Photograph of M. F. Husain at the opening of his exhibition in Prague in 1956. Courtesy of Fotobanka ČTK/Lomoz Viktor, ID No. 0670836450.

Fig. 62 Photograph of a visitor to M. F. Husain's exhibition at Manés Exhibition Hall looking at the artist's drawing of Prague. Courtesy of Fotobanka ČTK/Lomoz Viktor, ID No. 0670836444.

When Husain was invited to Prague for a solo exhibition in 1956, he had already experienced significant international exposure. He had probably seen more of the world than many European artists had. However, photographs from the opening of the exhibition show him as a shy young man in a suit and a tie—a young Indian man trying to be part of his new surroundings (Fig. 61). In the photograph (Fig. 65), Husain stands in front of the work that he brought from India for the exhibition. The invitation for the exhibition came from the Ministry of Education and Culture, and the requirement was that the invited artist carry out a so-called 'study tour' of the country.[80] In another photograph from the opening of the exhibition, we see a drawing that he probably made in or around Prague during his obligatory study tour (Fig. 62).

Husain drew extensively when he travelled, and many such drawings survive. In an auction catalogue from Pundole's in Mumbai, from 2013, a number of these drawings are documented. Some of these landscapes capture his visit to Switzerland from 1953;[81] yet there are also scraps of text on partly torn sheets of paper, which are dated August 6, 1956, Praha;[82] August 5, 1956, Praha;[83] and Wednesday, August 8, 1956, Praha.[84] In another set of nineteen drawings, of which one is dated May 17, 1956, Praha, seventeen are from July 1957, Praha, and one is from August 1997, Praha, we witness how Husain's sketching changes and takes on new forms over time.[85] This is a result, I suggest, of his ongoing observation of the city of Prague. Two more drawings connected to Prague appear in

this catalogue, one of which is dated and inscribed "Unčín, July 11, 1957"[86] (Unčín is a small village approximately 140 kilometres east of Prague). One of the two drawings shows the interior of a room with a bed, a desk, some books, a small round table with a teapot and two cups, some pastries, and a window to the left looking out onto the countryside. A female figure is lying on the floor on her stomach, one hand holding her head, while the other holds a book. The legs point upwards at an angle. Husain's presence comes via the inclusion of a drawing of a toy horse and a cart, which is placed on the other side of the room.

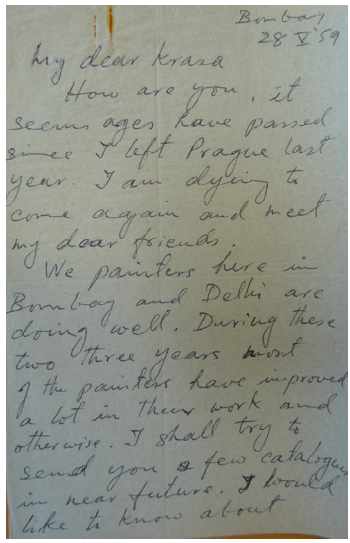
According to the inscribed dates, we are able to ascertain when Husain was in Prague. While the 1956 drawings can be temporally aligned with his exhibition at Mánes Exhibition Hall, the 1957 series of drawings must be connected to his visit to Prague for a commission to paint a mural for the city office of Air India.[87] Unfortunately, the work was removed, and probably destroyed in the 1960s.[88] Husain was also commissioned to create posters and murals for Air India sales offices in Geneva, Hong Kong, and Bangkok.[89]

In the drawing from May 17, 1956, Praha, we see a woman sitting cross-legged, rowing a boat.[90] A simple architectural structure with arches is visible in the background, indicating a bridge. The date and location are noted at the bottom right-hand edge of the sheet. Husain's signature is recognisable on the lower-right edge of the boat, and the woman's left leg reads 'Marie Jaroslava Žůrková.' Marie was Husain's translator and interpreter from the time when he came to Prague for his first exhibition. Not unlike Vlasta Semeráková, who was the translator for Sanyal and Gade when they came to Prague a year earlier, acts of care by these women for the men from India were an important part of how the Indian artists experienced the Central European metropolis.

Husain fell in love with Marie, and seemed to have returned frequently to Prague to see her. The two were said to have shared an enthusiasm for literature and music.[91] According to the residence file of Marie Jaroslava Žůrková, she was born on September 23, 1923, in Jasenná in Zlín District, and she arrived in Prague on March 27, 1950. According to this file, she was a student at the faculty of theology.[92] The contact between Husain and Marie was established by Krása. Marie, it is said, was the "impossible" love of Husain's life.[93]

In the drawing of the woman in charge of the rowing boat, we can imagine Husain sitting opposite Marie in the boat, capturing her image while the two of them enjoy a boat trip on the Vltava like a couple in love.

Husain made a number of drawings of Marie and of Prague in the coming years, returning to the city many times to spend time with Marie. Some of the drawings from 1957, which are documented in Pundole's auction catalogue and are now part of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art collection, are surrealist in style. They capture less recognisable places and distorted scenes, in which human figures sometimes enter into architectural entanglements, or parts of human bodies are disarticulated in bizarre poses. An indication that these drawings are connected to Marie is visible in a sheet on which there is a larger-than-life book, whose partly opened pages reveal a falling human figure with its legs stretched upwards. The spine of the book bears the title *Indian Philosophy*.[94] An alarm clock and a compass at the bottom of the drawing refer to time and geography, with the longer arrow pointing east. The book is a reference to Marie and the intellectual engagement Husain enjoyed with her. According to the artist, it was with Marie that he developed an understanding of Western music and "the European mind."[95] His understanding and perception of Europe was therefore filtered through a Central European point of view. This is a fact that becomes apparent when, many years later, he views Prague as a place that connects Eastern and Western Europe. The seventeen drawings are therefore inspired by an engagement in how the human body, or parts of it, relate to the situation they find themselves in. They open a door to us, allowing us insight into the artist's intellectual exchange with Marie, and his feelings for her. There are further drawings that are particularly revealing of this. In a work dated and inscribed with D.33, July 23, 1957,[96] we see an older man with a beard and a cane positioned at one end of a bridge. On the opposite side of the bridge sits a bare-breasted female figure. Her arms are held above the head in a kind of yoga gesture. There is a single figure rowing a boat under the bridge, reminding us of the woman in the rowboat discussed earlier. A landscape and the architectural structures of two church towers appear in the distance. In another drawing dated and inscribed with D.22, July 20, 1957, we see a bride and a groom in front of a bridal hall.[97] The groom's dark skin tone contrasts with that of the bride. Whereas these images suggest personal connection, liaison, and the possibility of unity, at the same time they address distance, and the difficulty of overcoming it. The personal, therefore, intersects here with the wider political and geopolitical reality of the time.

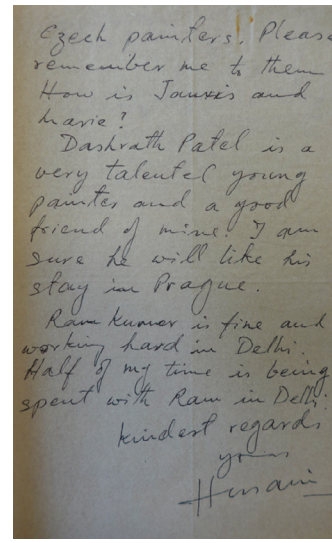

Bombay
28 V 59

My dear Krasa

How are you, it seems ages have passed since I left Prague last year. I am dying to come again and meet my dear friends.

We painters here in Bombay and Delhi are doing well. During these two three years most of the painters have improved a lot in their work and otherwise. I shall try to send you a few catalogue in near future. I would like to know about

Fig. 63


Czech painters. Please remember me to them. How is Jaweis and Marie?

Dashrath Patel is a very talented young painter and a good friend of mine. I am sure he will like his stay in Prague.

Ram kumar is fine and working hard in Delhi. Half of my time is being spent with Ram in Delhi.

kindest regards

yours

Husain

Fig. 64

Figs. 63-64 Two-page handwritten letter by M. F. Husain to Krása. Image courtesy of Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4. Courtesy of Ms. Helena Bonusová and the Krása family.

In many ways, these drawings are a precursor to further drawings Husain made in Prague some years later, in 1976. His emotional and intellectual feelings for Marie are central, but impressions of the way he encountered Czechoslovakia and Central Europe in the 1950s are conveyed through images with transformational elements that are 'Kafkaesque' in their depictions of being and becoming. Husain's impossible love for Marie came to an end with a marriage proposal, which she rejected. In the drawing of the bride and groom in front of the bridal hall from 1957, the marriage of the two still seemed possible. However, Marie eventually married another man. When she and her husband left for Australia in 1964, Husain helped her get the collection of the thirty-four paintings he had gifted her in the 1950s out of the country.[98] Many years later, she returned these paintings to him, as she did not consider herself to be their rightful owner.[99]

Despite Marie's absence, Husain maintained close ties with Prague, and continued to return regularly. In a letter to Miloslav Krása in 1959, he writes about his last visit to Prague the previous year and informs Krása about the progress that he and other painters are making[100] (Fig. 63, Fig. 64). Husain also shows his interest in Czech painters, and his request to Krása to "remember me to them"[101] allows us to assume that he met

some artists while in Prague. He also enquires about the well-being of Marie and Jauris.[102] He further announces the imminent arrival of his good friend, the very talented artist Dashrath Patel, in Prague. He adds that he spends half of his time with Ram Kumar in Delhi, who is working hard.[103] In yet another letter, dated September 8, 1965, Husain writes to Krása that he accepted an invitation by the Czechoslovak government to visit Prague for an exhibition of his paintings, and he says he looks forward to seeing Krása and his family again in the middle of October. He updates Krása about an exhibition of his work in Baghdad in May of that year, and in Kabul in June, after which he had an exhibition of drawings he made of his Kabul impressions. He also talks about the government of India having commissioned him to do an eighty-foot-high ceramic mural for a government building in Delhi, on which he planned to begin work after his return from Czechoslovakia.[104] What we gather from this is that Krása was well informed and frequently updated on the work and career of Husain as it developed and evolved across places.

In 1967, Husain's work was exhibited together with that of Ram Kumar in Prague (Fig. 58, Fig. 59).[105] As mentioned earlier, neither Ram Kumar nor M. F. Husain were in Prague for the occasion, but Kumar's brother Nirmal Verma, together with Krása were present (Fig. 59). From a file from the Ministry of Education and Culture about the opening of this exhibition, we learn that sixteen of Husain's paintings were in fact shipped via the Indian Embassy in Baghdad. The note goes on to say that the opening of the Prague exhibition was accompanied by a particularly interesting speech by Dr Lubor Hájek, and that after three weeks, the works on display in Prague would be sent on to Warsaw.[106]

Husain's next trip to Prague, in 1976, is well documented, not least through a series of drawings that he made while in Czechoslovakia. While I have already written in detail about some of the work that Husain made during this trip,[107] I will at least attempt to contextualise the others, even if not all of them can be reproduced here. This will support my earlier argument about Husain's Prague works, in which I highlighted his notion of East and West.[108] The drawings will further confirm that the feedback and recognition he received from the Central European art community and friends signified an important reciprocal appreciation between peripheral regions. Furthermore, Husain's frequent travels to Prague and his extensive mobility in general, particularly to and between regions outside the

traditional art worlds located primarily in the West, suggest an experience and perception of the margins not as peripheral, but rather as formative.

When Husain stayed in Prague in May and June 1976, Marie had long been gone. However, he must have carried the memories about her with him, especially when in Prague—a city he explored and discovered through her, not just as his interpreter, but as a friend, a muse, and an emotional anchor, whose sensibility and intellect strongly shaped his understanding of Europe.[109] Husain perceives Europe, therefore, not through the lens of the former empire and its former metropolis in Western Europe—quite the opposite. All things considered, it is not unlikely that apart from South Asia, Central Europe, Egypt, China, and Central Asia, not Western Europe, found a greater resonance for Husain's aesthetic decisions of that period. Moreover, the way he came to understand Europe and the world also impacted how he positioned himself in relation to other artists globally. His work in Prague and Czechoslovakia, as well as his artistic response to this region, are therefore crucial for reassessing his position in relation to modernist art more broadly.

4.2.2 A Strong Connection with Prague: Intersecting and Co-creating Place

The 1976 exhibition at the Jaroslav Fragner Gallery in Prague, which seemed to have been planned as an exhibition of the work of both Kumar and Husain, opened on June 22. The exhibition folder seen here (Fig. 65) announces both Husain and Kumar's work. The opening date on this folder is set for May 19. The image of a dancing female figure is a reproduction of a work by Husain. Stylistically, it is close to a series of wooden toys he made in the 1940s and 1950s, which were a huge success. Some of these objects were included in his exhibitions, as seen here, in his 1956 Prague exhibition, where they are selectively displayed in a display case (Fig. 66) and examined by exhibition visitors. Hájek, in a 1962 article about the artist's wooden images, views them as "fragments of the world."[110]

Although both Husain and Kumar are mentioned in the exhibition announcement (Fig. 65) from 1976, it appears to have been a solo exhibition of Husain's works. The photographic material that survives from this exhibition, which includes a press article, allows us to conclude that this was, ultimately, an exhibition of Husain's work only.[111] There was a delay of more than one month between the announcement of the exhibition and the actual date of the exhibition opening. The fact that, eventually, Husain

Fig. 65 Exhibition announcement of Ram Kumar and Maqbool Fida Husain's exhibition in Prague, dated May 19, 1976. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

Fig. 66 Photograph of the display of M. F. Husain's wooden toys in a vitrine at the opening of his exhibition in Prague in 1956. Courtesy of Fotobanka ČTK/Lomoz Viktor, ID No. 0670836447.

and Hájek joined forces in the opening ceremony of the exhibition may also have been a last-minute decision by the two men, after hearing that Kumar was unable to attend. Alena Vosečková, who attended the vernissage, reports in the journal *Nový Orient* that, quite unexpectedly, after the official speeches ended, Husain began to paint in front of the audience. At the same time, Hájek spoke informally about the artist's life from memories that he had collected over the years.[112] Vosečková recalls that Husain casually took off his shoes in front of the audience, and moved towards a large, empty canvas that had already been prepared, piquing everyone's curiosity from the outset. He thus began to paint, while the audience witnessed what took shape in front of them. Vosečková emphasised that the artist moved in a "pantomime-like, performative act" along the huge canvas, and she recounts the way an image emerged with absolute lightness.[113] Vosečková adds that Husain was able to be so casual because he was already so familiar and connected with the city of Prague.[114]

From a series of photographs that survive in the Krása archive, we get a sense of the setting and ambience of the opening. Judging by the way Husain painted while Hájek spoke (Fig. 67, Fig. 68), the artist seen in casual conversations with the Prague audience not wearing shoes (Fig. 69), and a photograph that documents some of the works on display (Fig. 70), the exhibition seems to have been well attended.

In the photograph of the exhibition space with some of Husain's work (Fig. 70), we see, on the right-hand side by the entrance, a painting which may well be the one that Husain is said to have spontaneously made of Ram Kumar, to fill the gap of his absence. It appears to be a three-quarter portrait of a male figure in a suit, with crossed arms, in front of an abstract landscape. The large-format paintings displayed diagonally opposite the entrance are all works by Husain (Fig. 70). For a detailed description of the second one from the left, we may turn to cultural historian Sumathi Ramaswamy, who wrote that it was possibly exhibited together with four more paintings of goddesses in Prague in 1976.[115] What we see in this work is a three-armed female figure, a goddess, with bent knees, displayed diagonally across a portrait-format canvas. Below, to the left, appears the flag of India. The space that emerges from the body of the goddess, and a zigzag line that looks like the outline of her hair, is "identifiable as a partial outline map of India."[116] The image is that of Parvati in her incarnation as Shiva's spouse.[117] It is possibly, as Ramaswamy suggests, Bharat Mata, Mother India, divine and human, with which Husain engaged frequently.[118]

Fig. 67

Fig. 68

Fig. 69

Figs. 67-69 Opening of M. F. Husain's 1976 exhibition, Prague, Jaroslav Fragner Gallery. Documentation of the Collection of Asian Art. Fond Miloslav Krása. Reproduction © National Gallery in Prague 2023. Photo Stárek. Courtesy of Ms. Helena Bonusová and the Krása family.

Fig. 70 View of the exhibition of M. F. Husain's work in Prague, Jaroslav Fragner Gallery. Documentation of the Collection of Asian Art. Fond Miloslav Krása. Reproduction © National Gallery in Prague. Photo Stárek.

In the image of the *Goddess Kunti in a Carriage drawn by Ten Horses*/*Bohyně Kuntí na voze taženém deseti koni*, which emerged from the large life drawing in Prague, the female character and the female body are central (Fig. 68, Fig. 67). Kunti is an important female protagonist in the epic Mahabharata. Beginning in the late 1960s, Husain developed an interest in both the Mahabharata and the practice of live drawing in front of an audience. The fact that he performed in front of the Prague audience resonates with an observation made by Sonal Khullar about how Husain intentionally situated the artwork "within the community of viewers."[119] Khullar therefore argues against views of Husain's performative work that ascribe it to his awareness of international developments and his "talent for showmanship."[120]

Elsewhere, I have pointed to Husain's "early experience as a billboard painter and toy designer in 1940s Bombay," observing that he was used "to painting and designing, not in seclusion, but surrounded by others."[121] I view this, together with the act of including his viewership, as crucial to informing an understanding of the twenty-three drawings that make up Husain's Prague sketchbook from 1976. These drawings document a number of well-known, and lesser-known, sites in Prague, but also the places that he visited across Czechoslovakia. The works are still bound in the original Grumbacher sketchbook; the size of each page is 23 × 15.5 cm. Apart from the cover page, each one is dated, from as early as June 15, 1976, to June 28, 1976. Some of the locations are inscribed directly on the drawn page. However, according to Zdenka Klimtová's assessment of these drawings, the places and monuments that are mentioned are deliberately mixed and collaged, to condense the many places visited into twenty-three sheets of paper.[122]

The cover page sets the tone of the series, which is marked above all by "movement," "theatricality," and music,[123] all of which ties it back to the artist's relationship with Marie Žůrková and his memories of her. The two hands that can be seen on the title page (Fig. 71), one of which draws with "quivering seven fingers" and two pencils, while the other hand serves as a drawing surface, refer to the virtuosity of the hands of the musician, the painter, and the writer. The drawn line is not a static one, but rather a processual one, intersecting and co-creating place and narrative while moving along. In *Praha 1* (Fig. 72), the naked male figure that emerges from the arch of the National Theatre, therefore, holds a blank sketchbook, signalling that something is in the making.

Praha 2 is inscribed "Malostranská," which is situated in the quarter of Malá Strana, located under the Prague Castle, and surrounded by historical

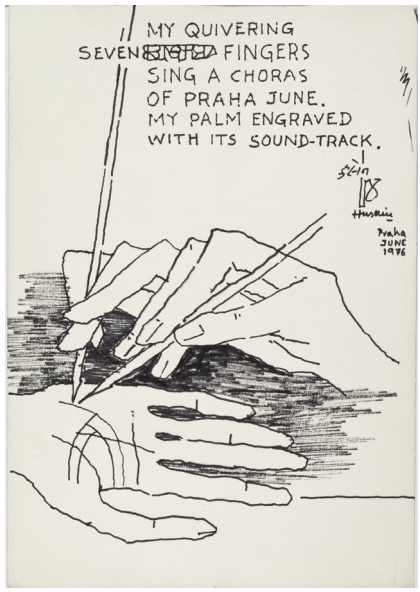


Fig. 71 M. F. Husain, Cover page for the *Praha* series of drawings, June 1976. Felt-tip pen drawing, 23 × 15.5 cm. Inv. no. 4278. National Gallery in Prague. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

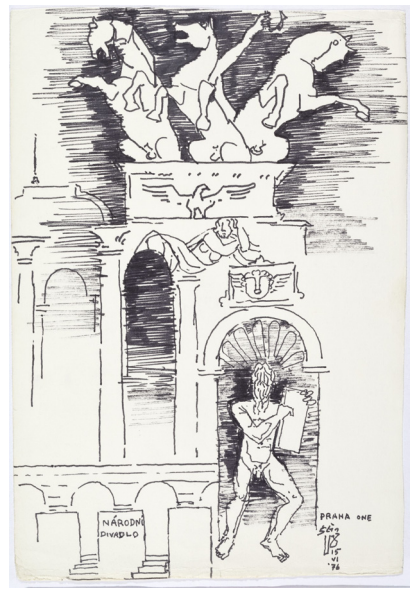


Fig. 72 M. F. Husain, *Praha 1*, 1976. Felt-tip pen drawing, 23 × 15.5 cm. National Gallery in Prague. Inv. no. 4278. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

buildings. In this drawing, the figure of an older man in Indian clothing indicates the direction with an outstretched right arm and index finger. The relatively large figure is placed at the front edge of the drawing, and is crouched so that it does not obscure the view of the historic façade in the background. I would like suggest that the intertwining of the drawn lines of the fabric of the male figure's clothing, and those of the almost naked female statue to the right, functions as a gesture of connection between male and female, a recurring motif in Husain's work.

The setting of the next page, *Praha 3* (Fig. 73), is the Charles Bridge. Here, Husain simplifies the large traditional sculptures on the bridge by "transfiguring them on to paper."[124] He thereby liberates them of their "cultural-religious affiliation"[125] and opens up to us the possibility of focusing on their gesticulations. In this way, these sculptures "are reminiscent of a theatrical act and draw a connection with the musical theme that he attests to this cycle of drawings in the prelude."[126] The way Husain approaches these historical and local impressions is similar to how he studied Indian sources from the Khajuraho temples or the Madras

Fig. 73 M. F. Husain, *Praha 3*, 1976. Felt-tip pen drawing, 23 × 15.5 cm. National Gallery in Prague. Inv. no. 4278. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

Fig. 74 M. F. Husain, *Praha 5*, 1976. Felt-tip pen drawing, 23 × 15.5 cm. Inv. no. 4278. National Gallery in Prague. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

Museum's Chola bronzes.[127] According to anthropologist Karin Zitzewitz, this is how "Husain identified formal strategies that he considered to be essentially Indian."[128] However, as I have argued elsewhere, the process of adapting and transforming, as seen here in the Prague drawings, is less a matter of cultural essentialism, than a kind of resistance to it.[129] What if the common denominator of cultural form is the simple line? What if this line is not characterised by cultural differences, but by similarities? Husain achieved an understanding of the meaning of the line through the graphic and transformative treatment of various cultural forms—in India, in China, in Egypt, and across a series of places in Europe. This is why, I suggest, simple lines, like those in the Prague cycle, predominate in his drawings.

Praha 4 suggests observations of daily life in Prague. We see a wide variety of people, civilians, a uniformed man with a rifle, a couple in love, workers. The co-existence of different lives—military, popular, traditional, quotidian—is a reminder of Husain's deft ability to make such observations. In the wedding scene in *Praha 5* (Fig. 74), the male figure that we have already met in *Praha 1* (Fig. 72) appears sitting on the lower steps of a church. A bride and groom stand in the archway of the church entrance. The male figure turns away from this scene, resting his head on his hand. The larger part of this drawing is a view of a space in front of what looks like a walled church complex such as the Capuchin Monastery in Hradčany in Prague, with several houses and a park behind it. In the middle of the wall is a gate, where a car appears. Above the car leans a large female figure. Husain's biographer, Khalid Mohamed, wrote about Husain's proposal of marriage to Marie, and how he drove a Volkswagen to Prague. Accordingly, he gifted this car to her, along with a wedding dress.[130] The sorrowful male figure by the steps of the church in Fig. 74, together with the winged figure, the clouds, and a crescent that is placed at the bottom of the scene, all allude to Husain's experience of Marie's rejection of his wedding proposal, and his feelings about her marriage to another man.[131]

With *Praha 6*, Husain leaves the capital city behind and travels to Žebrák, southwest of Prague, to the hometown of the Czech artist Jaroslav Hněvkovský (1884–1956). Here, Husain reproduces two of Hněvkovský's works, both of which refer to the time when this artist lived in India.[132] These works are: a portrait of the young student Rani, whom he met at Kala Bhavan, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan and an oil painting of

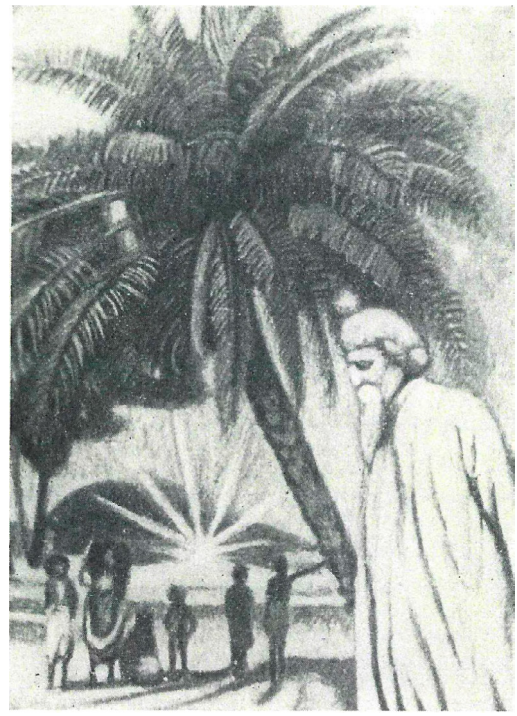


Fig. 75 Jaroslav Hněvkovský, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 1922, oil painting. New Orient Bimonthly, no. 6, 1967, 183.

Rabindranath Tagore in Santiniketan, seen here reproduced in an article about Hněvkovský by Krása (Fig. 75). In Husain's drawing *Praha 6*, he adds to the scene some vegetation, an elephant, and a head, thereby referencing Hněvkovský's painterly repertoire of tropical plants. Husain also includes a palette with three brushes which symbolises a greeting from one artist to the other. In *Praha 7*, Husain lines up a series of portrait heads of people he met and was close to. In the middle of the seven portraits appears the face of the elderly man whom we have already encountered in *Praha 1* (Fig. 72), in *Praha 2*, and in *Praha 5* (Fig. 74). This is an older version of the artist himself, suggesting that his inclusion in the line-up of portraits of artists and friends is a tribute to the creative potential of Czechoslovakia, and Husain's as a part of it.

In *Praha 8*, Husain returns to Prague, which he depicts as a distorted landscape with leaning building structures and lines that form myriad shapes. An oversized, barefooted figure emerges from behind a church tower, and approaches a couple who are seated at a round table in front of a square, seemingly unimpressed by the scene around them. This adds a bizarre touch to the scenario, as does the collection of upward-striving

Fig. 76 M. F. Husain, *Praha 9*, 1976. Felt-tip pen drawing, 23 × 15.5 cm. Inv. no. 4278. National Gallery in Prague. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

Fig. 77 M. F. Husain, *Praha 11*, 1976. Felt-tip pen drawing, 23 × 15.5 cm. Inv. no. 4278. National Gallery in Prague. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

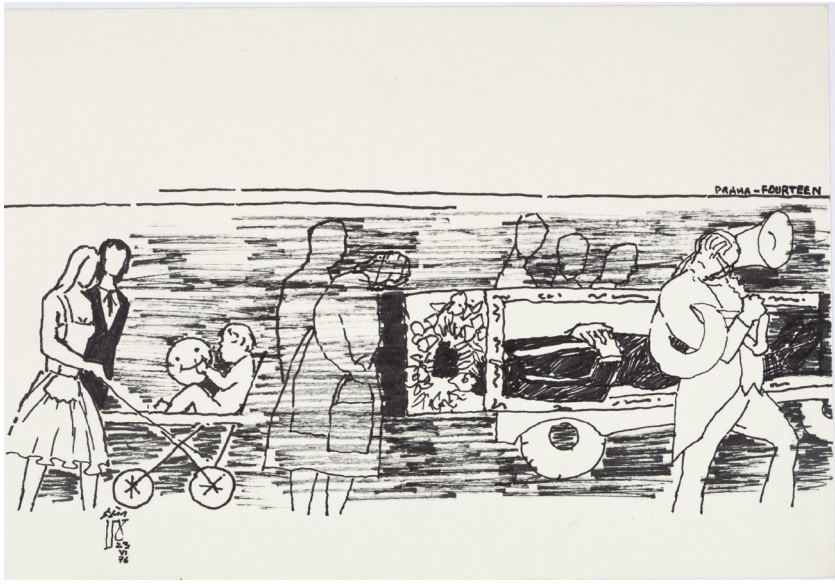


Fig. 78 M. F. Husain, *Praha 14*, 1976. Felt-tip pen drawing, 23 × 15.5 cm. Inv. no. 4278. National Gallery in Prague. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

Fig. 79 M. F. Husain, *Praha 18*, 1976. Felt-tip pen drawing, 23 × 15.5 cm. Inv. no. 4278. National Gallery in Prague. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

church towers with their dark lines of shadow. *Praha 9* (Fig. 76) is a portrait of the Krása family with books on top of which the letters KRASA become visible.

In *Praha 10*, a dove, together with a young female figure in a traditional Czech dress, flies across a landscape with a single house and two trees. Next to the house sits a man with a cylinder hat in a chair, holding out an empty bird cage. In *Praha 11* (Fig. 77) we see two large figures: in the upper part appears a naked female figure with wings and long hair, one arm outstretched, and in the lower part is a male figure lying on his stomach. This figure resembles the middle portrait in *Praha 7*, but reminds us also of the male figure in *Praha 2*. *Praha 12* documents another journey away from the capital, to the city of Břišejov, south of Prague, which the artist probably visited, and met Lubor Hájek and his wife Hana at their cottage. *Praha 13* is a scene with a crescent moon, a naked woman with long hair and a violin, a few houses, and a street with lanterns.

Music is also involved in the drawing *Praha 14* (Fig. 78), in which a funeral procession is led by a musician with a tuba. *Praha 15* portrays Prague from an elevated perspective. We encounter familiar sites again, such as the Charles Bridge, some of the leaning buildings, and the large male figure that we already saw in *Praha 8*. *Praha 16* is a reference to an opening of an exhibition of sculptures. Husain, therefore, inscribes the name of the Czech artist František Bílek (1872–1941), as an established representative of the tradition of Czech sculpture. We therefore see a sculpture on a pedestal, with Bílek's name visible. Furthermore, on top of the pedestal lies a nude female figure. Next to this scene stands a man in a suit speaking into a microphone; further left is a kneeling figure, filming what is taking place. This scene refers to the Zbraslav Château, where, at that time (1956–1994), a permanent exhibition of Czech sculpture from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was installed.[133]

Praha 17 shows a musical performance of an orchestra with string instruments. The only female figure in this group sits slightly apart, and is elevated on a pedestal. *Praha 18* (Fig. 79) is dominated by a large rooster, under whose tail the St Vitus Cathedral is situated. To the right, we see smoking factory chimneys. The final pages of the sketchbook are *Bratislava 1* to *4*, which document Husain's tour to the countryside of today's Slovakia, rather than to Bratislava. The folkloristic symbols that he depicts on the local couple's clothing in *Bratislava 1* (Fig. 80), but also on the upper part of *Bratislava 2*, are common patterns from the rural area in Čičmany, known for its log houses with white ornamentation.[134]

Fig. 80 M. F. Husain, *Bratislava 1*, 1976. Felt-tip pen drawing, 23 × 15.5 cm. Inv. no. 4278. National Gallery in Prague. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

Fig. 81 M. F. Husain, *Bratislava 4*, 1976. Felt-tip pen drawing, 23 × 15.5 cm. Inv. no. 4278. National Gallery in Prague. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

Fig. 82 M. F. Husain, *Drawing*, 1976, reproduced in Nový Orient, no. 7, 1976, 218.

Bratislava 2, *Bratislava 3*, and *Bratislava 4* (Fig. 81) are depictions of rural scenes. The motifs, the patterns, and also the logs on the horse carriage lead us to conclude that Husain saw them around Čičmany.

A drawing that is connected to this trip, but is not part of the NGP's series of 23 drawings, is depicted in Alena Vosečková's 1976 article in *Nový Orient* (Fig. 82).[135] The scene is dominated by a house that is divided into two halves, creating two mirror images. Inside the confines of the house, we see two female figures. The left-hand figure is wearing a traditional Central European dress. On the roof above lies a male figure playing the flute, dressed in Central European style. Both are facing west. The woman in the right-hand half of the house could be in a dancing position due to her upward-facing hand, which, according to details of her clothing, is of Indian origin. The man playing the flute on the roof above her confirms the geographical allusion to India, not least through his style of clothing. Both figures are facing east. East and West are here visibly united in a symbiosis. On the lower part of the drawing appears an inscription reading: "To my dear Cipka Durdilová. Praha, June 29, 1976."[136] It seems that Husain was in the habit of giving away drawings to people who he met along the way.

Fig. 83 Photograph by M. Krása, June 18, 1976. As inscribed on the back, the photo was taken in Žebrák, probably at the home/museum of artist Jaroslav Hněvkovský. Photograph from the Krása archive, courtesy of Ms Helena Bonusová and the Krása family. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

Husain's artistic strategy of simplifying cultural signs and forms, and including these in his iconography, is something he developed early on in his career. The painting *Between the Spider and the Lamp*, from 1956, is a pertinent example of how he employed elements of the Devanagari alphabet in a symbolic way, rather than allowing them to function as just a written code of communication.[137] When considering the works that he made in Prague, the transformational quality of Husain's process is therefore transcultural, in the best sense of the term. It is one in which relationships between cultures are explored, and one culture is not privileged over the other.[138] Husain's approach is therefore also one of participation, and of careful positioning.

The performative act of painting at the exhibition opening at Fragner Gallery in Prague (Fig. 67, Fig. 68, and also in Fig. 82), was also a positioning of the artist within a community of viewers that stretches across continents. Moreover, a connection can be established between Husain's "cosmopolitan orientation,"[139] and the "quivering seven fingers" on the title page of the Prague sketchbook (Fig. 74). In a 1971 volume that

appeared in New York, Husain talks about the "dialogue between the seven points," which are listed as "Kyoto, Mahabalipuram, Samarkand, Palermo, Provence, Liverpool and Alaska."[140] From these words, it is clear that Husain viewed his position as one that crossed several art worlds, which he symbolically, strategically, and quite logically viewed as lining up from East to West.[141] In this way he addresses his own mobility, which began in the East and connected him with places of significance, many of which are not frequently mentioned in accounts of artistic modernism. His travel to, and engagement with, these places is therefore a dialogue in which he articulates connections and positions himself.[142] For his audience in Prague, Husain was seen as a link to the world to which they, unlike him, had only limited access.

The painting that Husain executed during the opening of the 1976 exhibition measures 1.5 × 5 metres, and is titled *The Goddess Kunti in a Car Drawn by Ten Horses*. The NGP acquired the work in 1977, shortly after the exhibition ended, along with the sketchbook of twenty-three drawings he made during the same trip. According to Vosečková, Husain also made a film when he toured through parts of Czechoslovakia.[143] In a photograph of Husain taken by Miloslav Krása in Žebrák (Fig. 83), dated June 18, 1976, we see Husain with a camera, looking at a display of objects.

4.2.3 Capturing Prague as a Significant Place

About Husain's film, Vosečková says that he saw it as a "kaleidoscope of images and drawings."[144] The film cannot be found, but its kaleidoscope, of which the twenty-three drawings form a part, appears to have served as a "cinematic diary"[145] for a chapter of his second feature film, *Meenaxi: A Tale of Three Cities*, produced in 2004. *Meenaxi* is about a writer who overcomes his creative impasse through a muse, whose name is Meenaxi. Meenaxi appears in the three chapters of the film, in different roles, in three different cities. In Hyderabad, she is the mysterious perfumer; in Jaisalmer, she performs as the exotic woman from the desert; in Prague, she is the orphan Marie Žůrková. Hyderabad, as well as Jaisalmer, are important cities in India for Husain. He frequently returned to these places. In 1967, he produced his first experimental film in Jaisalmer. The black and white film, titled *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, was commissioned by the Films Division of India, and it won him a Golden Bear award

at the Film Festival in Berlin in 1967.[146] The fact that he included Prague as a place of significance allows us to go beyond the claim that this was only because of his special relationship with Marie Žůrková. He included Prague because he saw it as part of the dialogue that he created between various places. The versatility of the main character, Meenaxi, who slips in and out of places and cultural settings, encourages us to see her as a reflection of the artist, capable of adapting, changing, and being part of different environments.

The Prague episode[147] is the last one in *Meenaxi.* It opens with an aerial view of the historic part of the city, zooming in on monuments, statues, churches, the Charles Bridge, and the Vltava River. What follows is the main character Marie, who is Maria in the film. Maria is seen leaving the convent, where she presumably lives, pushing her bicycle to work at a riverside café, and subsequently to a theatre rehearsal. From there, she hurries off to Prague's main train station, Praha hlavní nádraží. There she stands, holding a handwritten sheet of paper that reads "Kameshwar Mathur," the person she is supposed to be meeting. Trains and crowds of people pass by, until Maria gives up waiting for Kameshwar, who either did not arrive, or passed by without noticing her holding up his name.

Maria then leaves the train station, and takes a seat in a tram, where she unexpectedly meets Kameshwar. When the two start a conversation, Maria introduces herself as the person Dr. Krása has sent to the station to pick him up. Following this, Maria is seen strolling with Kameshwar through Prague, and the two growing visibly close.

After approximately twenty-five minutes, the Prague episode comes to an end, with a theatrical performance by Maria and her theatre group, in front of a stage-set design of large, rearing horses, which clearly bear Husain's signature. Kameshwar is part of the audience watching Maria on stage. Husain's eldest son, Owais, was responsible for the Prague interlude. In a discussion about the decision to include Prague, he talks about how he sees Prague as a corridor between Eastern and Western Europe.[148]

The general impression of the Prague scenes in *Meenaxi* is that they contain many autobiographical elements. The soundtrack—for which award-winning composer Allah Rakha Rahman was responsible—adds distinctive features to all three parts of the film. Moreover, the music, and the way the camera moves between Prague's historic architecture and the elongated shadows cast by the medieval structures, reminds us, not least, of Husain's sketchbook, and the twenty-three drawings, in which historical monuments and music play an important role.

There are comparisons to be drawn between *Meenaxi* and Husain's better-known, first feature film, *Gaja Gamini*, from 2000. Commercially, neither of them was very successful. However, sociologist Patricia Uberoi's observations about the plot of *Gaja Gamini*, that it is about "the universal woman who takes many forms in many times and places,"[149] can also be said of *Meenaxi*.[150] If one looks beyond the significance of the muse in the film, however, one might also conclude that this is about the artist's perception of the world through his lifelong mobility, and his desire to work across opposites—to unite and connect, "to conjoin disparities,"[151] as historian of Islam Bruce B. Lawrence has said about Husain's late work. Lawrence holds that Husain's play with opposites is not an attempt to make them disappear, or to play out one against the other. He seems to suggest, rather, that the artist's purpose is to create something new through the distinctiveness of terms that are placed in opposition to each other.[152]

For this reason, Husain's engagement with Prague, through drawing, painting, performing, and filmmaking, along with his personal and intimate relationships, cannot solely be viewed within the political framework of the Cold War. Rather, this engagement bespeaks Husain's rich experience across and within emerging art worlds that offered immense opportunities and possibilities for participation.

Chapter 5
Chittaprosad's Immobile Mobility

In keeping with the questions explored in this book, I will focus on the communist artist Chittaprosad Bhattacharya's "immobile mobility," and attempt to work out how this connects with the "imaginative geographies"[1] that allowed the artist to negotiate his international participation from his small one-room apartment at Ruby Terrace in Bombay Andheri. He did this "by means of virtual cosmopolitanism,"[2] as Partha Mitter famously articulated it elsewhere. The Prague connections that Chittaprosad was able to establish from the early 1950s were part of his cosmopolitanism. They formed a crucial part of his international visibility at a time when, ironically, he was more or less neglected by the post-independence Indian art world. In the past three decades, however, there have been private initiatives in India to excavate material from the artist. These efforts have been spearheaded by the Delhi Art Gallery (DAG) and Osian's auction house in Bombay/Mumbai, which resulted in a large-scale exhibition in 2011, and comprehensive publications.[3] What the exhibition and the publication revealed, apart from a large amount of unknown material and artefacts the artist had collected in his room, and then tightly held on to, is a post-mortem visibility that contrasts with what art historian Sanjukta Sunderason has called "the artist's own unique *withdrawal*"[4] from the art world into his small abode in Bombay Andheri.

Over the past several years I have written about Chittaprosad's connection to Prague, and learned from others who have worked on the artist before me or parallel to me.[5] What I would like to add to this research is a close reading of the letters that are kept in a Prague archive, which document many years of correspondence between the artist and two of his close friends from Czechoslovakia. One was Krása, the Indologist, and the other was Růžena Kamath, a Czechoslovak national married to an Indian engineer in Bombay, who seemed to look after the artist quite regularly.[6] Another set of letters are an exchange between the artist's sister Gouri Chatterjee and Krása, after the artist's demise. These letters complement Sunderason's recent research into the artist's international correspondence in the 1950s, and add Chittaprosad's Prague connections

to a larger "network of transnational socialist movement."[7] I will also examine more closely the film *Konfese: indického grafika Čittaaprasada/ Bekenntnis des indischen Grafikers Tschittaprasad,*[8] for which director Pavel Hobl (1935–2007) won an award from the World Peace Council at the Leipzig documentary and short film week for cinema and television in 1972.[9] The film, the collection of Chittaprosad's work in the National Gallery in Prague (NGP), and the letters mentioned earlier—all these will serve as the basis for an inquiry into the artist's sympathy with different kinds of struggle, and the transnational networks of solidarity that this opened up, despite his own incapacity to leave his single-room apartment in Bombay. This leads to questions about his lack of visibility in the post-independence Indian art world, and about how he was able to participate in art worlds located elsewhere.

5.1 A Single Room with a Central Function

The few scenes in the fifteen-minute documentary *Konfese* that were actually recorded with the artist are an intimate portrait of an aging and sick person, whose life and work have merged with every fragment of his living space (Fig. 84).

The photograph of Chittaprosad and M. F. Husain, which was taken by Miloslav Krása in the same room approximately ten or twelve years earlier, shows a slightly younger and happier Chittaprosad (Fig. 85).

The room is the same. We recognise the distinctive brass railing on the window, the crumbling wall, and even the fabric with the geometric border that covers and protects a pile of something on the left in both pictures. Quite a few photographs of Chittaprosad's single-room apartment at Ruby Terrace survive. They include both inside and outside shots, shots of local and international visitors, shots of puppet theatre rehearsals,[10] and even one of a delivery of an entire puppet stage.[11]

In a letter written to his mother on March 10, 1965, Chittaprosad speaks about his plans to travel to Europe, but at the same time expresses concerns about how he cannot leave his room. He explains that this is because he cannot trust anyone to take care of "this single room [which] contains the accumulated wealth of the past twenty years, the yield of my toil, the wealth of my pain. So many books, so many paintings, puppets, gifts from abroad, expensive brush and paint. Further, utensils and clothes as well."[12]

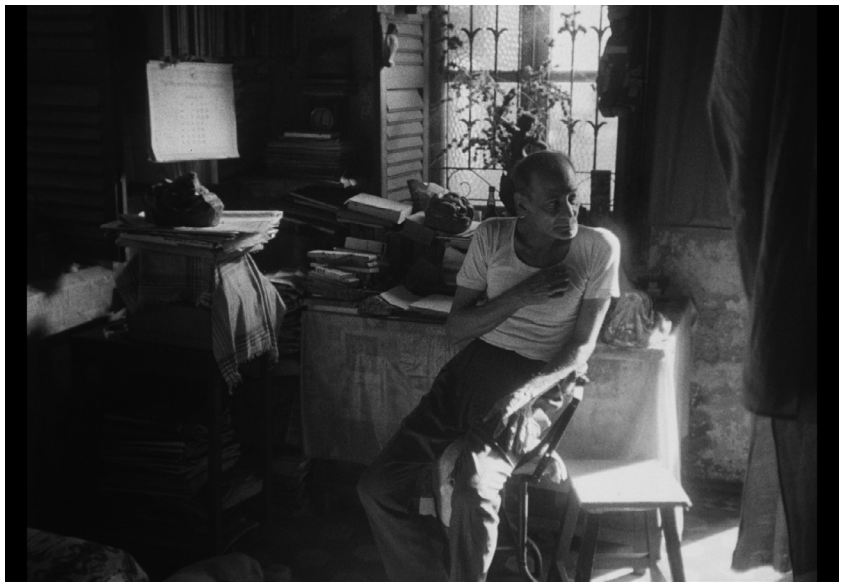


Fig. 84 Film still from *Konfese: indického grafika Čittaprasáda*, 1972, direction: Pavel Hobl. © Národní filmový archiv.

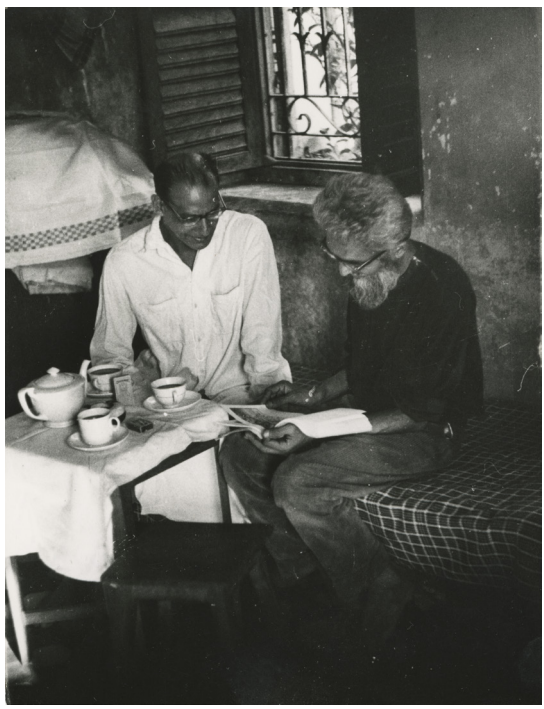


Fig. 85 Photograph by M. Krása, undated. As inscribed on the back, we see Chittaprosad seated on the left and M. F. Husain on the right. Photograph from the Krása archive, courtesy of Ms Helena Bonušová and the Krása family. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

In the same letter, he continues to bring up the possibility of travelling to Europe, and suggests that this can only happen if the addressee, his mother, together with his sister Gouri, come and stay in his room while he is absent.[13] He explains:

> It's a single room, the bathroom is close by, shared by neighbours, nearby are a couple of toilets, those too used by all—but kept clean. There's a scarcity of water because it is a pipeline supply, though round-the-clock; also because all the neighbours collect drinking water to store—another family wash their clothes and clean the utensils, but they have a fixed time slot allotted to them. The neighbours are well behaved, not over-inquisitive, yet maintain a natural decent relationship. Outside the room to the west, a spacious verandah, then a long 20 yards wide courtyard, then the main road—I mean to say, all the difficulties of a single-room accommodation are definitely present—on top of it, my room is cramped with books and objects, and the kitchen is in one corner.[14]

Chittaprosad's description of his room—going into great detail about its composition, its surroundings, the social environment to which it belongs, its functionality and inconveniences; but also that which it contains, the entire and ongoing result of his work, together with the richness of his pain, inextricably linked to his artistic output—all of this is made up of the accumulated fragments of his life, carefully assembled in his Ruby Terrace home. From his own background as a formerly celebrated artist, who, in 1943, walked across the landscapes of districts most severely affected by the Bengal Famine, reporting and illustrating the tragedy, and the immense suffering, which he experienced through direct contact with many victims, we gather that for him, pain and artistic output are inextricably linked. Linked, as well, therefore, is the accumulated wealth of pain that these experiences brought, and the wealth of what the room contains, including the work that comes out of it.

Despite several invitations to travel to Prague, Chittaprosad never left India. As opposed to travel and movement, his single-room apartment became the central axis of his life. His apartment and its terrace thus became a place where he received people regularly. In one of several letters to Růžena Kamath, he expressed his "'fears about leaving' [his] room to travel [to] places,"[15] adding that they are not "imaginations."[16] In this twelve-page handwritten letter (Figs. 86-97), he explains to Kamath why he did not turn up for the celebration of her national day (by which he

probably meant the celebration of the Czechoslovak National Day) (Fig. 87). Růžena Kamath had met her future husband while studying in London beginning in 1939. After they married in 1942 and moved back to Bombay, she became active in organising events for the India–Czechoslovak cultural society, and translated texts from Czech into English. While Chittaprosad also shared his precarious financial and health problems in letters that he wrote to Krása, Růžena Kamath seems to have taken care of him in an almost motherly way, transporting him to doctors' appointments, or to an art supply shop, and even bringing linoleum supplies to his home. Chittaprosad justifies one of his "non-appearances" with the unexpected appearance of a friend in front of his apartment, which, he adds, meant that he could not leave his "beloved room in spite of all my efforts to go out to prove to you and other friends, for once at least, that I too like to meet them outside my room once in a while"[17] (Fig. 88).

While he cherished his room, Chittaprosad seemed to have been veritably bound to it, which reinforced his immobility. He explains this dilemma in the same letter, when he says that he used to travel to Poona years ago, when he still had "honest and civilized people" as his "next room neighbours"[18] (Fig. 88). The year before, he adds, he even went to Calcutta; but when he entrusted his room to a friend, it turned out that he "had a good time in the room and took out my books, made a mess of my things and took no care of my room."[19] Besides having no one with whom to entrust his possessions for longer periods, he was now also responsible for what he calls his "little 'family',"[20] composed of a pet cat, a puppy and its mother, and his "little 'hanging garden'," which he all loves "most dearly"[21] (Fig. 88). In her role as a motherly figure, Růžena Kamath was the person to whom he confided all these worries and concerns.

I now return to the photograph in Fig. 85, and to why M. F. Husain sat next to Chittaprosad in his room, which is also explained in the letter to Růžena Kamath. After describing why he cannot leave his room, he delves into a conversation the two had apparently had at some earlier point, perhaps at Ruby Terrace, about the commercial aspect of art. Chittaprosad detests the commercial aspect of art, and makes clear that he has "no respect for the artists who produce art for money"[22] (Fig. 91). Here he articulates a position contrary to Kamath's, who believes that art is a commodity for which one should receive money in return, and consequently use it (Fig. 90, Fig. 91). Chittaprosad holds the strong opinion that art is neither a

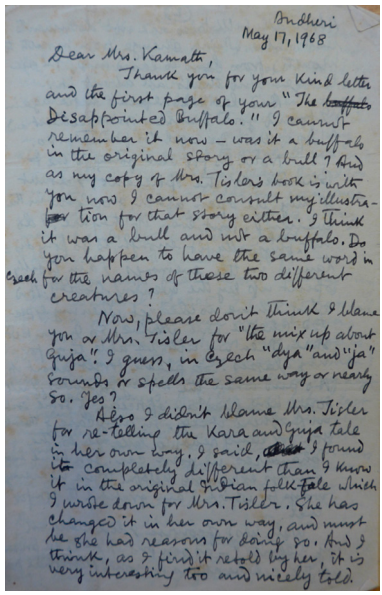


Fig. 86

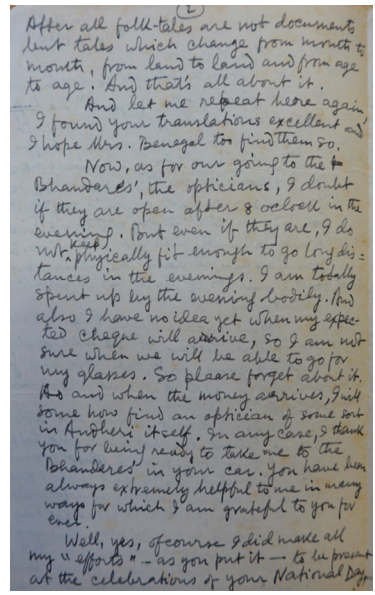


Fig. 87

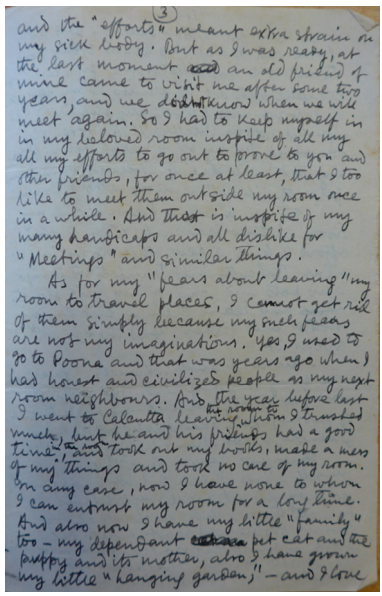


Fig. 88

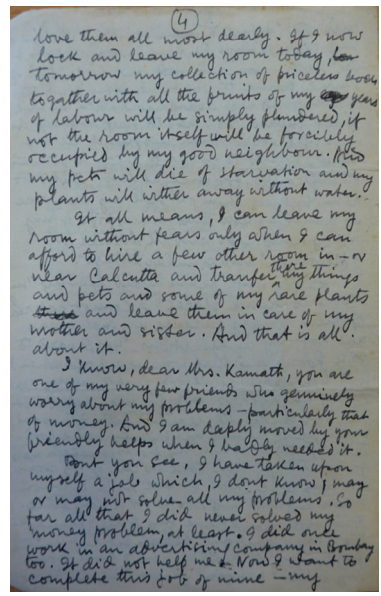


Fig. 89

Figs. 86-89 Pages 1-4 of the Twelve-page handwritten letter by Chittaprosad to Růžena Kamath. Image courtesy of Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4. Courtesy of Ms. Helena Bonusová and the Krása family.

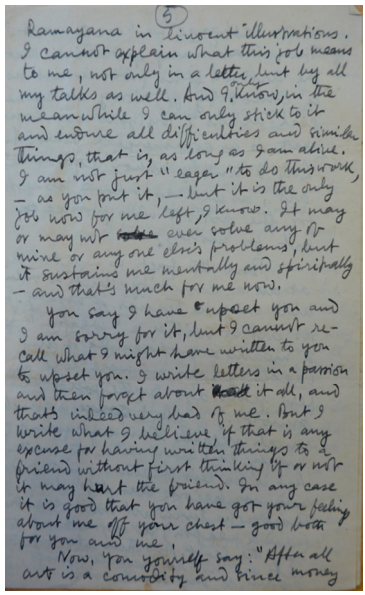


Fig. 90

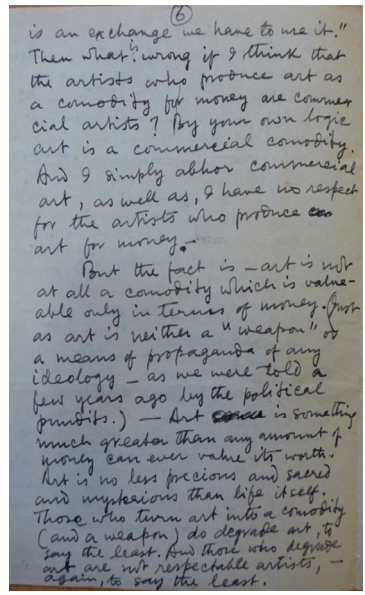


Fig. 91

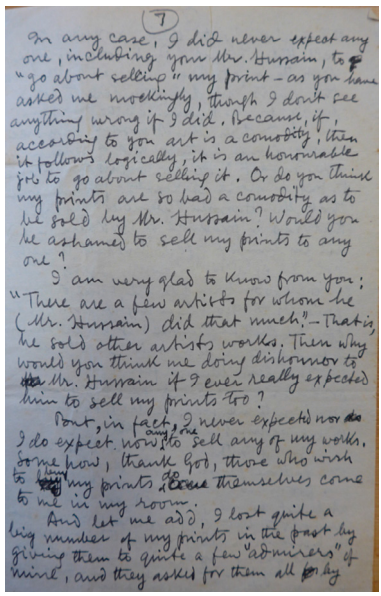


Fig. 92

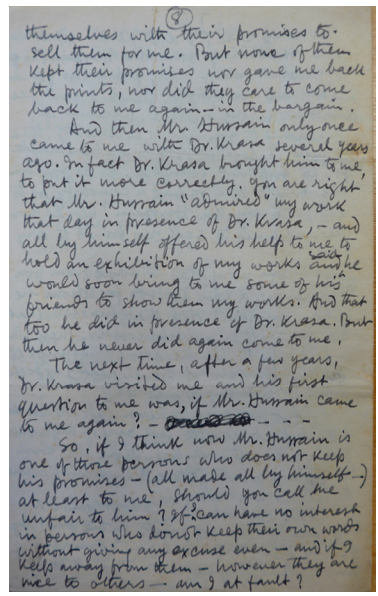


Fig. 93

Figs. 90-93 Pages 5-8 of the Twelve-page handwritten letter by Chittaprosad to Růžena Kamath. Image courtesy of Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4. Courtesy of Ms. Helena Bonusová and the Krása family.

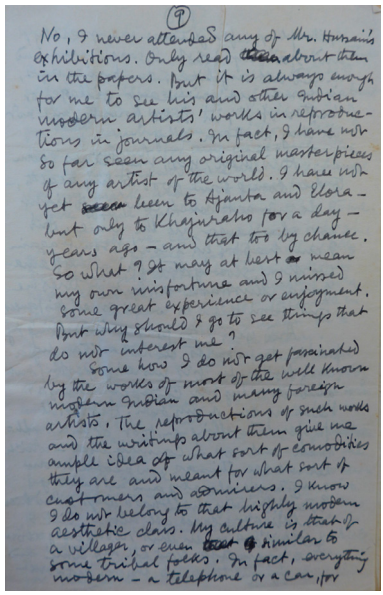


Fig. 94

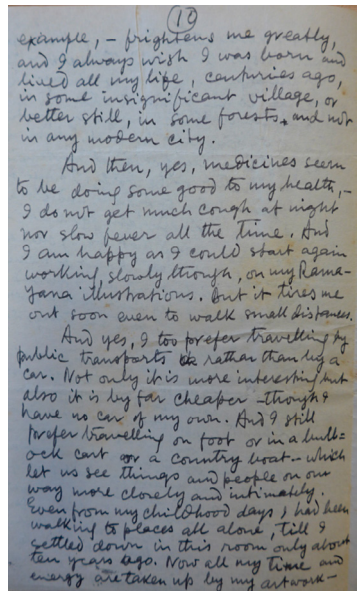


Fig. 95

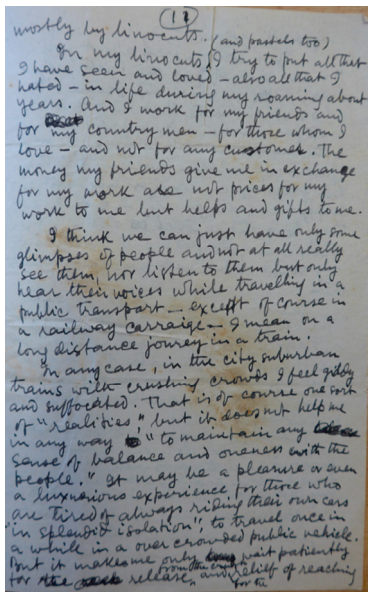


Fig. 96

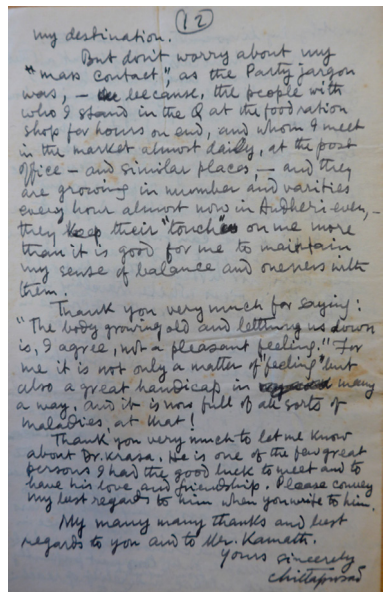


Fig. 97

Figs. 94-97 Pages 9-12 of the Twelve-page handwritten letter by Chittaprosad to Růžena Kamath. Image courtesy of Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4. Courtesy of Ms. Helena Bonusová and the Krása family.

commodity nor a "'weapon' or a means of propaganda of any ideology," by which he harks back to the years when he was working for "the political pundits"[23] (Fig. 91). Chittaprosad further justifies himself by saying that he never expected anyone to help him sell his art, not even "your Mr. Hussain" (Fig. 92) who, as Kamath seemed to have said of Husain, did this only for a few artists.[24] Chittaprosad's pride at having admirers come to his room and buy his prints resonates here. At the same time, his unfortunate experiences with the many people who promised to sell his work, but never returned the work or delivered the money, also filter through. According to Chittaprosad, Husain also made such promises. The two were introduced by Krása, who repeatedly visited Chittaprosad in Bombay, and did his best to establish connections for the artist. As can be drawn from many letters, Krása was very concerned about Chittaprosad and supported him from a distance by organising exhibitions in Czechoslovakia, as well as through commissions, purchases, attention, and expressions of affection. Above all, he tried to expand the artist's network. By bringing Husain to Ruby Terrace, Krása meant well. He not only intended to help the artist, who was constantly beset by financial troubles, but also no doubt hoped that the immobile, isolated, and dislocated artist would find a way into the Indian art scene, with which Krása was quite familiar and connected.[25]

The empty promises that Husain made in the presence of Krása were not forgotten by Chittaprosad, who brings this up in his letter to Kamath, and emphasises that Husain made these promises only because of Krása's presence (Fig. 93). In the letter, Chittaprosad continues to distance himself from "that highly modern aesthetic clan" and confirms that he was neither interested in, nor had seen, any modern commercial Indian or foreign art[26] (Fig. 94). His resistance to "everything modern" then comes to a head when he reveals that he prefers the more economical mode of public transport to travelling alone by car, because of the proximity to people[27] (Fig. 95). Given Chittaprosad's dire financial situation and health problems, Ruby Terrace and the people with whom he queues up "at the food ration shop for hours on end"[28] (Fig. 97) are his reality, not the life of an artist pursuing a successful national and international career. Chittaprosad, we learn from these passages, was dissatisfied with the way postcolonial India was developing, embracing modernity while leaving masses of people behind. A disappointment about the course of his own career, as a formerly politically committed artist who worked for the

Communist Party of India and achieved a considerable degree of fame in the process, but was dropped after leaving the Party, also resonates here.

Considering that the careers of M. F. Husain and many other Indian artists who came to prominence during the postcolonial era were significantly linked to various kinds of mobility involving international travel, exhibitions, and study opportunities, the fact that Chittaprosad did not physically participate may have been a source of irritation and worked against him. Chittaprosad's work was, for instance, not included in Indian survey exhibitions that were sent abroad. His work does not appear in the two India exhibitions that were sent to Prague and to East/Central Europe in 1955/56 and in 1979. However, his work was featured at international exhibitions for the World Peace Council and the International Conference for the Defence of Children in Vienna already in 1952.[29] In 1963, a large-scale exhibition of his work, composed of seventy-two linocuts, ten drawings, and thirty-five photographs, was organised for him in Prague at Hollar Gallery. This exhibition was then also shown in Bratislava.[30]

Whereas Husain and Ram Kumar attended exhibitions at events accompanying the World Youth Festivals or meetings in the framework of the World Peace Council,[31] Chittaprosad was not "conference-hopping" from and to these events.[32] His international recognition, therefore, rested exclusively on his artistic work, and on personal friendships and the "ideological affiliations"[33] that he was able to cultivate from his single room on the outskirts of Bombay, with little to almost no mobility.

5.2 A Single Room as a Stage for a Puppet Theatre

Chittaprosad's artistic output involved not only works on paper, but also puppet theatre. When Chittaprosad met František Salaba, who worked as an assistant to the trade commissioner of Czechoslovakia in Bombay between 1954 and 1957,[34] he found in the Czechoslovak man an ally with whom he shared his love for puppets. During his time in Bombay, Salaba organised an exhibition of Czech toys and puppets, which Chittaprosad admired very much. Before leaving Bombay, Salaba gifted the artist an entire puppet stage, which was delivered by truck to Ruby Terrace.[35] This was the material base for Chittaprosad's puppet theatre, named "Khelaghar." Salaba also remained one of his best friends, and a moral ally, which the

artist acknowledged in the many letters that he wrote to both Krása and Kamath.[36] During the short period that the artist worked enthusiastically to bring Khelaghar to life—from training laymen and women from his neighbourhood, to designing and making the puppets and the stage and writing the scripts—he felt "enriched," as he writes to Krása in a letter in 1958, through his friendship with his Czech friends. He sees that this has brought him "a new creative vitality and visions."[37] This letter, with a Khelaghar letterhead, focuses on Khelaghar, of which Chittaprosad proudly says that it is "the first modern puppet theatre in India."[38] He speaks about the "endless possibilities puppetry has for creative artists," "though," he adds, " I fell in love with this medium of art in 1955 when for the first time I worked with a group of Rajasthani village puppeteers in Delhi."[39]

Chittaprosad's Khelaghar has often been brought into connection with Czechoslovakia.[40] In his letter to Krása, the artist confirms this by saying that he has recently "received from the Prague Academy of Arts some excellent literature giving detailed instructions on puppet making."[41] He adds that the "Radost friends of Brno have sent me a gift of a perfectly made marionette from their own theatre."[42] Khelaghar has even been accepted as a member of UNIMA, the Unesco-affiliated organisation Union Internationale de la Marionnette, through the initiative of Czech puppeteer Jan Malik. Puppet historian Eva Vodičková seems to have sent him literature on puppet-making, and invited him for a workshop at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.[43] While Chittaprosad writes to Krása in detail about how he makes different characters for the puppet theatre, such as birds and a leopard out of empty coconut shells, it is clear that Khelaghar, like his other work, is entirely produced at Ruby Terrace. However, perhaps more than his works on paper, the puppets were created through a cross-cultural effort and material participation. Chittaprosad was aware of the Czech influence, which he described as "the spell of foreign prototypes," and therefore worked to "'puppetise' the folk wood and terracotta toys,"[44] in an effort to localise his aesthetic output.

Furthermore, the way Khelaghar transformed Chittaprosad's room and its "very limited space"[45] into a "land of enchantment"[46] on Fridays was only possible through concerted efforts, not only from abroad, but also from his neighbourhood. He mentions "two very sincere, hard-working young ladies, not too talented," but he speaks even more of his joy about "the children whose eyes shine when lights are on the little stage of my KHELAGHAR."[47]

The collective effort to make Khelaghar a reality was ultimately what brought it to an end. From constant lack of money and technical equipment, to the large number of people and manpower needed,[48] to the lack of organisational capacity for promoting it, Chittaprosad seemed to have been overwhelmed by all the obligations, as well as opportunities, that Khelaghar brought with it. This is reflected in a letter to his friend Murari Gupta. In this letter, he writes about Khelaghar, and how he wishes not "to get too entangled and dissipated in an outside world," and how the joy in his work can only be achieved, or perhaps maintained, by moving "away from the hustle and bustle of the world of exchange."[49] Since the puppets are "a world apart, gathering a crowd around them," they disturbed his painting and printmaking practice, the isolated "world of peace"[50] to which he returned after Khelaghar came to an end.

5.3 Exhibiting in Prague

The stage that Chittaprosad created temporarily for Khelaghar at Ruby Terrace in his one-room apartment ultimately returned to its original setting; instead of "gathering a crowd," it welcomed a limited few who came to visit "from near or far."[51] What we gather from the artist's experience of enthusiastically setting up the puppet theatre is the realisation of a failed attempt to engage with the "outside world,"[52] which worked against his ideologies and beliefs, already strongly expressed in the letter mentioned earlier to Kamath (Figs. 86-97). In the letter to Krása, he expresses his fears and concerns about whether he can cope with the puppet theatre, since several people have to be involved; at the same time, he wonders whether he has "taken up this new task rather late in [his] life."[53]

In a letter to Murari Gupta, dated November 30, 1958, Chittaprosad says that he has had to "shut down the activities of Khelaghar,"[54] which he confirms in a letter to Krása dated December 24, 1958. He also tells Krása about his meeting with the Radost Theatre people during their performances in Bombay, via a long-distance introduction through Krása.[55] He was particularly impressed by their high level of performance, their "superb 'team-work'" and "the simplicity of their nature."[56] This seems to have encouraged him to return to his work on Khelaghar, because in a letter dated May 25, 1959 he speaks about the improvement of his health, and about Khelaghar having begun its activities again, with "a few very

fine young men" with whom he hopes to perform publicly in Bombay by Christmas, and hopes to visit Czechoslovakia next year.[57] In subsequent letters, Khelaghar is no longer mentioned. This is the point when he returns to speak about his paintings, his prints, and his book illustrations. What remains of Khelaghar are the marionettes, with which the artist lived, and for whom he once invented stories for his performances.[58] Stylistically, the puppets are characterised by facial expressions of unusual happiness. Their laughing faces distinguish them significantly from the works on paper, many of which are characterised by a seriousness conveying the misery and misfortune of those whose lives and stories they tell. The success of Khelaghar was ultimately tied to ample financial resources, and to collaborative, but perhaps even more to organisational efforts. Chittaprosad, the reclusive artist who suffered constantly from financial constraints, was enthusiastic about the artistic possibilities of his theatre, but was ultimately overwhelmed by its implementation.

In letters that followed, Chittaprosad and Krása discussed matters such as payments the artist received for the illustration of the book *Indické Bajky a Pohádky* by Běla Tišlerová,[59] and the inclusion of his work in the journals *Nový Orient* and *New Orient Bimonthly*. The artist also thanked Krása for copies he received of the journals and other materials, such as a catalogue of Mexican art.[60] Other letters reiterate the invitation to the artist to come to Prague, and the artist's apologies for why he cannot come. Ultimately, the 1963 retrospective exhibition mentioned earlier took place without the artist's presence. The exhibition opened on May 3, 1963, at Hollar Gallery.

The invitation card (Fig. 98) is illustrated with a detail of one of Chittaprosad's compositions of Rada and Krishna. The exhibition was organised by the Union of Czechoslovak Visual Artists; the works for the exhibition seemed to have come from Salaba's collection of the artist's work. The exhibition also travelled from Prague to Bratislava. In 1964, the NGP acquired thirty-eight works on paper from the artist.[61]

In a four-page letter from Chittaprosad to Krása from December 1963, the artist talks about his efforts to prepare his papers so that he can travel to Prague.[62] He also tells Krása that the Kamaths came to visit, and purchased some of his linocut prints. What makes him even happier, however, is that almost every day he receives "some friends in [his] room, some of them are new, some of them are from far off Denmark, some of them are young

Fig. 98 Invitation card for Chittaprosad's exhibition at Hollar Gallery in Prague. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2023.

artists from Calcutta, and all of them are fine people."[63] It is clear from lines like these that the visits of friends from near and far cheered him up considerably. He enjoyed the attention, without having to go anywhere. He considers his life to be a "very interesting" one "of more than half a century," in which good things, such as the exhibition of his work in Prague, usually happened at a slow pace.[64]

Chittaprosad's acceptance and appreciation of slowness, as well as his rejection of the art market and modern art, complement each other. His international visibility, despite his "immobile mobility," stands in stark contrast to the careers and mobility of many Indian artists in the post-independence period. We are reminded of Octavio Paz's awareness of developments outside his country, which he defined as "the time lived by others."[65] In refusing to accept invitations to travel abroad, Chittaprosad searched for "the real present"[66] in his immediate surroundings. This is how his disentanglement of the puppets from "foreign influence" and the "world of exchange" can be understood, as can his return to working with prints. This medium offered, I would suggest, a unique ability for international participation by way of non-movement or "virtual cosmopolis,"[67] a notion put forward by Partha Mitter with respect to the emphasis on

"uneven power relations between center and periphery."[68] The unevenness of the various power dynamics at play in the case of Chittaprosad's life and career, as a former Communist Party artist, is complex—his exclusion from an Indian art world that was simultaneously committed to the nation and the world, for example.[69] As a socially committed artist, Chittaprosad negotiated his international visibility and participation by remaining firmly and truly connected to those whose concerns and struggles he witnessed and shared. The many letters that he wrote from, and received at, Ruby Terrace, Andheri, along with the many friends who visited him, are therefore not "a parallel trajectory to his pictorial formulations,"[70] but an integral and formative part thereof.

5.4 The Anatomy of a Film about the History and Life of an Artist

On August 2, 1972, Miloslav Krása wrote a letter to Chittaprosad saying that he had seen the nearly completed film that was shot in Bombay and in Prague, with material from the collection of the NGP along with newsreel shots from Bangladesh. He says: "It seems that the film will be very good and quite dramatic."[71] He further recounts that it was nice to hear Chittaprosad's voice in the film studio, along with "all the additional sounds from Kurla Road," which, he says, "evoked the whole atmosphere of our last meeting."[72] Krása speaks about the final stages of the production of the film *Konfese Indického Grafika Čittaprasáda*, by filmmaker Pavel Hobl. With this film about the life and work of the artist Chittaprosad, Hobl won the main prize at the Arsfilm Festival in Kroměříž[73] in East Moravia, in October 1972, followed by an award at the fifteenth international Leipzig documentary and short film week for cinema and television (DOK Leipzig), also in 1972.[74]

In the same letter, Krása informs the artist that he got back his drawings on Bangladesh, which he returns together with this letter. "Some of them," he says, "will also be reproduced in our Czech Journal *Nový Orient,*" together "with a short article about our last meeting in Bombay."[75] *Nový Orient* reproduced four of the artist's Bangladesh drawings,[76] and details of some of them also appear in the film *Konfese*.

Not unlike the realisation of the exhibition of Chittaprosad's works in Czechoslovakia many years earlier, implementing the idea of a film about the artist's life was a long, slow process.

When filmmaker Pavel Hobl travelled to India in 1972, he was commissioned to produce a commercial film for Czechoslovak Airlines. This was a colour film titled *Brána do Indie*/*Gate to India,*[77] which was shown in cinemas across Czechoslovakia. Miloslav Krása was Hobl's consultant, and suggested to the filmmaker that he also meet the artist Chittaprosad while in Bombay, which Hobl did. However, the idea and the script for a film about the life and work of the artist had originated some years before, with the Bratislava-based filmmaker Vlado Kubenko (1924–1993). Kubenko is considered one of the pioneer Slovak documentary filmmakers. He produced a number of films about art and cultural history, which took him to East Asia, South Asia, and North Africa. In the fall of 1966, Kubenko was in India for the shooting of a documentary film titled *Features from India,* in which he accompanied members of the Pantomime Theatre of Bratislava on an Indian tour.[78] The film was released in 1967. During the same trip, Kubenko also made the film about four *Modern Indian Painters*, which I will discuss in detail in the following chapter.

Preserved in an archived file about Kubenko's work (Fig. 3), dated 1966, is a short-film proposal, titled *Historie a život v díle indického grafika Cittaprasáda/History and Life in the Work of Indian Graphic Artist Čittaprasáda*.[79] This is subtitled as "Proposal Number Four," and it outlines in detail the plan, the narrative, and the setting of a film about the artist Chittaprosad. After a short introduction about the artist, the proposal states: "To make a short film about this truly 'national' Indian artist should be quite easy, provided he himself consents to do so (we presume, he will)."[80] The proposal continues by suggesting the inclusion of only a few shots from the artist's home and its outdoor setting, and that the rest of the scenes be shot in Prague, where material about the artist's work is housed at the NGP and with accessible private collectors. Furthermore, it states that Chittaprosad's work is already well known in Czechoslovakia, due to two acclaimed, and very comprehensive, exhibitions.[81] While the report holds that the artist is "undervalued in India,"[82] it says that "he is considered one of the top Asian graphic artists in Europe and America," and his works are often compared to the works of Käthe Kollowitz (1867–1945), Chinese revolutionary wood carvings and Mexican graphic art.[83] The proposal advises the filmmaker to film the artist's living environment tactfully, emphasising the atmosphere and the "connection with simple people he is surrounded with."[84] What follows is a list of works and journals to be included in the film, along with a suggestion

to film an improvised performance of the artist's puppets with children from the street. Moreover, it intended to film the artist at work, and to include his artistic creed as a monologue.[85] The draft ends with a number of contact people in Bombay and their phone numbers.

In a series of handwritten notes, in the same archived file, Kubenko seemed to have made personal notes about the few days that he spent in Bombay. From these entries we are informed that he met with a number of artists, including Bal Chhabda, Krishen Khanna, Akbar Padamsee, and Tyeb Mehta.[86] In an entry that refers to a Tuesday visit to someone whose name is not legible, he notes that this person lives close to Chittaprosad, who was already expecting him. He notes that the artist lives in a modest, small room with a kitchenette. One side, he continues, is decorated with puppets for a puppet theatre, and the other side is full of books. He notes that the pottery, which is displayed in the windows, is dynamic and expressive. He connects this with his assessment of the puppets, which have their own specific charm and meaningful expressions.[87] Chittaprosad showed his visitors a book about Indian cuisine, which had been published in Denmark with the artist's illustrations. Kubenko also mentions that he saw the artist preparing colourful pastels for an exhibition in Czechoslovakia.[88]

There is then a change of location. Over dinner at Bal Chhabda's house, the conversation turned to the possibilities of making films, and on possible collaborative projects between the two countries. The idea of making a film about the artist Chittaprosad was expressed and noted on several pages of this document.[89] In essence, the meeting between Kubenko and Bal Chhabda was intended to assess, for both sides, what kinds of cooperation would be feasible. In a further report about negotiations between the two taking place sometime later, between November 11 and December 4, 1969, the possibility of a different director taking over the shooting in India, with the same cameraman, comrade Strelinger, was mentioned.[90] This possibility was realised by Hobl, who made the film about Chittaprosad. Cameraman Strelinger was replaced by Vlastimil Kosík. In many ways, Hobl kept close to the storyboard prepared by Kubenko some years earlier. Krása, who had previously acted as an advisor for Kubenko's film projects, was also advisor to Hobl. However, the turn from *Historie a život v díle indického grafika Cittaprasáda/History and Life in the Work of Indian Graphic Artist Čittaprasáda,* to *Konfese Indického*

Grafika Čittaprasáda, requires some reflection, not least because the artist seemed to have been unhappy with the title of the film, for which both the filmmaker and Krása offered explanations.

In a letter written by Krása to Chittaprosad from 1978, he assures the artist that he is keeping in mind his "arguments about the title" of the film, and continues to try "to impress them upon the producers, should an English version be made."[91] Krása proposes some meanings of the word "confession," as found in the Oxford English Dictionary. He enumerates them thus: "confessing, substance of things confessed; confession of faith; solemn declaration of religious belief, creed; statement of one's principles in any matter."[92] We do not know, however, if this was convincing to the artist. When Krása wrote this letter, Chittaprosad was in the process of moving to his sister's home in Calcutta, due to severe medical issues. He passed away not long after, on November 13, 1978, in Calcutta. The issue of the title of the film was also addressed by Hobl, soon after the film was released. In an interview in 1973, he explained the choice of the title, saying that the film is an artist's monologue, without any further commentary.[93]

If we return to the original script and notes prepared by Kubenko in 1966, and compare them with *Konfese*, filmed and produced by Hobl, some striking and important details seem to have been lost along the way. *Konfese* opens with the camera browsing over the catalogue of Chittaprosad's 1963 Hollar Gallery exhibition, followed by Danish and Czech publications such as *New Orient Bimonthly,* in which Chittaprosad's work was regularly reproduced and discussed. This printed material was all available in Prague. What follows are scenes from rural landscapes of Bengal, with natural settings, temples, decorated walls, and local people.[94] A transition is then created between rural India and the artist's room in Bombay, indicated by the puppets and masks that adorn the walls of his home, and shots of laundry being hung out and dried in the sun. We are reminded of Kubenko's short film proposal, and the note about the artist's domestic environment and the tropical surroundings, which has been followed quite faithfully here by Hobl. In the film, the camera then pans from almost frightening close-ups of individual puppet faces (Fig. 99), all filmed from a certain height in the room, to the artist sitting on the floor, filmed from above.

The camera view, directed at the artist from above, is somewhat irritating; it is only corrected when the camera is lowered to the level of the artist on the floor, who is now speaking to the person opposite at eye level. What the artist shows his interlocutor are the large pages of his work on

Fig. 99 Film still with details of puppet faces from *Konfese: indického grafika Čittaprasáda,* 1972, direction: Pavel Hobl. © Národní filmový archiv.

the history of India, the Ramayana, which he had been involved in for quite some time. While the artist is showing some of these pages, the camera focuses on the beautiful script that covers the two-column pages, and less on the images themselves. The narrator of the film follows along these pages, repeating, in Czech, the words of the artist, who says that this is his last job—transcribing the ancient Indian epic Ramayana.[95] Kubenko's approach to Chittaprosad could be viewed as attesting to the enormity of this historical task, which accompanied the artist for a number of years and ultimately remained unfinished.

During the several minutes of the scene with the artist on the floor, who talks to the camera about his Ramayana work, we see different angles of the artist's sunlit room, with a glimpse of his dog sleeping on the floor. While this scene was filmed with the artist speaking to the camera the entire time, we do not know if the Czech voice actor we hear is repeating any of Chittaprosad's actual monologue. A testimonial, a statement of one's principles, or a confession, as the artist may well have found, would have implied different parameters, such as hearing the artist's voice. While still filming the artist's hand as it moves across pages of his Ramayana

project, the voice of the Czech narrator fades out and is replaced with music, which accompanies a series of close-ups of the artist's work.

The documentary then shows scenes of parched landscapes, rural poverty, and malnourished men, women, and children, as well as fieldwork being done by hand, alternating with excerpts from drawings by Chittaprosad dedicated to precisely these themes. At this point, the camera returns to the artist's home, moving along the windows, zooming in on a shelf with some titles from his book collection, over to a view of the sleeping dog again, and back to a close-up of Chittaprosad, at which point the music stops and the narrator picks up again. Here, a transition to sounds of bullets and machine guns is introduced, using excerpts and detailed shots of individual works by the artist. The battle scenes are footage from the Liberation War in East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh in 1971. Accordingly, Chittaprosad shows some of the drawings that he made of the Liberation War, many of which, as Sunderason notes, have not been shown elsewhere.[96] As mentioned above, four works from the collection of these drawings were reproduced in *Nový Orient*.[97]

The film then continues with dramatic footage connected to the Liberation War, with people mourning their loved ones and those who have been killed, and to masses of young and old people receiving food in outdoor settings under precarious conditions. Some of Chittaprosad's drawings from the series *Angels without Fairy Tales* appear here, connecting visually to the faces of children being fed in the previous scene. Now the final scenes of the film unfold, in which outdoor shots of children in various situations—being washed at a well, or being breastfed by their mother—overlap thematically with images from Chittaprosad's work (Fig. 100, Fig. 101). The closing scene returns us to the artist's room. We see him sitting on a chair in his sunlit room, frail and aged, with a smile on his face. It is an image of the room which has already been described earlier (Fig. 84, Fig. 85). Chittaprosad turns sideways, talking to someone. The camera approaches him, and the Czech voice narrates:

> this essence of black and white with the possibility of quick and cheap reproduction, I consider to be the most effective means to communicate something to both educated and less learned audiences. Every artist must sooner or later consciously or unconsciously express his moral and political standpoint. Through my work, I claim allegiance to the tradition of moralists and political fighters. To save people is to save art itself. The artist's activity is an active denial of death.[98]

Fig. 100 Film still with Chittaprosad's work from *Konfese: indického grafika Čittaprasáda*, 1972, direction: Pavel Hobl. © Národní filmový archiv.

Fig. 101 Film still with Chittaprosad's work from *Konfese: indického grafika Čittaprasáda*, 1972, direction: Pavel Hobl. © Národní filmový archiv.

Fig. 102 Chittaprosad, *Call for Peace*. 1950s. Linocut on paper, 30.5 × 29.6 cm. Inv. no. 2481. Photo © National Gallery in Prague, 2019.

The film ends with two images, one of the artist's work *Call for Peace* (Fig. 102), and the other a close-up of him, with a haunting yet thoughtful look on his face that lingers in one's mind as a memory (Fig. 103).

As Krása said in his letter to Chittaprosad, the film was, indeed, "quite dramatic."[99] The inclusion of original newsreel material, combined with scenes from the artist's life, along with the message conveyed by much of his politically and socially engaged art, all contribute to this. The conferring on Hobl of the World Peace Council Prize in Leipzig for his film was undoubtedly linked to the content of the film, and to its title.

Hobl's production only partly followed Kubenko's script from 1966. Kubenko's emphasis on the artist and his social surroundings, along with

Fig. 103 Film still with a thoughtful artist from *Konfese: indického grafika Čittaprasáda*, 1972, direction: Pavel Hobl. © Národní filmový archiv.

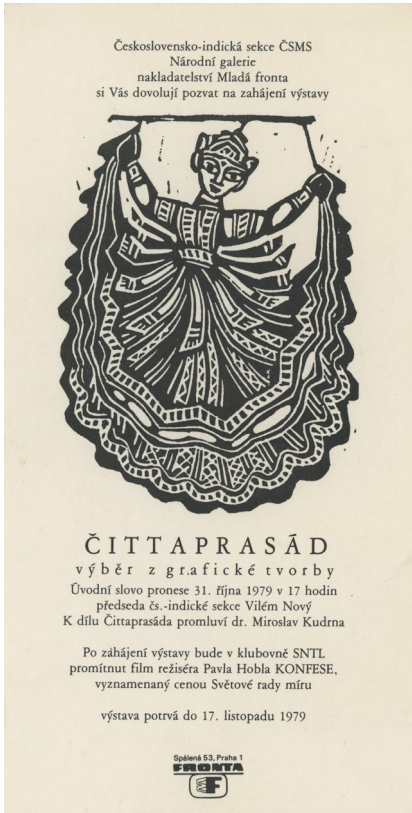
the inclusion of an improvised performance of Chittaprosad's puppets and the children from his neighbourhood, was almost entirely neglected. In the letter to Chittaprosad from 1972, we remember Krása saying how much he enjoyed hearing the artist's voice, together with noises from Kurla Road in the film studio in Prague.[100] In the end, the artist's voice, together with the noises from the street, were almost entirely cut out, save for a brief moment when we hear the artist's voice in Bengali, as identified by Sunderason.[101] Hobl's portrait of Chittaprosad is perhaps most distinctive and striking when the camera meets the artist in his room.[102] The moments of distance between the camera and the artist mentioned earlier could have been bridged with the artist's voice and the noises that were part of the reality of Ruby Terrace. Kubenko's suggestion of a "portrait of the artist,"[103] a topic with which he was most familiar, having already produced "portrait films about Slovak artists," together with "reportage films from the Biennial of Illustration [in] Bratislava,"[104] eventually gave way to a "dramatic" focus on political reality—the recent Liberation War in East Pakistan—which had not yet taken place when Kubenko wrote his short-film proposal in 1966.

Both Hobl's film *Konfese* and Kubenko's earlier script for the film bear Krása's signature, and can be traced back to his suggestion to produce a film about the artist Chittaprosad. Krása is named by both filmmakers as the consultant on the project. The artist's irritation at the film's title is understandable, since, as Hobl said in an interview, the shooting in the very shy artist's room only lasted for one hour.[105] It is therefore difficult to imagine that the artist would have made a statement or confession after meeting the filmmaker and the rest of the film team for such a brief period of time, unless he had been asked or expected to do so. From what we know, Chittaprosad never got to see the film. Krása's letter to Chittaprosad from June 1978 only mentions the intention to show the film in India.[106]

If one looks for the artist's confession, one will find it less in the film than in his many letters. As Sunderason rightly observes, the many letters he wrote to family members and close friends in India and abroad captured his "statement of principles."[107] An hour of filming in the artist's room and an hour of recording the artist's voice, which is then not heard in the film, are in fact diametrically opposed to many of the artist's principles. The World Peace Council award that Hobl received at the Leipzig documentary film festival had, like the work that Chittaprosad made for the World Peace Council before, almost no impact on the artist's life and career. In retrospect, it appears that his visibility on platforms and events associated with the Communist Party, significantly supported by his international friends, contributed to his continued neglect in India. This invisibility at home extended beyond the artist's lifetime.

5.5 A Symbolic Personal Friendship

Krása received the sad news about Chittaprosad's death from Erik Stinus in Denmark. Stinus wrote to Krása on the day the artist died, right after he received a telegram from Gouri, who had asked him to pass on the information to Krása.[108] Stinus, like Krása, was one of Chittaprosad's dearest and most loyal friends. He visited him frequently, and exhibited, published, and disseminated his works in parts of Scandinavia. Krása last saw Chittaprosad at the Nanawati Hospital in Bombay Santa Cruz, where he also met Gouri.[109] Krása remembers this when he writes to Gouri, just after he received the letter from Stinus saying that Chittaprosad had become "the symbol of my deep relationship to India."[110] Krása's



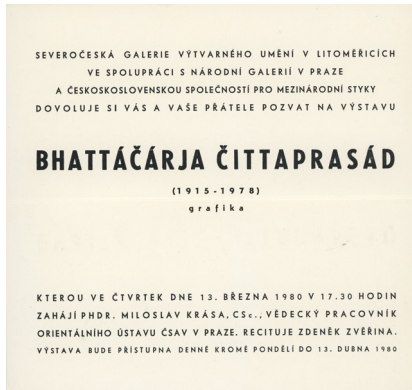
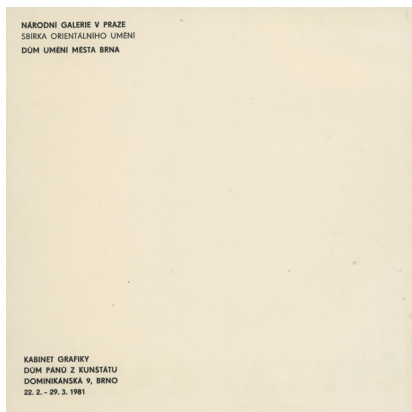


Fig. 105 Invitation card for the exhibition of Chittaprosad's work in Litoměřice. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

Fig. 104 Invitation card for the exhibition of Chittaprosad's work in Prague, at Mladá Fronta. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.



Figs. 106-107 Exhibition folder for the exhibition of Chittaprosad's work in Brno. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2025.

concern and affection for the artist was very personal and profound, and went far beyond what his political and cultural duties may have encompassed. He saw in the artist what others did not see—neither in India, nor perhaps in Czechoslovakia, where not everyone shared his enthusiasm for Chittaprosad and his work.[111] Accordingly, Krása announced in the letter to Gouri that he, together with Salaba, would organise posthumous exhibitions, not only in Prague, but also at other locations across Czechoslovakia.[112] The first of three of these exhibitions opened in October 1979 in Prague, at the publishing house Mladá Fronta (Fig. 104), followed by an exhibition in Litoměřice in March 1980 (Fig. 105), and a third one at Dům Umění in Brno, in February 1981 (Fig. 106, Fig. 107).

The invitation for the retrospective at Mladá Fronta (Fig. 104) is decorated with one of Chittaprosad's early linocuts, depicting details of folk dances. The opening also announces the screening of Pavel Hobl's film *Konfese*. The design of the Litoměřice exhibition invitation (Fig. 105) is much more streamlined, and completely omits any decorative elements. This spareness of design continued in the Brno exhibition catalogue (Fig. 106, Fig. 107). The works that were shown in the three posthumous exhibitions came from the collection of the NGP, and possibly also from private collections. Along with these exhibitions, Krása wrote an article about the artist, reflecting on what connected him to Czechoslovakia, and on his personal friendship with the Bengali artist of almost a quarter of a century, in the cultural monthly *Kulturní měsíčník*.[113]

In this article, Krása refers to Chittaprosad's Bengali roots as definitive of his work. He writes about the many facets of the work that had been shown in Prague, which was frequently discussed in cultural magazines. He also mentions the artist's Bengali poems, some of which were translated into Czech by Dušan Zbavitel, and which were still in the process of being translated.[114] Krása writes that he knew Chittaprosad's early work before he even met him. He writes that he absorbed them almost unconsciously and anonymously, along with his first impressions of India, which he experienced directly during the transition from colonialism to independence. He adds that to this day, nobody has yet been able to justly evaluate the artist's work.[115] Towards the end of the article, Krása writes about the many letters Chittaprosad wrote to his friends in Czechoslovakia, which he views as his confessions. These revealed much about how he saw the relationship between art and society, and expressed the artist's joy in actively partaking in this relationship.[116]

While Krása draws a symbolic connection between his own relationship with India and Chittaprosad's work, he acknowledges in this review that the artist's confessions were formulated in his letters, many of which he sent to his friends in Prague over the course of three decades. This comes almost as a belated concession to the artist, who, Krása maintains, has been unjustly sidelined and misunderstood. Krása's support for Chittaprosad, however, continued after the artist's death, through his correspondence with Gouri; the two exchanged letters for more than a decade.

Krása kept Gouri, whom he addressed in early letters as "My dear Shrimati Chatterjee" or "Dear Shrimati Gouri," informed about the development of the three posthumous exhibitions in Czechoslovakia. During the course of the preparations, he asked her about "Chitta's poem RIKSHAWALA written in Calcutta on Sept. 30, 1978," which he wanted to have translated into Czech so that it could be recited during the inauguration ceremony.[117] While Krása already knew Erik Stinus' English translation of the poem, he still preferred to have the Czech version translated directly from the original Bengali, even, as he adds, if Chittaprosad wrote an English version as well.[118] Translation from original languages was a highly prized and practised skill in Prague, which supported what Peter Kalliney has called "different patterns of literary traffic" during the "Cold War's diplomatic initiatives."[119]

Almost simultaneous with that request, Krása wrote about the delay of the exhibition planned for Brno, adding that he and Salaba were together, discussing "Citta's lino-cuts and paintings as we used to do in his room in the Andheri Road."[120] He continued by saying that Srimati Kamath had informed him that the building where Chittaprosad lived had been destroyed, and was currently being replaced by a large new building.[121] Gouri responds to these letters, thanking Krása and Salaba, emphasising that both had been a constant presence in her brother's letters to her and their mother.

In a long letter from May 6, 1980, she talks about her intention to form a trust to protect Chittaprosad's work, and asks if she may include both of them as trustees. She also says that she wants to hand over "all the puppets and their accessories to Mr. Salaba," and asks Krása to discuss this possibility with his friend.[122] Shortly after, on July 4, Krása responds to this by expressing both his and Salaba's conviction that Chittaprosad's work was created for India, and should therefore remain in the country.

However, he adds, he would think it over, and asks Gouri to send an inventory list, so that he could get an idea of the number of works of art and objects she is talking about.[123] In another letter from Krása to Gouri, he takes up the issue, and suggests that a possible sales exhibition in Calcutta could be arranged under the auspices of "the Society,"[124] reiterating that any discussion of possible sales to the NGP should include a detailed list with photographs of the works. At this point, Gouri Chatterjee was facing a legal battle over the artist's possessions, during which much of his inventory was locked up and left to decay. Throughout the 1980s, there appear to have been no letters exchanged between the two. Finally, in May 1992, Gouri writes to Krása, saying that she does not understand the reason for the long silence on his part.[125]

> That curse of the case caused a lot of misunderstanding and doubt about me, among those who knew Chittaprosad. I was terribly hurt and promised to remain quiet until the truth is revealed. By the Grace of God, it has been proved that all the allegations brought against me were nothing but sheer falsehood. The opponent's purpose was to defy Chittaprosad's last Will and possess all his works. Even some of our common friends joined with the plea. For a long period of ten years I had to fight alone to save Chittaprosad's creation. Save and except Erik Stinus from Denmark, none enquired about the case, no one kept any contact with me.[126]

The long silence is explained by Krása as

> [a] rather sad silence on the unexpected and most unfortunate case between Chittaprasad's two sisters, and, still more perhaps, over the impossibility and impotence to change the inevitable course of things. It was not a question of doubting anybody, but merely of accepting the painful reality and one's total helplessness. I do understand your feelings, after your truth has been publicly revealed, and wish you that the Chitta Bharati be a source of deep and permanent satisfaction to you and your friends as a dignified memento of Chitta's legacy and message.[127]

In the same letter Krása tells Gouri that, due to his advanced age, he had donated all the cuttings, photographs, books, and other documentation in his possession to the Oriental Art Collection of the NGP.[128] This is how the NGP came to hold a substantial collection of that which forms the Krása fund. Together with the collection of thirty-eight works on paper,

purchased in 1964, the NGP was the first museum to have acquired Chittaprosad's work. Krása's involvement, no doubt, played a substantial role in this acquisition.

Despite his "immobile mobility," Chittaprosad managed to build a transnational network that, albeit with meagre financial results, enabled him to participate in some of the Cold War art worlds that we have already encountered in this book. It may have been particularly irritating for some protagonists of the emerging Indian art world that an artist working from his single room on the periphery of Bombay was receiving international attention. The purchase of a large collection of his work by the NGP, and the fact that his work was shown in international exhibitions and regularly published internationally, must have been known to parts of this Indian art world. As a dedicated and energetic 'cultural networker,' Krása must certainly have spoken about this with his large network of Indian artist friends. His arrangements for the filmmaker Kubenko to visit the artist, and Kubenko's apparent discussions about this visit with the artist Bal Chhabda,[129] attest to this. Moreover, the influential writer, philosopher, cultural critic, and art patron Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004), with whom both Krása and Hájek were frequently in conversation, published some of Chittaprosad's work in 1954, and wrote one of the rare texts about him in India.[130] Despite the neglect of Chittaprosad at home, however, he participated in the Cold War art worlds not only through the activity of the 'imagination,' but also through intellectual activity, characterised above all by the many and frequent visits to his home by international protagonists, and by the many and often very long exchanges of letters. In this way, through his art practice and his ideas, Chittaprosad gained access to the Cold War art worlds located in Central Europe from his peripheral location on the outskirts of Bombay—his 'virtual cosmopolis.' In the same way that Partha Mitter's "colonial intelligentsia negotiated their transaction with modernity by means of virtual cosmopolitanism,"[131] Chittaprosad, through his absent presence, and due to his exclusion by the Indian art world, negotiated his participation in wider Cold War art worlds through "immobile mobility."

Chapter 6
Conclusion

The six chapters of this book draw on the concept of a migratory aesthetics, giving it form and depth by exploring key moments in an art history that cannot be adequately captured by a presumed past of unitary homogeneity. It is, therefore, a history that differs from a history focused on Western European and North American dominance. With a focus, rather, on mobility, artistic exchange, cultural policies, and diplomacy between the socialist world of East/Central Europe and South Asia, it contributes to an understanding that such art histories and the art worlds they constituted cannot be approached through what art historian Monica Juneja has called "a facile globalism."[1] The study of transcultural and transnational exchanges between South Asian art and artists and Czechoslovakia during the Cold War, and the scholarly attention paid to socialist internationalism, represent an important contribution to existing scholarship on critical global art history.

By examining socialist internationalism in the post-war period, I see my work as a contribution to a scepticism about overarching global models; but it is also an attempt to decentralise and horizontalise discourses of internationalism beyond North Atlantic narratives. I draw upon Piotr Piotrowski's notion of horizontality, which, as art historian Beáta Hock contends, commits itself to the contextualisation of the periphery.[2] Here, Chen Kuan-Hsing's idea of "Asia as Method,"[3] as a way of nuancing discourses on internationalism and moving them towards socialist internationalisms, is also relevant. The transnational negotiations of the time, however, which largely took place on a political and diplomatic level, cannot be separated from the interpersonal relationships between the artists and individual protagonists that *Cold War Art Worlds* uncovers.

Just as cultural mobility is the "enabling condition" of culture, I hope to remind the reader, as well, of how, echoing Stephen Greenblatt's thinking, culture emerges through processes of interaction.[4] The methods and work that underpin this book represent archival work under often difficult transnational conditions and therefore take dissonances into account.[5] Since some of the archives I have worked with are uncatalogued, I have

learned that it can be relevant to return to them with new search mechanisms, sometimes leading to results that one would not initially have thought possible. My ongoing research, therefore, continues to unearth further data that supports my thinking in relation to the archives. As such, these investigations are an ongoing constituent element in support of one of the salient arguments of *Cold War Art Worlds*—that art worlds and migratory aesthetics interact with, and mutually constitute, each other.

In the introduction to this study, Prague, as the site of the first edition of the World Youth Festival in August 1947, represents a locus of new possibilities for artists from across the decolonising world. It is not my intention to position Prague as a central place in the standard histories of modernism. Nor is it my aim to offer an alternative or addition to the centralised histories of European and American modernisms.[6] As a place at a certain remove from Western art worlds and their modernisms, I view Prague, with its opportunities for studying, exhibiting, discussing, and making art, as setting an example for critical global art history, urging it to decentre discourses about internationalism focused on the so-called 'Free World.'

The prelude to my thesis, that South Asian modern artists co-produced the art world that emerged in Prague at the beginning of the Cold War, highlights Shakir Ali's long journey across colony, empire, and post-war Europe. His experience of the transition from colony to post-colony, at the World Youth Festival in Prague, and his subsequent return to Prague as an art student, are emblematic of the experiences of the artists I examine. The work of these artists must therefore be considered in the context of debates about the emerging nations to which they belong, and the mobility and transnational engagement in which they were entangled during their travels. Aesthetic and political debates, often conducted in intense dialogue with interlocutors and other artists at home and abroad, were an essential part of what constitutes the art worlds of the Cold War. Viewing the Prague art school as a site of transcultural entanglement, in the way Tiampo and Bruchet, following Said, position the Slade School of Fine Art as a site of polyphonic production,[7] offers a way for us to read the postcolonial and Central European margins into the centres and their narratives, and back again.

The list of South Asian artists who applied to study in Prague is long, and the material I have found is fragmented.[8] Unlike Shakir Ali, who moved from London to Prague, numerous students applied from South

Asia, and subsequently travelled to Czechoslovakia in the late 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s to study film and art at various institutions in Prague. Curator Tereza Stejskalová has researched two filmmakers: Krishna Viswanath from India, and Piyasiri Gunaratna from Ceylon/Sri Lanka. The results were presented in the framework of an exhibition in Bratislava and Prague and in a publication.[9] Stejskalová focused on film students from the Third World, and her primary research was carried out in the uncatalogued archives of the University of 17 November in Prague. She was able to retrieve important data on film productions, but also on the racism that students of colour were exposed to in Czechoslovakia. What she reveals very clearly is the prevalence of racism, despite the supposed incompatibility of racism and socialism.[10]

Nevertheless, artists from many decolonised countries applied for scholarship programmes. In a report written by the Department of Foreign Students, which was produced on request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Czechoslovak Embassy in New Delhi in February 1961, a total of twenty-six scholarship holders from India are listed.[11] These students appear to have come to Prague either as postgraduate students, or as students who were enrolled in Master's or doctoral programmes in Prague. Included in the list of students are the writer Nirmal Verma and Bakul Ghosh. The latter came to Czechoslovakia for medical studies in 1959, where she met Nirmal Verma. The two got married in Prague. The art students listed in the report were all male, and they came to Prague for postgraduate studies.

6.1 Indian Art Students in Prague

Precisely because the information retrieved from archives is often sketchy, I will focus here on three artists whose sojourns in Prague can be factually documented. Pramod Pati (1932–1975) came to Prague to study puppetry; Ajit Kumar Chakravarty (1930–2005), alternatively spelled as Chakraborty studied sculpture and graphic art; and Bishamber Khanna (1930–1999) studied graphic art. All three came to Prague in 1958. There are no records of personal or professional contacts between them, although they were in Prague at the same time.

Pramod Pati is considered as one of post-independence India's most original voices in documentary filmmaking and animation. The fact that he

studied with pioneering puppet animator Jiří Trnka (1912–1969) in Prague is generally acknowledged.[12] Pati is often referred to as "an eccentric Indian filmmaker"[13] of the 1960s, whose role in leading the animation unit at the Films Division of India has been partially studied.[14] Pati's application process for a scholarship with the Government of India, Ministry of Education & Scientific Research (Scholarship Division), which was sent to Prague, began on December 21, 1957. In the three-page application form that survives in Prague, we gather that when Pati went to Prague, he arrived with a good amount of education and practical experience. When asked whether he had done any research or work, he replied that he had produced, directed, and overseen the editing process of fourteen documentary films for his state government, which we gather to be Orissa.[15] From this application form, we also learn that Pati had not yet had the chance to travel abroad, but that he was keen on being offered the opportunity.[16]

Pati was, as he stated, hoping to be able to study film production techniques and methods in the West.[17] In his application, he does not name the institution to which he wishes to gain admission; however, he states that once he returns to India, he will be able to produce more, and better, documentary films.[18] A report about Indian students enrolled in Czechoslovakia at around that time, compiled by the Department of Foreign Students, contains information about students' records, as well as their grades.[19] This is how we know that Pramod Pati came to Czechoslovakia on March 29, 1958. After he arrived, he is said to have achieved good results for approximately five months, at the Department of Puppetry and at the Faculty of Theatre of the Academy of Performing Arts (DAMU). He worked, while simultaneously studying, in the Film Department at the Studio of Short Film (FAMU). For approximately four months, he was an intern at the puppetry studio of Jiří Trnka, who was his supervisor. The results of his academic work, a report states, were consistently very good, as he was particularly industrious and diligent.[20] His Czechoslovak exchange year ended with the 1959/60 academic year.

In a further report from the Ministry, we learn that Pati daily attended the puppetry department, and joined seminars as well as practical lessons. Eva Vodičková is said to have acted as an interpreter for him there.[21] Once a week, Pati came to FAMU, where he worked under the supervision of Dean Šulc. He also attended film screenings, frequented the cartoon studio, and the puppetry studio (Trnka's). Doc. Kučera and student-alumnus Skalenakis helped him with translations and theory (Kučera), and

interpreting (Skalenakis). He was very satisfied. He stayed at the Morava Hotel in Prague XII. From September, he would begin his studies under Trnka at FAMU.[22] No work of Pati survives in Prague.

Ajit Kumar Chakravarty was born in Chittagong, which became part of East Pakistan after partition. Before going to Czechoslovakia, he studied at the Government College of Art and Craft in Calcutta beginning in 1948, and graduated in 1954, where he studied with the sculptor Pradosh Das Gupta. When he returned to India after his studies in Prague, he continued to work at Kala Bhawan, Visva Bharati in Santiniketan.[23] Chakravarty came to Czechoslovakia on March 29, 1958, the same day as Pramod Pati. He began to study at the Academy of Arts, Architecture & Design (UMPRUM), in the studio of Jan Kavan. His focus was on sculpture. He worked primarily on realistic representations of the Buddha, on female nudes, heads of women, and the dove of peace; but he also worked in the graphics department. The works made there were exhibited at the Academy, where they received high acclaim.[24] He is also said to have worked with wood, and is generally praised as one of the best students at VŠUP (UMPRUM). In consequence, a request was made to prolong his studies for one year. He thus studied in Prague from 1958 until 1961. In 1961, he had an exhibition at the Old Town Hall in Prague, where four works on paper and two sculptures were purchased by the NGP.[25]

On a tour of Prague art schools, Hájek wrote an article titled "Two Indian Artists in Prague."[26] During the tour, he saw the work of art students from countries such as China, Korea, Vietnam, India, Iran, and Egypt. In his article, he points to the many instances in art history in which artists have crossed borders for travel and for work.[27] Hájek claims that the uniqueness of Chakravarty's sculpture lay in its ability to hark back to classical works in India, from Bharhut to Konarak, while at the same time drawing from pre-Columbian sculpture, as well as from contemporaries such as Constantin Brâncuși (1876–1957), Jan Štursa (1880–1925), and Otto Guttfreund (1889–1927). What he admires in Chakravarty is his openness to experimenting with material, which he views as useful with respect to the many construction projects of new towns in India.[28]

In a postcard to Krása from Florence, dated August 26, 1961, Chakravarty seems to send his farewell wishes to Prague, with a note saying that he has travelled to Paris and Venice. In the same postcard, he also says that he

Fig. 108 Ajit Chakravarty, *Untitled*. Sand-limestone, ca. 160 × 100 × 100 cm, St. Margarethen, 1961. Photograph Simone Wille, 2018. Courtesy Symposion Europäischer Bildhauer (SEB).

has finished his work in Austria, and that photographs of it would be sent to Prague from Calcutta. He further mentions that he would like to hear Krása's opinion about this work. He adds that he thinks that the best education an artist can get is in the galleries, and while travelling.[29] Chakravarty's purpose for travelling to Austria was to attend the third European Sculpture Symposium in St Margarethen, southeast of Vienna.[30] The Sculpture Symposium had been established in 1959, to great acclaim, inspiring similar symposia around the world. The gatherings in St Margarethen allowed artists to work collectively with large-format stone, in the company of international artists, and with the help of the quarry's masons.

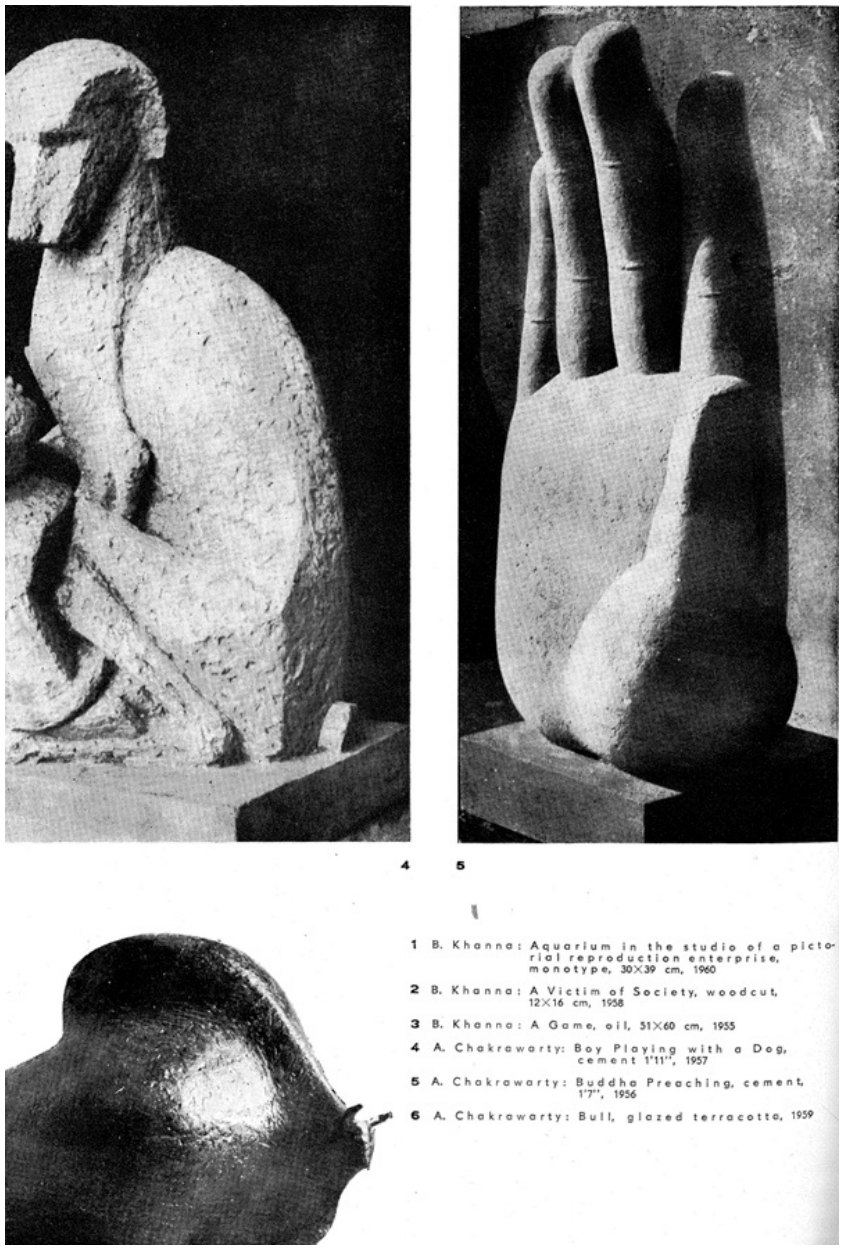
The organisers of the Sculpture Symposium in St Margarethen were not pleased with Chakravarty's output. They complained about the realist work (Fig. 108), for which the artist had already prepared a model prior to coming to Austria. As one of the driving forces of the symposium, artist Karl Prantl (1923–2010) was keen on positioning the initiative as a platform for non-figurative works, in line with the natural outdoor setting of the symposium in the Roman quarry, and against the backdrop of the aesthetic and political battles of the Cold War, in which the contested terrain of the fine arts became "the real."[31] One of the driving forces behind the Sculpture Symposium was Karl Prantl's urge to take action

as artists, erecting signs of protest along the lines of the construction of the Iron Curtain. This had been taking place near the location of the symposium, at the Hungarian border. In this context, the dissatisfaction with Chakravarty's work may be understandable. It is unclear why Ajit Chakravarty had received an invitation to the Sculpture Symposium in the first place. In an unpublished PhD dissertation about art symposia in the 1960s, Marcel Fišer speculates about why Chakravarty was sent to Austria. He believes that representatives of the Union of Czechoslovak Fine Artists were afraid of sending Czech artists across the Iron Curtain, which is why they suggested Chakravarty.[32]

Chakravarty's sculpture in St Margarethen (Fig. 108) is made of two blocks of stone: a rectangular base, on top of which sits a figure with its legs drawn up close to its body. Apart from the size, the work is continuous with the sculptures and prints that he made while in Prague (Fig. 109), seen here reproduced along with Hájek's article for *New Orient Bimonthy*.[33] The anatomical features, which are reduced to a compact block in Fig. 108, links the formal aspect of the work with works by Brâncuși, such as *Le baiser* from 1907/08, as well as with work such as André Derrain's *Homme accroupi*, from 1907. The crouching posture, the subordination of the human body into the form of a block, can further be linked with pre-Columbian sculptures, a connection that Hájek had already mentioned in his article on Chakravarty. The upright sitting posture, however, is also reminiscent of the statue-type of the Egyptian cube stool, in its strongly reduced outline of the human figure.[34]

The few works that I was able to view from the period after Chakravarty returned to India hardly allows me to make a statement about his sculptural output after leaving Prague. From some letters that Chakravarty and Krása exchanged long after the artist returned to India, one gathers that he must have spoken and written Czech quite fluently. Krása commented on this in one of his letters.[35] In a letter from 1987, Krása responds to Chakravarty's request for black and white reproductions of all André Derrain's works in the collection of the NGP. He says that he passed on this request to the director of the NGP, J. Kotalík.[36] Chakravarty's ongoing interest in Derrain's work may well mean that he began exploring it while in Prague.

Bishamber Khanna was born in 1930 in Peshawar, and educated in Lahore.[37] After the partition, he moved to Delhi, where he received training in Fine Arts at the Delhi Polytechnic, from 1949 until 1954. He applied



4 5

1 B. Khanna: Aquarium in the studio of a pictorial reproduction enterprise, monotype, 30×39 cm, 1960

2 B. Khanna: A Victim of Society, woodcut, 12×16 cm, 1958

3 B. Khanna: A Game, oil, 51×60 cm, 1955

4 A. Chakrawarty: Boy Playing with a Dog, cement 1'11", 1957

5 A. Chakrawarty: Buddha Preaching, cement, 1'7", 1956

6 A. Chakrawarty: Bull, glazed terracotta, 1959

Fig. 109 Works by Ajit Chakravarty, reproduced in New Orient Bimonthly, no. 5, vol. 1, 1960.

Fig. 110 Bishamber Khanna, *Thun Street in Prague*, 1960. Oil on canvas, 21 × 30 cm. Seen here reproduced in New Orient Bimonthly, no. 5, vol. 1, 1960.

to take part in painting and graphic courses at the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU) in Prague. In his application form, he states that he travelled to Afghanistan in 1953, that he speaks English, and that he has a working knowledge of German.[38] As a reference, he lists B. C. Sanyal, well known to many in the Prague circle.[39] According to the university card from the AVU, Khanna began his studies there on November 21, 1958, under the painter Vladimír Pukl (1896–1970), and the graphic illustrator Vladimír Silovsky (1891–1974). He had a solo exhibition in Prague at Hollar Hall in 1960, where paintings, drawings, and prints were shown.[40] According to Hájek, he also attended courses of "printing and reproduction techniques in the pictorial reproduction departments of our printing works."[41] With regard to Khanna's artistic work in Prague, Hájek notes that he sees significant progress through the various printing techniques, which in his opinion required the artist to devote himself to technicalities, and therefore relegate his visual memory to the background.[42] The NGP acquired four of his works on paper. Hájek regarded the work of this artist as "proof that he is successively supplementing his range of subjects from the native Indian environment with motifs from the Prague artistic mileu [...]," and

proves this understanding with the reproduction of a work by the artist, the motif of which refers to Thunovská Street in Prague. This 350 meter street in Prague's old town is known for its preserved medieval character and is therefore a popular motif (Fig. 110).

The Embassy of the Czechoslovak Republic in New Delhi planned to exhibit the work of the three artists, Pati, Chakravarty, and Khanna, after their return to India, and therefore received information about them from Prague. The Ministry of Education and Culture also prepared an assessment about the three scholarship holders, from which we derive some information about how they were looked after in Prague. Accordingly, they each received six Czech language lessons weekly, and attended the theatre nine times, where they were seated in the lodge of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Employees from the Ministry of Education and Culture and from the Ministry of Foreign Trade looked after them, and gave them background information about what was being shown in the theatre.[43]

What is evident from Pati and Khanna's scholarship application is that they viewed their training in Prague, and the opportunity to study in the West and in Europe, as useful for enhancing their prospects back in India.[44] For these artists, Czechoslovakia seemed to be part of Europe, rather than a regional Central European country. Interestingly, however, there is no record of any contact between these Indian artists while in Prague. Moreover, the fact that Hájek interacted quite frequently with Khanna and Chakravarty, but not with Pati, gives us the impression that different interest groups may have been at play. In general, neither Hájek nor Krása were interested in international students at DAMU or FAMU. Given Pramod Pati's visibility in the Indian art world, especially after his return from Prague, it is surprising that he seemed to receive little attention during his stay in Prague.

One may conclude that the arrival of Indian/South Asian art students in Czechoslovakia was part of an official exchange programme and cultural agenda between the countries involved. Compared to the many art students who went to study in London, Paris, or New York, the experience of a selected few of living, studying, and working in East/Central Europe for a period of time was often characterised by an experimental approach to traditional art, techniques, and new media.[45] There may also have been less pressure to conform to academic dictates or to compete with fellow scholarship holders. In the case of Pati, Chakravarty, and Khanna, it is

clear that they opted to study art techniques and media that were unavailable to them at home, rather than studying painting. This gave them an opportunity to try out technical possibilities, and therefore to experiment with form more freely.

Artist Biren De's interaction with Prague does not fall within the framework of the art school. It was, however, based on an official invitation for an artist residency. This began with a letter he wrote to Miloslav Krása from the Soviet Union in 1971, where he announced his visit to Czechoslovakia.[46] In this letter, the artist proposed to talk to an interested audience in Prague on the subject of twentieth-century Indian art, and mentioned that he would be bringing a collection of slides.[47] Later, in 1975, he received an artist residency through the Czechoslovak Ministry of Culture, which enabled him to spend around six months in Prague. He worked in the studio of the artist Hermína Melicharová on Dlouhá Street next to the Old Town Square, where he produced some of his iconic paintings with lotus flowers and mandalas, three of which were purchased by the NGP.[48] In an article some years later by Hana Knížková about the 1979 India exhibition in Prague, the author refers to Biren De and his stay in Prague from 1975.[49] The title of the three paintings which the NGP acquired are a reference to his stay in Prague: *PRAGUE—May 1975*; *PRAGUE—May-June 1975*; and *PRAGUE—June-August 1975*.[50] The titles of these works remind us of the series of drawings by M. F. Husain, discussed in detail in Chapter 4, which this artist also referenced with date and place. This allows us to presume that for Biren De, as for other artists who came to Prague as official guests of the government, the requirement was to produce work while in Czechoslovakia. According to personal accounts by Helena Honcoopová, who worked with the Collection of Asian Art at the NGP together with Lubor Hájek, Biren De's working process was very slow and he never left the studio to sketch *en plein air*.[51] While Biren De's mostly large-scale works unfold a visual language that is characterised by tantric symbols and strong colours, they radiate a suggestive power for which he became known as a 'neo-Tantric' painter, beginning in the 1960s,[52] a classification he himself rejected.[53] The works that De created in the borrowed studio of Melicharová—whose work is included in Miloslav Krása's book *Looking Towards India*, discussed in the introduction—bear little resemblance to the immediate environment, apart from the titles. Working in the studio seemed to offer the artist a way of devoting himself to his work at a certain distance from his immediate surroundings.

Biren De's interaction with the audience in Prague, however, was tied to his role as an official cultural delegate of India. Talking about Indian art and culture was also a way to enter into dialogue and contact with the local audience. We recall Babesh Chandra Sanyal's account of his and Hari Ambadas Gade's journey in 1956, and how they became ambassadors, or "cultural brokers," as they introduced Indian art to audiences across East/Central Europe.[54] I therefore argue that the South Asian artists mentioned in this study shaped the art worlds of the Cold War through interaction with each other, and with their audiences in Prague.

An important feature of these art worlds in general, and the art world in Prague in particular, was participation across nations, geopolitical divides, ideologies, and cultures. The works of the artists mentioned above are evidence that the art world in Prague was open to different kinds and modes of participation. In this way, various kinds of trans-culturally informed contacts were forged, from social encounters and friendships to productive teamwork, exchange, and dialogue. Together with the expanded possibilities provided by cultural mobility, these are the conceptual structures underlying the "geographies" of the art worlds of the Cold War.[55] In general, it can be said that these artists' lives and careers were informed by processes enabled by mobility. Consequently, they contributed to the art worlds that they accessed, but they also developed an understanding and a vision of modernism that was not informed by one single place, nation, ideology, or political block. Rather, their vision emerged from the relationships they eventually were able to establish between these places.[56]

The two Indologists, Miloslav Krása and Lubor Hájek, played a decisive role in facilitating artistic interactions with Prague. Hardly any report on encounters, exchanges, acquisitions, and exhibitions is complete without a fitting tribute to Krása and Hájek. Their common interest in the art and artists from South Asia, and their serious and discursive engagement with modern art from the region, is emphasised throughout the narrative of this book. Zdenka Klimtová also saw these two individuals as the main protagonists responsible for artistic contact and exchange with India, in particular.[57] As if to consolidate Prague's role as a central venue for the development and appreciation of Indian and South Asian art, their involvement is visible in almost all areas of cultural exchange and cultural production.

6.2 Czechoslovak Engagement with India through the Camera Lens

Miloslav Krása, in particular, but to some extent Lubor Hájek as well, was instrumental in encouraging a Czechoslovak engagement with India through the camera lens. In this way, their intellectual engagement, together with their role as "cultural brokers,"[58] takes on an expanded role. The circumstances of the production of Czechoslovak films, together with the expertise of the people involved and the subsequent dissemination of the material, therefore contribute a further layer of complexity to the narrative of my book, and shift the narrative gaze to the camera.

Mass media, such as film, played a central role in the project of socialist globalisation, and in the struggle of the great powers for influence in the decolonising world. By taking avant-garde documentary film into account as a tool and a cultural form addressing Cold War cultural relations, I will explore the capacity of the medium to address an experience of post-war modernism that extends beyond national affiliations and ideologies. Focusing on *Moderní indická maliari*/*Modern Indian Painters*, a short film about four Indian modernist artists by Vlado Kubenko (1924–1993) from 1967, I will analyse aesthetic form, technique, and narrative, and examine, as well, the politics and people involved in the production of the film. The film is highly experimental, and projects an avant-garde view of Indian modernism through the lens of a Czechoslovak filmmaker.

6.2.1 Filmic Documentation about Cultural Exchange

Vlado Kubenko, the Bratislava-based filmmaker, made a series of films reflecting his interest in cultural history and art, not only from Czechoslovakia, but from distant lands more generally. He connected this interest with an opportunity to travel. In 1958, he made a documentary film about a Cambodian delegation visiting Bratislava. This was followed in 1959 by a series of films set in Cambodia: *Bajon*, *Den v Phnom Phen*, *Angkorvat*, and *Usmevy Angkor*. In 1966 he accompanied members of the Pantomime Theatre of Bratislava on a tour through India, filming some of their performances and parts of their journey. The result, the black-and-white *Features of India* (*Črty z Indie*), was made in cooperation with Miloslav Krása, who, together with Lubor Hájek, also appeared in the film credits in some of Kubenko's productions in Cambodia.[59]

Features of India was shot at locations across cities such as Bombay, New Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, and Hyderabad, which allowed Kubenko to get to know some of the cultural landscapes of India in the 1960s.[60] Alexander Strelinger (1934–2022), who was the cameraman in *Features of India*, vividly remembers the journey to and across India, when he reminisces about some of the many and unexpected pitfalls that the crew encountered. Leaving Prague in November when it was minus two degrees, he recounts how their arrival to a temperature of more than thirty degrees in Bombay was a sobering shock for the entire film crew.[61]

> We were shooting on a classic thirty-five, which meant a twenty-pound camera with a full cassette, plus some 500–600 pounds of film stock. There were two of us for everything, the director and myself. So, we were transporting amazingly heavy crates, with the material, with the camera, with the tripod, with the batteries, which themselves weighed five to six kilos, all in that muggy, humid Indian weather, so it was extremely physically demanding, but really incredible.[62]

Another "joke,"[63] as Strelinger put it, was the language barrier. Neither one of the Czechoslovak crew knew sufficient English for communication. Kubenko spoke French, and Strelinger's basic English was not very helpful.[64] Strelinger says that the journey had the character of a kind of cultural exchange, which meant that the Indian side would send a "zither player or some orchestra," and in return the Czechoslovak side would send "a pantomime," for which documentation was needed.[65]

During this trip to India, through the initiative of Krása, Kubenko met with some artists in Bombay. This led to the making of the short film about four "modern Indian painters," *Moderní indickí maliari*. Kubenko already had a reputation for making films about artists. In Czechoslovakia, Kubenko was considered an "arts-film director," whose work on individual Czechoslovak artists and film reviews about the Biennial of Illustrations in Bratislava featured regularly at the Arsfilm Festival in Kroměříž, East Moravia.[66] The Arsfilm Festival was established in 1964 as a national platform featuring short documentary films about art. The focus was on single works of art, art history, and artistic movements, as well as on the promotion and restoration of local art, architecture, and culture.[67] The film festival thereby corresponded to the communist ideology, in which principles of folk culture and folk tradition were understood to be important pillars of a classless society.[68] A fundamental tenet of the film

festival was that the education of a classless society should be carried out by means of art.[69]

6.2.2 *Moderní indická maliari* (1967)

Krása's involvement in setting up meetings between Kubenko and Indian artists during the filmmaker's journey to India in 1966 precipitated the making of *Moderní indická maliari*. Bal Chhabda (1923–2013), the artist, art gallerist, and filmmaker, was an integral member of the post-independence art community of Bombay, not least through his involvement in opening his Gallery '59 in 1958. Chhabda's gallery was located at the Bhulabhai Desai Institute, a multi-disciplinary space for contemporary art, near the Czechoslovak General Consulate. Although the gallery only operated for one year, its mission—to show modern art and to encourage collecting—contributed to the Bombay art scene, in which many artists were struggling to make ends meet at the time. Chhabda's own living situation was quite opulent. He lived in a newly built high-rise apartment on the seventh floor, where he regularly hosted his artist friends, albeit primarily male ones, as cultural anthropologist Karin Zitzewitz recounts.[70] A scene from Kubenko's film about the four Indian artists gives an impression of Chhabda's spacious apartment (Fig. 111), referred to as "Seventh Heaven" by his friends,[71] from which one had a spectacular view of the surrounding houses of the metropolis (Fig. 111).

Kubenko's meeting with Chhabda over dinner at his home was also connected with the Indian artist's interest in filmmaking in general, and in exploring the ways in which a transnational collaboration could be arranged. Chhabda expressed interest in this, and was able to provide theoretical and practical help for the visiting film crews, hoping, as he said, to get funds from the Ministry. For this reason, he asked Kubenko and the Czechoslovak film crew to provide him with a preliminary budget and a project idea.[72] Various handwritten notes from Vlado Kubenko's personal archive reveal that the filmmaker was also in touch with M. F. Husain and Ram Kumar in New Delhi, from whom he wished to gain an overview of the contemporary art scene in India.

Thus, in a series of short film proposals for the film on modern Indian painting, Kubenko sketches out a framework for the film project. When he states that India is "nowadays one of the most interesting places in Asia, as far as contemporary art development is concerned,"[73] he positions himself

Fig. 111 Film still from *Moderní indická maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

Fig. 112 Film still from *Moderní indická maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

as a connoisseur of contemporary art in Asia and in India. He carries this self-confidence into his proposal, in which he further states that there are many painting schools in India that either adhere to historical painting traditions, or oppose them. These schools are represented by significant artistic personalities, the quality of whose work was often highly regarded, and who enjoyed international reputations.[74]

In terms of logistics and timing for the film project, the filmmaker insisted that it would be easy to connect with individual artists, since most of them lived either in Bombay or New Delhi. The short film also intended to introduce a representative sampling of contemporary works of art.[75] The film, the proposal further states, would feature scenes at artists' studios, exhibition venues, and art schools, in order to convey the atmosphere of artists' lives.[76] While European sources and local aesthetics would be explored, the film intended to show how abstract art could be understood to be inspired by the local Indian milieu.[77] Artists M. F. Husain and Ram Kumar were proposed as the main contacts for the film. They would help to establish further connections with artists in Delhi, such as Krishen Khanna (born 1925); Krishna Shamrao Kulkarni (1916*/1918–1994), founder of the cultural organisation Triveni Kala Sangam in New Delhi in 1948; Jagdish Swaminathan (1928–1994); and Satish Gujral (1925–2020). Extra scenes with sculptures by the artist Babesh Chandra Sanyal were planned to be shot either at the academy grounds, or at his studio.[78] For Bombay, the proposal continued, Husain would prepare to brief Dr Menon, director of the Bhulabhai Desai Institute, from which other artists, such as Vasudeo Santu Gaitonde (1924–2001) and Bal Chhabda, could easily be contacted.[79]

From these suggestions, we may conclude that Kubenko had done his homework and researched the contemporary art scene in India. The copies of various articles on contemporary Indian art, as well as entire issues of *Nový Orient* on this topic found in the personal archive of the filmmaker, suggest that Krása himself probably provided this information. The choice of artists Kubenko considered for the film also suggests that the filmmaker's interests lay in artists whose formal language moved towards abstraction.

In the end, however, the film became a portrait of four artists: Bal Chhabda, Maqbool Fida Husain, Mohan (Manmohan) Balkrishna Samant (1924–2004), and Tyeb Mehta (1925–2009). Their work is in many ways representative of Indian art of the 1960s—experimental in terms of style, technique, colour, and material. The way in which the filmmaker portrayed

them collectively, as artists "pertaining to the avant-garde movement,"[80] suggests an approach to Indian art that is consistent with this view, which is reinforced by the camera's gaze and the choice of local shots.

The film opens with a shot of the view from Bal Chhabda's apartment in Bombay (Fig. 112). We then see the artist opening the door to his apartment, allowing the camera to access a space in which the artist's works are displayed on an easel and on the wall (Fig. 113). These first scenes are accompanied by very quick and upbeat orchestral sounds. Then follow the opening credits, written on a grid-like canvas, with the artists' names scripted out with Czech diacritics, as well as in the artists' respective handwriting (Fig. 114).[81] The combination of both scripts represents a visual symbiosis, but is also an act of respect and inclusion. The camera then zooms in on individual works by Chhabda, and slowly focuses on painterly details. The music fades into the background, and we hear the artist talking about his work, until his voice is replaced by the Slovak narrator.[82] The camera moves between the artist working in his studio, shots of the artwork, and details thereof. The stroller that we saw in the first scene (Fig. 111) is now partially visible, being rolled back and forth in front of a painting and accompanied by the sound of a crying baby. This reinforces the abstract character of the painting, gives the scene a surreal touch (Fig. 115), and creates a connection with the following scene. The camera now turns to the artist's family, who are positioned in front of the panoramic window offering a view of the city (Fig. 111). The visit to Chhabda's home and studio ends with this setting, the artist moving from behind the large canvas on the easel towards the window, facing the camera.

With this stage-like scene, the camera leaves the artist's apartment and the city of Bombay, and turns to a large wall mosaic, filmed from a relatively close distance, panning from top to bottom (Fig. 116). The camera thus moves along an architectural centreline that separates the building and the mosaic into two parts, until it comes upon the artist Husain. The artist is walking away from what is known as the drum-shaped building and the wall mosaic that bears his signature towards a car.[83] Before we see him driving past the white, modernist architecture in a white Ambassador (Fig. 117), he takes one last look back and up at the building, thereby insinuating a connection between the work of art and its maker. The accompanying music is slowly attenuated. In contrast to the orchestral arrangement in Chhabda's domestic space in Bombay, only

Fig. 113 Film still from *Moderní indickí maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

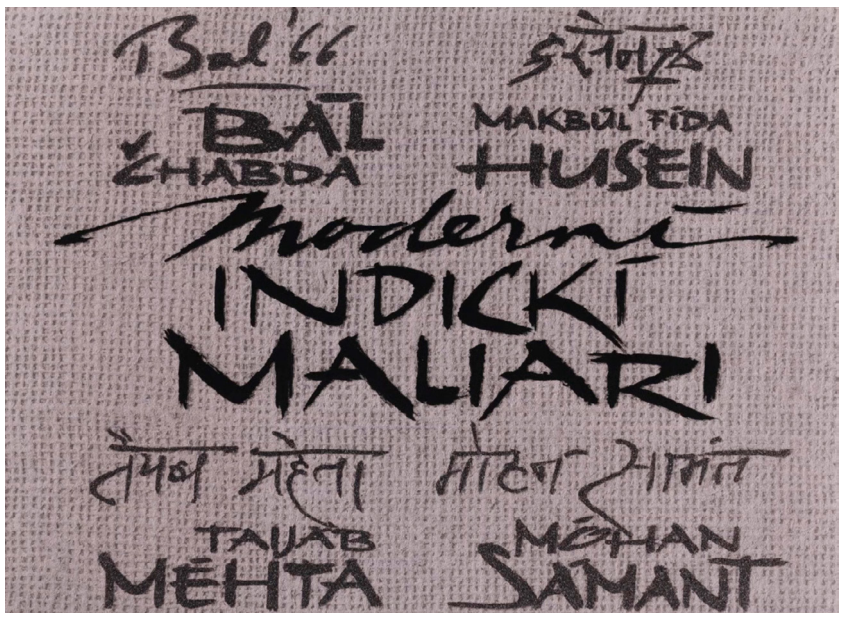


Fig. 114 Film still from *Moderní indickí maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

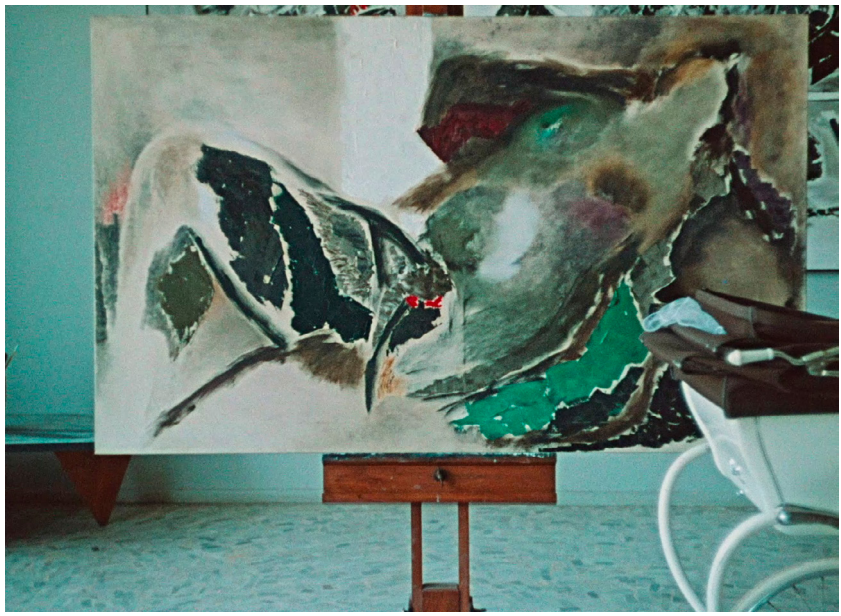


Fig. 115 Film still from *Moderní indická* maliari (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

Fig. 116 Film still from *Moderní indická maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

Fig. 117 Film still from *Moderní indickí maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

Fig. 118 Film still from *Moderní indickí maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

isolated instruments sound here. The camera captures another modernist building (Fig. 118), before turning to the artist and his work.

The scene, with the façade of the modernist architecture and its abstract and symmetrically alternating window frames (Fig. 118), leads to Husain's studio, in which we see the artist working on a series of watercolours simultaneously (Fig. 119). Close-ups of several of Husain's works follow, highlighting details such as colour combinations and materiality, which reveal painterly method, symbols, iconography, and figurative details (Fig. 120). The Slovak narrator's voice tells the story of the artist's successful career, with Husain's own voice partially heard from behind. International exhibitions are mentioned, including in Prague, as is Husain's painterly turn to expressionism. Here, the narrator explains, the artist saw a connection to primitive art, through which he turned to the beauty of his country's simple folk art. We then see Husain at work, moving his brush loosely over a sheet of paper, followed by close-ups of striking details, such as horses, colour fields, and abstract signs. When the camera moves across the picture's surface, it reveals, as in Chhabda's work, details about the materiality of the art works on canvas and paper.

The change of location, from Delhi back to Mumbai, is announced through a view of a cityscape, in which we see a run-down area with billboards, followed by a stretch of sea and a few high-rise buildings (Fig. 121). The camera then turns almost 180 degrees, to capture a detail of a painting, before we see the artist Mohan Samant playing a *sarangi* in front of one of his works in his studio (Fig. 122).[84] Samant is known to have played the *sarangi* every day before starting to paint. The camera moves between works of art displayed on an easel in an outdoor scene on a rooftop terrace (Fig. 123), and the artist playing his musical instrument. Details of the carved and decorated instrument alternate with details of the artist's materially dense and heavily layered paintings, while the Czech narrator speaks of the archaeological character of Samant's works. The artist speaks in English about how everything he sees and enjoys exploring, from 2,000-year-old reliefs from a museum in Cairo, to the beauty of nature and classical Indian and European music, enter his work and becomes form.[85]

The last of the four artists, Tyeb Mehta, is introduced as he walks through a city arcade, where a laundromat casually sits alongside an antique shop filled with ancient statues. We then see recurring details of Mehta's work, accompanied by a monologue from the artist in English, which is soon replaced by a Slovak voiceover. In this monologue, connections between

Fig. 119 Film still from *Moderní indickí maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

Fig. 120 Film still from *Moderní indickí maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

Fig. 121 Film still from *Moderní indickí maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

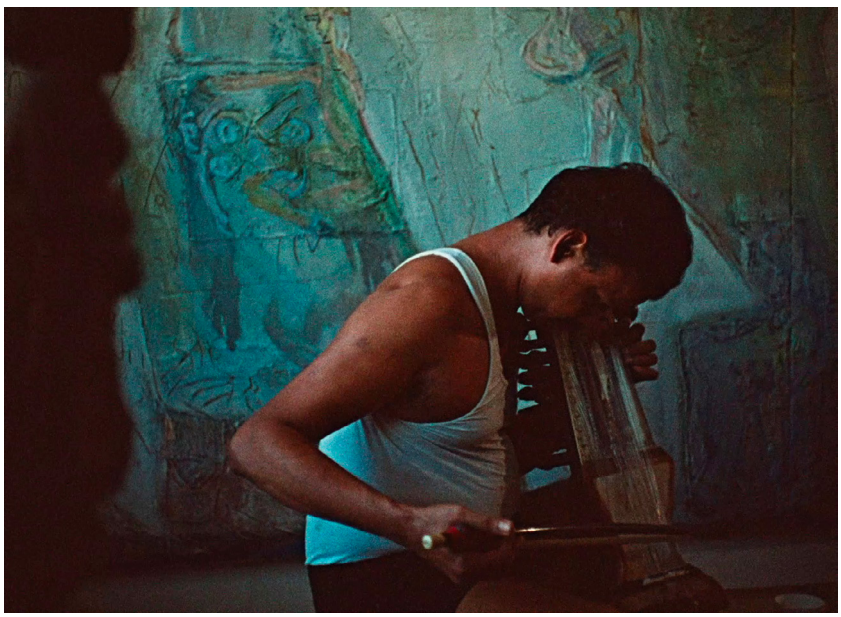


Fig. 122 Film still from *Moderní indickí maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

Fig. 123 Film still from *Moderní indickí maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

art movements, spanning classical modernism up to the contemporary, are noted, pointing out the general aesthetic experience to which this can lead. The final scenes show the artist climbing a steep staircase outside a modern building, at the top of which he is greeted by his wife in an open doorway (Fig. 124). The camera then moves along the outside wall of the building, to a window that frames the artist working inside at his easel while his little daughter plays with the curtains (Fig. 125). This brings the film to a close.

In *Moderní indickí maliari*, Kubenko succeeds in introducing four Indian artists in a period of just over ten minutes. He presents a broad perspective of their work, using the camera to focus on their intimate working environments, which are also their homes. Kubenko approaches the work of the Indian artists in the same way as he approaches Slovak art and artists in his films, such as *Anna Ličková: Returns to Happiness*, *Galanda*, or *National Artist Ludmila Riznerová-Podjavorinská*. Thus, his focus is not on the national character of their art, but rather its painterly methods, materiality, and aesthetic achievements. When the camera captures the artistic environment, it does not do so to locate them nationally or ethnically—quite the opposite. Kubenko succeeds in articulating

Fig. 124 Film still from *Moderní indická maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

Fig. 125 Film still from *Moderní indická maliari* (1967), d. Vlado Kubenko © Slovak Film Institute.

the artists' immediate, urban living and working environments, as a prerequisite for locating their avant-garde positions. By narrating their international exposure, their travels, and their international success, he succeeds in contextualising their work, not only as Indian, but, above all, as international. Kubenko's experiences in Asia, and filming at different locations, conditioned him to understand art as a dialogue and encounter with a variety of experiences. Through the lens of the camera, expertly handled by Strelinger, *Moderní indickí maliari* takes a fascinating and engaged look at art in India from the 1960s. The film was made possible through the collaborative efforts of many people, not least through the network of artists, friends, and experts provided by Krása.

The film was intended to be shown in cinemas in Czechoslovakia. There is, however, no record of when and where it was screened.[86] From a newspaper clipping we learn that the film was shown at the Festival of Czechoslovak Films on April 15, 1968 in New Delhi.[87] Furthermore, Krása, in a letter to Kubenko, writes that Bal Chhabda inquired whether he could purchase four copies of the film with English subtitles: one for Tyeb Mehta, and the others for private use.[88] In a postcard written jointly by Tyeb Mehta, Ram Kumar, and Miloslav Krása from New Delhi to Kubenko in Bratislava, the two Indian artists congratulate the filmmaker "on the highly acclaimed film about four Indian artists," and emphasise that they would be happy if "he would work in India again soon."[89] Kubenko, it seems, did not return to India, which is why the film about Chittaprosad was eventually made by Pavel Hobl.[90] Krása's role in the film *Moderní indickí maliari*, from establishing contact between Kubenko and artists in Bombay and New Delhi, to providing comprehensive information about the art scene in India, to declaring that these artists were the "real avant-garde"[91]—a formulation that Kubenko adopted in his film proposal[92]—goes far beyond that of a mediator. Rather, through his ability to move between Czechoslovakia and India, and through the personal contacts that he was able to provide, he established deep and meaningful connectivity between the Indian art world and that of Prague, and Czechoslovakia at large. In this way, Krása affirms his role as a "cultural broker,"[93] but also confirms the view that modern art is, above all, a multi-site process. I view Krása's and Hájek's efforts as transcultural, precisely because they are based on exchange and encounters on equal terms, and brought about by mobility.

6.3 Final Remarks

In studying material from the film archives in Prague and Bratislava, my aim was to discover various film productions about South Asia. I was surprised, however, to encounter primarily travel and educational films about India in the collections.[94] As a medium, film was instrumentalised to accompany official cultural and entrepreneurial delegations to countries like India. The purpose of the films was the self-propagation of Czechoslovakia, on the one hand, and the promotion of Czechoslovakia's interest in and knowledge of India, on the other. All these films, including *Moderní indickí maliari*, can be traced back to Miloslav Krása, whose role was pivotal, as this book demonstrates. He was decisive in instigating collaborations that eventually animated the transnational socialist solidarity front with India, and, to a lesser degree, with Pakistan and Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

Krása, together with Hájek, strategically built a network of cultural protagonists and intellectuals across both Czechoslovakia and South Asia, which had a direct bearing on the ways cultural exchange between the two regions was carried out. This impact was felt not only in the fine arts, but also in the realms of film, theatre, dance, literature, student exchange, and more. The groundwork laid by Krása and Hájek, and to some extent Jan Marek, in establishing historical and contemporary Czechoslovak–Indian/South Asian connections, became the hallmark of the friendly relations between the two regions during the Cold War era.

The film discussed here confirms this, both visually and ideologically, and reveals how Krása's vision was implemented. Vlado Kubenko's portrayal of artistic modernism in *Moderní indickí maliari*/*Modern Indian Painters* thus stages the collective perception of a group of Czechoslovaks and their positioning of 1960s modern art in India. Through the camera lens, the film audience is presented with the living worlds of these Indian artists. With a focus on details of the artists' immediate surroundings, the camera opens up a world that diverges from that of Czechoslovakia. In its portrayal of these artists, the camera does not linger on the religious, spiritual, or folkloric aspects of India. Rather, Kubenko's explorations of these artists and their milieus expand the perspective of post-war modernism, nudging it beyond national affiliations and ideologies, and adding to the larger transregional and transnational cultural network between Czechoslovakia and South Asia. Some of the artists mentioned here were also in contact with the neighbouring Central European countries

of Poland and Hungary. Largely due to the efforts and vision of Krása and Hájek, however, Prague came to play a unique artistic and cultural role in the lives and work of these South Asian artists. Their experiences of Prague were crucial for these artists, as they struggled to position themselves, their work, and their modernism amid the tensions of the Cold War, during the aftermath of the tumultuous events of World War II, partition, and independence.

Notes

Chapter 1. Introduction

1 Biennales are often taken as a starting point for accounts on how the post-war art world changed, since they were established across the globe and gave rise to exhibiting and travel opportunities in places such as São Paulo, starting in 1951; in Ljubljana and Alexandria, both starting in 1955; and in Baghdad, where in 1974 the first Biennale of Arab Art was established. However, through youth festivals, peace conferences, sculpture symposia, and other mega-events, locations across the globe came to regularly host artists, either to work and exhibit, or to engage discursively in programmes accompanying these events.

2 Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, "Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global," *Third Text* 27, no. 4 (July 1, 2013), 442–455.

3 The partition in South Asia was a result of the end of British colonialism, and led to the birth of India, and West and East Pakistan. In 1971 Bangladesh was born out of East Pakistan, in yet another partition. Ceylon became independent from British colonial rule in 1948.

4 For selected South Asian artists' engagement with modernism, the nation, and the global art world, see Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Sonal Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations: Artistic Practice, National Identity, and Modernism in India, 1930–1990* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015); Lotte Hoek and Sanjukta Sunderason, "Journeying through Modernism: Travels and Transits of East Pakistani Artists in Post-Imperial London," *British Art Studies* 13 (2019), https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-13/hoek-sunderason; Partha Mitter, "Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-Garde Art from the Periphery," *The Art Bulletin* 90, no. 4 (December 2008), 531–548.

5 Joan Kee, *The Geometries of Afro Asia: Art beyond Solidarity* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023). Kee uses the concept of the "global majority" as a more appropriate and inclusive term for referring to what constitutes the 'global south' or POC (people of colour). See Kee, *The Geometries of Afro Asia*, 3–5.

6 The tragedy of Lidice provoked immediate worldwide reactions and a wave of compassion and resistance. Among the better-known works of art are Toyen's drawings of children, one of which is *Untitled* and the other one titled *Mami!/Mom!*, which she created for the book by Louda, Vlastimil, *Lidice. Čin kravého teroru a porušení zákonů I základních lidských práv* (Prague: Ministry of the Interior, Department for Political Intelligence, 1945). The original works of art are deposited in the archive in Kladno. Other works are documented in Kol. Autorů (collective authors), *Lidice 1942–2002. Soupis publikací, dokumentů a uměleckých děl v rešerších domácích a zahraničních institutcí* (Nymburk: n.p., 2012). Heinrich Mann's novel *Lidice* was published in 1943, and Bohuslav Martinů's symphony *Memorial to Lidice* was also composed in 1943. See also Luba Hédlová, "Remember Lidice: 50 let Lidické sbírky umění: 1967–2017," in *Remember Lidice: 1967–2017*, exhibition catalogue (Lidice: Památník, 2017), 12–30.

7 A series of photographs in the Lidice Gallery archive attest to this. I have seen photographs of groups of Pakistani delegates who were brought to Lidice on tour by the Czech government, and photographed in front of Shakir Ali's painting in the conference room.

8 For my engagement with Shakir Ali's mobility and work, see Simone Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan: History, Tradition, Place* (London and New Delhi: Routledge, 2015), 17–39; "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modernist Art: An Art History Informed by Engagement and Circulation," in *Come Closer: The Biennale Reader*, Vít Havránek and Tereza Stejskalová (eds.) (Prague: Sternberg Press and tranzit.cz, 2020), 58–72; "South Asian Artists at the Académie André Lhote," in *André Lhote and His International Students*, Zeynep Kuban and Simone Wille (eds.) (Innsbruck: iup, 2020), 189–207.

[9] Stephen Greenblatt, "Cultural Mobility: An Introduction," in *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, Stephen Greenblatt, Ines G. Županov, Reinhard Meyer-Kalkus, Heike Paul, Pál Nyíri, and Friederike Pannewick (eds.) (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1–23; On the centrality of mobility for aesthetic production, see Nikos Papastergiadis (ed.), *Complex Entanglements: Art, Globalisation, and Cultural Difference* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2003); Tim Cresswell, "The Production of Mobilities," *New Formations* 43 (2001), 11–25; Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (London: Routledge, 2006); Peter Adey, *Mobility* (London: Routledge, 2010), 33–82.

[10] See Hanan Toukan, *The Politics of Art: Dissent and Cultural Diplomacy in Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021); Sarah Rogers, *Modern Art in Cold War Beirut: Drawing Alliances* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2021).

[11] Greenblatt, "Cultural Mobility: An Introduction," 2.

[12] Rogers, *Modern Art in Cold War Beirut*, 3.

[13] Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[14] Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism* (New York: Harper & Rox, 1996).

[15] The magisterial publication on the avant-garde, *Art since 1900,* did not engage with or include knowledge about artists from the wider art world. See Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin Buchloh, *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004). See also the critique by Partha Mitter about this publication in Mitter, "Decentering Modernism," 531.

[16] Kobena Mercer (ed.), *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* (Cambridge, MA and London: Institute of International Visual Arts and MIT Press, 2005), 7. *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* was the first in the four-part publication series *Annotating Art's Histories*, where Mercer introduced the term "cosmopolitan modernism."

[17] Mercer, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*, 8.

[18] Andreas Huyssen, "Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World," *New German Critique* 100 (Winter 2007), 189–207.

[19] Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*.

[20] Atreyee Gupta, "After Bandung: Transacting the Nation in a Postcolonial World," in *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*, Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes (eds.) (Munich: Prestel, 2016), 635. In her inquiry, Gupta refers to Maqbool Fida Husain as quoted in Ila Pal, *Beyond the Canvas: An Unfinished Portrait of M.F. Husain* (New Delhi: Indus, 1994), 92.

[21] Yashodhara Dalmia, *The Making of Modern Indian Art: The Progressives* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 105. Atreyee Gupta also refers to Dalmia in her article.

[22] Gupta, "After Bandung," 635; Pal, *Beyond the Canvas*, 92.

[23] Gupta, "After Bandung," 635.

[24] The Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts, as a non-bloc art event, especially in its first iterations, is a good example of how the nascent Non-Aligned Movement was translated into an art event. See Vesna Teržan, "Opening Story," in *Mnemosyne: The Time of Ljubljana's Biennial of Graphic Arts* (Ljubljana: MGLC, 2010), 16–32; Bojana Piškur, "Southern Constellations: Other Histories, Other Modernities," in *Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned,* exhibition catalogue (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2019), 9–21.

[25] About post-war and Cold War international ambitions, see Gardner and Green, "Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global," 442–455; Chelsea Haines and Gemma Sharpe, "Art, Institutions, and Internationalism, 1945–73," *ARTMargins* 8, no. 2 (2019), 3–14.

[26] Devika Singh, *International Departures: Art in India After Independence* (London: Reaktion Books, 2024); Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.), *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022); Sanjukta Sunderason and Lotte Hoek (eds.), *Forms of the Left in Postcolonial South Asia: Aesthetics, Networks and Connected Histories* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022); see also Sonal Khullar's presentation "Strangers in the City: The Progressive Artists Group (1947–1967) and Indian Modernity," The École des Modernités, Institute Giacometti, May 23, 2023, https://www.fondation-giacometti.fr/en/event/276/

strangers-in-the-city-the-progressive-artists-group-1947-1967-and-indian-modernity (last visited May 20, 2024); and the research project Metromod (ERC 724649) and its archive in Bombay, https://archive.metromod.net (last visited May 23, 2024); Hoek and Sunderason, "Journeying through Modernism."

27 See Monica Juneja, *Can Art History be Made Global? Meditations from the Periphery* (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2023), 36.

28 Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*; Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia.*

29 Gupta, "After Bandung," 633–637; Susan S. Bean, "East Meets East in Husain's Horses," in *Lightning,* Marguerite Charugundla and Deepanjana Klein (eds.) (New York: Tamarind Gallery, 2007), 11–20. When it comes to South–South relations between India and South America, Indian artists' participation in different editions of the São Paulo biennale are mentioned, as well as Satish Gujral's engagement with Mexico as a recipient of a Mexican government scholarship in 1952. However, none of these studies have yet engaged seriously with Gujral's work made in Mexico. See Natasha Ginwala, "Arrival, Incision. Indian Modernism as Peripatetic Itinerary," in *Hello World: Revising a Collection*, exhibition catalogue, Udo Kittelmann and Gabriele Knapstein (eds.) (Berlin and Munich: SMB and Hirmer Verlag, 2018), 227–228; Devika Singh, *International Departures*, 170–171.

30 For a close reading of two South Asian film students and their experiences of studying in Prague, see Tereza Stejskalová, "Students from the Third World in Czechoslovakia: The paradox of racism in communist society and its reflection in film," and "I believe film could have a great influence on people: An interview with Piyasiri Gunaratna," in *Filmmakers of the World Unite! Forgotten Internationalism, Czechoslovak Film and the Third World*, Tereza Stejskalová (ed.) (Prague: tranzit.cz, 2017), 51–63; 203–207. See also my own research and writing, such as Simone Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague: Connecting East and West," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 171–185; "The Prague Connection of Chittaprosad (1915–1978)," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*, Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 120; "Krishna Reddy (1925–2018) between Santiniketan, London, Paris, Ljubljana, and Vienna: Cold War Friendships and Networks, Collaborations and Aesthetic Solidarities," presented on May 27, 2021 in the framework of the conference *London, Asia, Art, Worlds* at the Paul Mellon Centre, https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/whats-on/forthcoming/sociality-and-affect (last visited February 18, 2025); "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modernist Art," 51–72; "Chittaprosad's Linocut Prints at the National Gallery in Prague: Understanding Indo-Czech Cultural Relations in the Postwar Era," *Bulletin of the National Gallery in Prague* XXX (2020), 6–21, and for the Czech version 137–149; "A Modernist Transnational Socialist Solidarity: Chittaprosad's Prague Connection," *Stedelijk Studies* 9 (2019) n.p.; "St. Margarethen: Ein Experimentierfeld der transnationalen Nachkriegsmoderne," in *Kunst und Literatur. Der Literatur Raum im Bildhauerhaus in St. Margarethen im Burgenland*, Beatrice Simonsen (ed.) (Vienna: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2019), 8–13; *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 21–22.

31 Gabriela Świtek, "Across Borders and Art Histories: Travelling Exhibitions," *Artium Quaestiones* 35 (2024), 55–82; Gabriela Świtek (ed.), *Ikonotheka*, Special Issue: *Exhibition Histories* 26 (: 2016). See also the link to the research project connected to the publication: https://zacheta.art.pl/en/dokumentacja-i-biblioteka/projekt-badawczy?setlang=1 (last visited October 9, 2023). See also the forthcoming volume edited by Katalin Cseh-Varga, *Exhibitions as Sites of Artistic Contact* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2026), to which I have contributed a text on artist Krishna Reddy's exhibition activity in Central Europe: Simone Wille, "Krishna Reddy in Central Europe," in *Exhibitions as Sites of Artistic Contact*, Katalin Cseh-Varga (ed.) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming in 2025). The publication by Magda Lipska and Piotr Słodkowski (eds.), *Was Socialist Realism Global? Modernism, Soc-Modernism, Socially Engaged Figuration*, (Warsaw: Books N°21, 2023) is the result of the conference *What Are Our Genealogies? Engaged Figurations: Realism, Socialist Realism and Soc-Modernism in a Global Perspective*, held at the Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw in April and May 2021. See also the catalogue for the Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts

in 2019, *Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned,* exhibition catalogue (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2019).

32 *Revolutionary Romances? Global Art Histories in the GDR*, Albertinum, Dresden, November 11, 2023–June 2, 2024; *Parapolitics: Cultural Freedom and the Cold War*, Anselm Franke, Nida Ghouse, Paz Guevara, and Antonia Majaca (eds.) (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2021) are worth mentioning, for a reflection on imbalances and a reassessment of the post-war art world. Projects which mainly turned to an exchange between East/Central Europe and Latin American countries are the exhibitions *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960–1980* at the New York Museum of Modern Art, 2015, and *The Other Trans-Atlantic. Kinetic and Op Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1950s—1970s* at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow, and Sesc (Serviço Social do Comércio) in São Paulo, 2017–2018.

33 Przemysław Strożek, *Ahmed Cherkaoui in Warsaw: Polish-Moroccan Artistic Relations in 1955–1980*, exhibition catalogue, trans. Paulina Bożek (Warsaw: Zachęta, National Gallery of Art, 2020).

34 Papastergiadis, *Complex Entanglements*; Nikos Papastergiadis, *Modernity as Exile: The Stranger in John Berger's Writing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).

35 Greenblatt, "Cultural Mobility: An Introduction," 2.

36 Natalie Adamson, *Painting, Politics and the Struggle for the École de Paris, 1944–1964* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 116.

37 Reinhart Koselleck, "'Erfahrungsraum' und 'Erwartungshorizont'—zwei historische Kategorien," in Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 349–375; translated into English as *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

38 Huyssen, "Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World," 189–207.

39 The World Youth Festival in Prague attracted approximately 17,000 young people from seventy-one countries, and many local participants. See Pia Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship: The World Youth Festivals and Soviet Cultural Diplomacy* (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2023), 30.

40 Joël Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, trans. Ralph Blumenau (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 117.

41 Richard Cornell, *Youth and Communism: An Historical Analysis of International Communist Youth Movements* (New York: Walker and Company, 1965), 7476; Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, 62–85; Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship*, 9. The Institute of Art at the Polish Academy of Sciences, together with Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, organised a conference in 2024 on *Cold War Warm Friendships: Politics and Culture in the Cold War Editions of the World Festival of Youth and Student*, October 17–18, 2024, hosted by art historians Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus and Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu, the result of which will be published soon.

42 Joël Kotek, "Youth organizations as a Battlefield in the Cold War," *Intelligence and National Security* 18, no. 2 (2010), 169.

43 Kotek, "Youth organizations as a Battlefield in the Cold War," 171.

44 Douglas Gabriel and Adri Kácsor, "Fraternal Encounters: Socialist Art and Architecture between Budapest and Pyongyang in the 1950s," in *Universal—International—Global: Art Historiographies of Socialist Eastern Europe*, Marina Dimitrieva, Beata Hock, and Antje Kemp (eds.) (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2023), 240–257; Łukasz Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020); Bojana Videkanić, *Nonaligned Modernism: Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945–1985* (Québec: McGill-Queens University Press, 2019); Bojana Piškur, "Yugoslavia: other modernities, other histories," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 20, no. 1 (2019), 131–139.

45 Christian Saehrendt, "Die bildende Kunst als Ferment für das sozialistische Weltsystem. Verdeutlicht am Künstler- und Ausstellungsaustausch der DDR mit Mosambik, Äthiopien, Syrien und dem Irak," paper presentation at the international conference *The Global GDR. A Transcultural History of Art (1949–1990),* June 9–11, 2022.

46 Liz Bruchet and Ming Tiampo, "Slade, London, Asia: Contrapuntal Histories between Imperialism and Decolonization 1945–1989 (Part 1)," *British Art Studies* 20 (2021), https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-20/tiampobruchet (last visited February 9, 2025).

47 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 59.

[48] Bruchet and Tiampo, "Slade, London, Asia."

[49] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 59.

[50] Piotr Piotrowski, "On the Spatial Turn, or Horizontal Art History," *Umění* 56, no. 5 (2008), 378–383; also published as Piotr Piotrowski, "Toward a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde," in *Europa! Europa? The Avant-Garde, Modernism and the Fate of a Continent*, Sascha Bru and Peter Nicholls (eds.) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 49–58. See also the edited volume by Piotrowski's former students Agata Jakubowska and Magdalena Radomska (eds.), *Horizontal Art History and Beyond: Revising Peripheral Critical Practices* (New York: Routledge, 2024), which critically examines advantages and limitations of the concept of a horizontal art history.

[51] Bruchet and Tiampo, "Slade, London, Asia."

[52] John-Paul Ghobrial, "Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian," in *Global History and Microhistory: A Supplement Volume of Past and Present*, John-Paul Ghobrial (ed.), Vol. 242, Issue Supplement 14, 2019, 1–21.

[53] Geeta Kapur, "Proposition Avant-Garde: A View from the South," *Art Journal* 77, no. 1 (2018), 87.

[54] Miloslav Krása, *Looking Towards India: A Study in East-West Contacts*, trans. Boleslav Seidl (Prague: Oribs, 1969).

[55] Tara Chand, "Foreword," in Miloslav Krása, *Looking Towards India: A Study in East-West Contacts*, trans. Boleslav Seidl (Prague: Oribs, 1969), 8. Chand was an archaeologist and historian. He taught at Allahabad University and served as vice-chancellor during the time that Krása studied there in 1946/47. There are online versions of *Looking Towards India* available, see for example https://archive.org/details/KRASALookingTowardsIndia/mode/2up (last visited August 20, 2024). Some of the online versions appear without Ajit Chakravarty's *Flute Player* on the cover.

[56] Krása, *Looking Towards India*, 11. Moriz Winternitz was Austrian, but taught at the Philosophical Faculty of the German University of Prague, where he later became dean. In June 1921, he received Rabindranath Tagore as a guest of the university in Prague.

[57] Ajit Chakravarty and his studies in Prague will be outlined in the concluding chapter.

[58] Krása, *Looking Towards India*, 79.

[59] Krása, Looking Towards India, 91-96; 100-102; 105-115.

[60] Krása, *Looking Towards India*, 137.

[61] In a private conversation, Jaroslav Strnad told me that Krása retired from the staff of the Oriental Institute slightly earlier, perhaps in 1984 or 1985. However, even after formal retirement, he continued to be active, as far as his deteriorating eyesight allowed. As the head of the South Asia Department of the Oriental Institute, he was particularly active, organising international conferences that focused on the work of important Indian cultural figures, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, but also on Vincent Lesný and Otakar Pertold. From a private conversation with Strnad, February 25, 2025.

[62] Marc von der Höh, Nikolas Jaspter, and Jenny Oesterle, "Courts, Brokers and Brokerage in the Medieval Mediterranean," in *Cultural Brokers at Mediterranean Courts in the Middle Ages*, Marc von der Höh, Nikolas Jaspter, and Jenny Oesterle (eds.) (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013), 9. This publication was preceded by the conference *Cultural Brokers between Religions: Border Crossers and Experts at Mediterranean Courts*, which was organised by the same trio of authors at the Ruhr University Bochum, October 28–30, 2010.

[63] Miloslav Krása has published widely on India. In English, see his edited volume *Jawaharlal Nehru—a political leader: a collection of contributions presented to the Symposium on Jawaharlal Nehru organized to commemorate the 85th anniversary of his birth and the 10th anniversary of his death*, trans. Karel Strádal (Prague: Czechoslovak-Indian Committee of the Czechoslovak Society for International Relations, 1974).

[64] For a detailed discussion on Lubor Hájek, see Markéta Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks: The Genesis of the Asian Art Collection at the National Gallery in Prague," and Zdenka Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," both in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 61–82 and 159–169.

65 https://www.bubinekrevolveru.cz/u-prilezitosti-narozenin-lubora-hajka-hajkovo-desatee ro-o-peti-bodech-vzpominky-viktora-karlika (last visited June 26, 2024).

66 Selected publications by Lubor Hájek are: *Chinesische Kunst* (Prague: Artia, 1954); *Kunst ferner Länder 1: Aegypten, Afrika, Amerika, Ozenaien, Indonesien*, Lubor Hájek (ed.) (Prague: Artia, 1956); *Kunst ferner Länder 2: Voderasien, Indien, Tibet, China, japan, Tschuktschen Halbinsel*, Lubor Hájek (ed.) (Prague: Artia, 1957); *Utamaro: das Porträt im japanischen Holzschnitt* (Hanau am Main: Dausien, 1958); *Indische Miniaturen vom Hof der Mogulkaiser* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Lesering, 1961).

67 Jan Marek wrote the chapter on Persian literature in a volume on the history of Persian and Tadschik literature, *Dějiny perské a tádžické literatury*, Jan Rypka (ed.), 2nd edition (Prague: Československé Akad. věd, 1963). See also Jan Marek, "Studies in Indian Languages and Literatures at Prague: I. Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu," *Mahfil* 2, no. 4 (1966), 31–39. Marek also wrote the travelogue *Po stopách sultánů a rádžů* (Prague: Panorama, 1973).

68 Jan Marek's degree was that of "kandidát věd, CSc" (a candidate of science), similar to a PhD degree.

69 *Nový Orient* has been published since 1945 by the Oriental Institute as a monthly Czech-language journal to inform the general public on Asian, African, and at certain times, also South American cultural, historical, and contemporary political affairs. In addition to *Nový Orient*, between 1961 and 1975 *New Orient Bimonthly* was published as a bimonthly English-language journal. Krása was on both journals' editorial teams, and the Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004) was part of the advisory editorial team for *New Orient Bimonthly*.

70 Krása and Marek were well trained in the art of photography, which is why the photographs of their travels were usually of very high quality, and usually reproduced in their books, and alongside their texts, without further processing. I would like to thank Jaroslav Strnad for sharing this insight with me.

71 Christian Kravagna, *Transmoderne: Eine Kunstgeschichte des Kontakts* (Berlin: b_books, 2017) and *Transmodern: An Art History of Contact, 1920–60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022).

72 Mercer, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*; see also Peter Burke, *Kultureller Austausch* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000); Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991), 33–40; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

73 See Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Ali Raza, Franziska Roy, and Benjamin Zachariah, *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views, 1917–39* (New Delhi and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2014).

74 Haines and Sharpe, "Art, Institutions, and Internationalism, 1945–73," 6.

75 Piotrowski, "On the Spatial Turn, or Horizontal Art History," 378–383; Piotrowski, "Toward a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde," 49–58.

76 The Journal of the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences published a guest-edited volume in which several art historians revisited Piotrowski's concept and methodology, responding to a critical text provided by Matthew Rampley. See Steven Mansbach (ed.), *Umění/Art* LXIX, no. 2 (2021).

77 Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004) acknowledges the importance of the concept, and looks at the advantages and limitations it offers.

78 See Ghobrial, "Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian," 1–21.

79 Both projects are fully funded by the Austrian Science Fund FWF (P29536-G26 and V880-G). For more information on "South Asia in Central Europe" see https://www.uibk.ac.at/en/projects/south-asia-in-central-europe/ (last visited August 22, 2024); and for "Patterns of Transregional Trails" see https://www.uibk.ac.at/de/kunstgeschichte/forschung/abgeschlossene-projekte/ (last visited July 18, 2024).

80 Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," 33–40; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; Said, *Culture and Imperialism*; Mercer, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*.

81 Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship*, 1.

[82] From the caption of the image in the photobank of ČTK, Prague. The exact caption is as follows: "Praha –Světový festival mládeže a studentstva, SFMS, průvod, Československo-SSSR, Utkání AC Sparta CDKA Moskva na Letné (ctrip) Světový festival mládeže a studentstva v Praze – zakončení, průvod. Na sn. Čelo průvodu – maketa Země."

[83] From Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship*, 1. Koivunen here quotes from Kutty Hookham, who was a member of the British Communist Youth League, as well as a secretary of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. See Kutty Hookham, *Czechoslovakia* (Prague: Mladá Fronta, 1947), 63.

[84] See Wendy Griswold, *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2004), 16–18; David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values. The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[85] Lubor Hájek, "Two Indian Artists in Prague," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 1, no. 5 (October 1960), n.p.

Chapter 2. A Pakistani Artist in Prague

[1] Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram, "Introduction: The Geopolitics of Modernism in the 20th Century," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*, Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 11.

[2] Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, 1; Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 22.

[3] Accounts so far have always referred to Perlingieri as a former pupil of Picasso. This is most likely not the case since Picasso did not have students. However, it is possible that Perlingieri himself passed on this information in order to lend weight to his profile as an artist. Mario Perlingieri was at Bhopal Prison Camp until his release on 10 July 1946. Information retrieved from the British Library, Archives of the East India Company and the India Office from 1900 to 1948, Vol. II, IOR/L/MIL/5/1070, p. 760. Thanks to Maureen Heath from the British Library, Asian & African Studies Reference Service, for helping me to source this file and interpret its content.

[4] On the significance of mobility for aesthetic productions, see Papastergiadis, *Modernity as Exile*; Papastergiadis, *Complex Entanglements*.

[5] Her first solo exhibition, two years later in 1949 in Karachi, is considered to have officially introduced painterly modernism in Pakistan. Cf. Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, 114. The works that were on display, along with the supportive and critical comments from both friends and envious people, allow us to conclude that it was Agha who introduced abstraction to Pakistan. There were controversies about her work in the exhibition, about which the writer Akbar Naqvi says that "[i]t was a success and a scandal." For Naqvi's discussion of Agha's exhibition and some of the letters that were published in response to the exhibition, see Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity: Fifty Years of Painting and Sculpture in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 147–149. The letters about Agha's 1949 exhibition are published in *Civil and Military Gazette*, June 4, June 11, and June 15, 1949, and reproduced in Ijaz ul Hassan, *Painting in Pakistan* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1991), 51–52. See also Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, 114. See also Saira Ansari, *Zubeida Agha: le chapitre silencieux du modernism pakistanais* (Paris: École des Modernités, 2024).

[6] Kotek, "Youth organizations as a Battlefield in the Cold War," 168. See also Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship*.

[7] Cf. Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship*.

[8] Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship*, 16.

[9] Shakir Ali in an interview with Jan Marek, "Shakir Ali," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 6, no. 4 (August 1967), 112. First quoted in Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 19; Wille, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modernist Art," 58.

[10] Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 2.

[11] Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007), xv.

[12] Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 16.

[13] Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship*, 6.

[14] Cf. Kotek, "Youth organizations as a Battlefield in the Cold War," 117.

[15] Shakir Ali in an interview with Jan Marek, "Shakir Ali," 113.

[16] Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 31–35; Wille, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modernist Art," 60–62.

[17] The Czech writer Julius Fučík was associated with the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. In February 1941, the entire Party was arrested by the Gestapo. Fučík was arrested a year later, tortured, interrogated, and executed in Berlin on September 8, 1943. While in prison, he wrote the material for the influential book *Notes from the Gallows*. German translations appeared as early as 1946. For an English translation I found Julius Fučík, *Reporter of Revolution—Part II: Report from the Gallows* (Prague: International Organization of Journalists, 1983). *Part I* is a collection of newspaper articles. According to archival findings, there appears to have been a book launch for the presentation of the Urdu translation of Fučík's book in Karachi in 1956. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether this book was translated from English or from Czech.

[18] Wille, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modernist Art," 61–62.

[19] Cf. Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, 120; Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 17. For works by Sarada Ukil (1888–1940) see https://dagworld.com/sarada-charan-ukil.html (last visited June 7, 2023).

[20] Shakir Ali in an interview with Jan Marek, "Shakir Ali," 112.

[21] Cf. *Annual Report, Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay, For the Year 1939–40* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1951), 19–25.

[22] Cf. *Annual Report, Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay, For the Year 1942–47* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1951).

[23] Cf. Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 202–224; Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, 121; Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 24.

[24] Cf. Appendix of *Annual Report, Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay, For the Year 1939–40*, n.p.

[25] Cf. Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 202; Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 23.

[26] *Annual Report, Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay, For the Year 1942–47*, n.p.

[27] *Annual Report, Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay, For the Year 1942–47*, n.p.

[28] Cf. Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, 121; Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 121.

[29] Keith Moxey, "A 'Virtual Cosmopolis': Partha Mitter in Conversation with Keith Moxey," *The Art Bulletin* XCV, no. 3 (September 2013), 389.

[30] From a private interview with the artist in Mumbai, July 9, 2017.

[31] On histories of the Progressive Writers' Association and the Indian People's Theatre Association and the left's cultural movement in late-colonial India, see Priyamvada Gopal, *Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence* (London: Routledge, 2005); Sumangala Damodaran, *The Radical Impulse: Music in the Tradition of the Indian People's Theatre Association* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2017).

[32] Cf. Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, 121 and see also 253, footnote 97.

[33] First Entry Form, University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, registry file 7075, January 1947.

[34] Re-Entry Form, University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, registry file 7075, 1947–1948.

[35] First Entry Form, University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, registry file 7075, January 1947.

[36] Re-Entry Form, University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, registry file 7075, 1947–1948.

[37] Typewritten letter by Shakir Ali, dated July 5, 1948, Archives André Lhote. Reproduced in Wille, "South Asian Artists at the Académie André Lhote," 193.

[38] Cf. Gemma Romain, *Race, Sexuality and Identity in Britain and Jamaica: The Biography of Patrick Nelson, 1916–1963* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

[39] See footnote 15 in this chapter.

[40] Archived handwritten letter by Charles R. Gerrard, signed and dated Bombay, September 6, 1945. University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, file 1429, 1945–1946. In comparison to further archival research in London, I note that many students who had gained British Council scholarships, and who were due to commence their studies in the UK in September 1945, were often delayed due to being unable to secure a passage. This was probably related to the pressure on shipping in the immediate post-war period. Many students arrived three to four months late, often missing the first term of their studies. I would like to thank Patricia O'Neill, who has helped me piece together information from London archives.

[41] Archived handwritten letter by Charles R. Gerrard, signed and dated Bombay, September 6, 1945. University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, file 7075.

[42] Archived machine typed letter, signed by Randolph Schwabe, March 15, 1947. University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, file 7075.

[43] Archived machine typed letter, signed by Randolph Schwabe, March 15, 1947. University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, file 7075.

[44] Archived machine typed letter, signed by Randolph Schwabe, March 15, 1947. University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, file 7075.

[45] University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, file 7075.

[46] In 1926, Lhote discovered Mirmande and set up his first field academy (L'académie aux champs). This was followed by the setting up of another field academy in Gordes in 1948 and in La Cadière d'Azur. He spent his summers working and teaching in these locations in the south of France. See Dominique Bermann Martin, "The Life of André Lhote," in *André Lhote and his International Students*, Zeynep Kuban and Simone Wille (eds.) (Innsbruck: iup, 2020), 30–31.

[47] For a detailed discussion on Shakir Ali's time with André Lhote, see Wille, "South Asian Artists at the Académie André Lhote," 189–207.

[48] Translated from the original French document by Fanny Drugeon, first published in Fanny Drugeon, "From Paris to Mirmande, International Aspects of Lhote's Academy through Lhote's Writings and Correspondence," in *André Lhote and His International Students*, Zeynep Kuban and Simone Wille (eds.) (Innsbruck: iup, 2020), 48.

[49] About these principles, see André Lhote, *Treatise on Landscape Painting* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1950), 37. The original French version was published as André Lhote, *Traité du paysage* (Paris: Floury, 1939). According to two letters that are in the archives of André Lhote, we know that Shakir Ali joined Lhote in Gordes in late July 1948. These letters are published in Wille, "South Asian Artists at the Académie André Lhote," 193, 194. The Slade logbook for the academic year 1948–1949 shows Ali's first signature appearing on Monday, October 4, 1948. Following this we can say that he remained with Lhote in the south of France for a maximum period of two months. See University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, file 7075.

[50] I have discussed this scene in detail in Wille, "South Asian Students at the Académie André Lhote," 196.

[51] See André Lhote, *Les Chefs d'oeuvre de la Peinture Égyptienne* (Paris: Hachette, 1954). For a discussion of Lhote's engagement and Egypt see Mehri Khalil, "André Lhote and Egypt," in *André Lhote and His International Students*, Zeynep Kuban and Simone Wille (eds.) (Innsbruck: iup, 2020), 172.

[52] Academy photographs and group portraits, especially from the 1920s and 1930s, often include nude models, sometimes in frontal view and sometimes in back view. From today's perspective, these pictures are irritating, and testify to an ingrained inequality. I am currently working on an analysis of such photographs, as I know them not only from the Lhote archives, but also from other art schools.

[53] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/slade/research/slade-archive-project/class-photos/ (last visited December 15, 2024).

[54] Hoek and Sunderason, "Journeying Through Modernism."

[55] About alternative routes to the more common East–West connections, and in the ways these were able to offer spaces for connections, see also my text on artist "Krishna Reddy in Central Europe."

[56] University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, file 7075.

[57] See the interview with Jan Marek, "Shakir Ali," 113.

[58] In his interview with Jan Marek, Shakir Ali speaks of his friend Masood Ali Khan, who had already been in Prague. See Marek, "Shakir Ali," 112.

[59] Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953). I would like to thank the Prague National Archives for helping me find Shakir Ali's police headquarters registration card. First quoted in Wille, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modernist Art," 60. The same registration card says that he was granted his permit by the Czechoslavk Embassy in London on July 6, 1949, for one year.

[60] According to his student card from UMPRUM, he left Czechoslovakia for India. The card states the date October 27, 1950, which might also be the date that he announced his leaving.

[61] Whether Ali attended classes with Filla cannot be proved beyond the fact that the artist himself stated that he studied with Filla. See the interview with Marek, "Shakir Ali," 113.

[62] The suggestion that this could have been Hořovice was made by Jan Marek in the interview that he made with Shakir Ali. See the interview with Jan Marek, "Shakir Ali," 113. Jan Marek also told me in a personal interview that Ali could have been working in a textile workshop in Hořovice, from a personally recorded interview with Jan Marek in his Prague house, March 3, 2028.

[63] The original caption is in Czech: "Návrh indického studenta Šakira Álího na vzor šátků vyráběných Československým textilním průmyslem."

[64] The original caption is in Czech: "Život na indické vesnici. Návrh na nástěnnou malbu pákistánského malíře Šakíra Álího, který letos studoval na Vyšší škole uměleckého průmyslu v Praze."

[65] Cf. Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 31–35; Wille, "The Lidice Collection," 60–62.

[66] Document 0011 Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953).

[67] Document 0011 Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953).

[68] Archive of Security Service. The stamp refers to written documents originating from I. S SNB (where SNB is the National Security Corps/Sbor národní bezpečnosti)

[69] Occasionally, in archival records, Marie Petranová's name is also spelled as Petránová.

[70] See also Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The origins of Pakistan's political economy of defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 49–135.

[71] Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, 277–294.

[72] Document 0011 Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953).

[73] Document 0011 Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953).

[74] Document 0011 Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953).

[75] This information is from Document 0011 Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953).

[76] Document 0011 Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953).

[77] Document 0011 Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953).

[78] Document 0011 Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953).

[79] Document 0011 Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953). Note that sometimes the reports refer to her as Mrs. Petranová whereas in other instances they reference her as Mrs. Ali.

[80] Ranajit Guha, "The Migrant's Time," in *The Migrant's Time: Rethinking Art History and Diaspora*, Saloni Mathur (ed.) (Williamstown: Clark Art Institute, 2011), 4.

[81] Guha, "The Migrant's Time," 3.

[82] Cf. Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*; Miguel B. Jeronimo and Jose P. Monteiro, *Internationalism, Imperialism and the Formation of the Contemporary World: The Pasts of the Present* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[83] Cf. Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 205.

[84] Cf. Salima Hashmi and Samina Iqbal, *Naya Daur: Shakir Ali and Lahore Art Circle*, exhibition catalogue, curated and edited by Salima Hashmi and Samina Iqbal (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2017).

[85] See Samina Iqbal, "Naya Daur: Shakir Ali and Lahore Art Circle," in *Naya Daur: Shakir Ali and Lahore Art Circle*, exhibition catalogue, curated and edited by Salima Hashmi and Samina Iqbal (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2017), 26.

[86] Salima Hashmi, "Foreword," in *Naya Daur: Shakir Ali and Lahore Art Circle*, exhibition catalogue, curated and edited by Salima Hashmi and Samina Iqbal (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2017), 14.

[87] Hassan Zaheer, *The Times and Trial of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy, 1951: The First Coup Attempt in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[88] Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, 120–133.

[89] Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, 125.

[90] As referenced by Dadi in *Modernism*, 125, footnotes 118 and 119, 255. Intizar Husain, *Chiraghon ka dhuan: Yadon ke pachas baras* (Lahore: Sang-I Mil, 2003); Muhammad Hasan Askari, *Sitara ya badban* (Karachi: Maktaba-yi Sat Rang, 1963).

[91] In an assessment about the general surveillance of political activists by the Pakistani government in the early 1950s, anthropologist Kamran Asdar Ali observes that "the realities of the emerging Cold War made Pakistan a vital geographical space to control for their [the British and the US governments] own security needs in the region." Kamran Asdar Ali, *Communism in Pakistan: Politics and Class Activism 1947–1972* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 139.

[92] The work *Masks*, oil on canvas, 49.50 × 43 cm, from the late 1950s, is in a private collection in Lahore. Reproduced in *Naya Daur*, 45.

[93] I am here thinking of the work *Bull*, oil on board, 60.10 × 60.10 cm, from the 1950s, in a private collection in Karachi. Reproduced in *Naya Daur*, 44. The artist made another work titled *The Bull* in 1962, which is very different in style. For the 1962 work, see Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 225.

[94] Akbar Naqvi spoke of "toy-like birds" but also of birds representing free spirits, in his chapter on Shakir Ali in the book *Image and Identity*, 189–266; quotes are from 231 and 243.

[95] Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 31–32.

[96] See for example *Woman with Bird and Flower* from 1965, reproduced in Yashodhara Dalmia and Salima Hashmi (eds.), *Memory, Metaphor, Mutations: Contemporary Art of India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 12.

[97] *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 6, no. 4 (August 1967), 73.

[98] Akbar Naqvi has made this connection in Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 242.

[99] Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 33.

[100] Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 34.

[101] Cf. Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 34–35; Beda Allemann, *Zeit und Figur beim späten Rilke: Ein Beitrag zur Poetik des Modernen Gedichts* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), 14.

[102] Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 36.

Chapter 3. Exhibiting and Collecting South Asian Art in Prague and Lidice

[1] See Claire Wintle, "India on Display: Nationalism, Transnationalism and Collaboration, 1964–1986," *Third Text* 31, no. 2–3 (2017), 301–320, https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2017.1393926; Claire Wintle, "Displaying Independent India Abroad: nationalism, cultural diplomacy and collaboration at the Nehru memorial exhibition, 1965–2015," in *Heritage at the Interface: Interpretation and Identity*, G. Hooper (ed.) (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018), 1–19; See also Susan S. Bean, "Post-Independence Indian Art and the American Art World, 1953–1970," in *Indian Painting: Themes,*

Histories, Interpretations. Essays in Honor of B.N. Goswamy, Mahesh Sharma and Padma Kaimal (eds.) (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2014), 378–389.

2 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (Verso: London, 1991), 163–185.

3 Tarar here quotes from National College of Arts files, NCAA File 192-E, *Exhibition in the Mayo School of Art (1954)*, in Nadeem Omar Tarar, *The Colonial and National Formations of the National College of Arts, Lahore, circa 1870s to 1960s: De-scripting the Archive* (New York and London: Anthem Press, 2022), 159 and footnote 49.

4 Tarar, *The Colonial and National Formations of the National College of Arts*, 159.

5 The first national survey exhibition that Pakistan organised in Britain took place in 1997, fifty years after Independence. *Pakistan: Another Vision. Fifty years of painting and sculpture from Pakistan*, exhibition catalogue, Timothy Wilcox (ed.) (London: Arts & The Islamic World, 1997).

6 On some of the early post-war exhibitions by Pakistani artists outside of Pakistan, cf. Samina Iqbal, "The Matrix of Biennales and Pakistan," artnowpakistan.com, https://www.artnowpakistan.com/the-matrix-of-biennales-and-pakistan/ (last visited July 22, 2024). Artnowpakistan does not publish anymore; however, the link still works. See also Samina Iqbal, "Karachi Biennale 2019: Censorship and Curatorial Responsibilities," first published in Sharjah March Meeting, 2021 and re-published in *Art Violence and State: In the Killing Fields of Karachi*, Adeela Suleman (ed.) (Lahore: Topical Printers, 2022), 205–219.

7 In the introduction of the catalogue of the 1955/56 exhibition sent to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania (Rumania), and Bulgaria, and subsequently to Moscow and Warsaw, it is noted that "art exhibitions and delegations have been already sent to London, Afghanistan, Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, China, Japan, Australia, U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Poland, West Germany, Italy and Yugoslavia." In *Indian Art Exhibition: Visiting Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria 1955–56*, exhibition catalogue (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1955), n.p. Nationally organised survey exhibitions of modern and contemporary Indian art were not readily welcomed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, as Susan S. Bean recounts. The exhibition of Indian contemporary art, in collaboration with the Rockefeller Foundation, was not accepted at MoMA in 1956 because Monroe Wheeler, the head of exhibitions, had travelled to India and was not convinced that the Indian artists, including M. F. Husain, were ready to be shown at MoMA. See Susan S. Bean, "Viewed from Across the Globe: The Art of M. F. Husain," in *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.) (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 248.

8 See also Simone Wille, "The Significance of Mobility and the Artistic Practice of Zahoor ul Akhlaq," *The Journal of Transcultural Studies* 13, no. 1–2 (2022), 76–111.

9 For artists' mobility to London, and in particular to the Slade School of Fine Art, see Bruchet and Tiampo, "Slade, London, Asia." For South Asian artists in Paris, see Wille, "South Asian Artists at the Académie André Lhote," 189–207. For Indian artists in Paris, see Devika Singh (ed.), *Marg*, Special Issue: *India-France: Artistic Exchanges* 69, no. 1 (2017); Gayatri Sinha, "Satish Gujral (1916–2020): A Singular Journey," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*, Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 181–182; Singh, *International Departures*.

10 On the Ukil brothers, see Atreyee Gupta, "The Delhi Silpi Chakra: Art and Politics after the Radcliffe Line," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*, Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 180–183; https://dagworld.com/sarada-charan-ukil.html (last visited July 22, 2024); "Drawings by Sarada Charan Ukil on the Krishna legend," *Roopa Lekha* 1 and 2 (1978–1979), 7–10.

11 I am currently conducting research on this exhibition. The research results will be published with the Bulletin of the National Museum in Warsaw in 2026. According to Gabriela Świtek, the MDM Gallery was being constructed in 1951 and therefore not a large space. From a personal conversation with Świtek, April 9, 2025.

12 Świtek, "Across Borders and Art Histories," 65.

13 Letter from AMZV, TO-O 1955–59, Indie 6, Archive of the AMZV (MFA) of the Czech Republic.

[14] There is documentation of a "Hindu Exhibition" in Warsaw on February 10, 1954. According to curator Zofia Machnicka, "Hindu" may well mean "Indian." Information retrieved from uncatalogued archival material from the National Museum in Warsaw and further discussed in a private conversation with Machnicka on September 18, 2023. Whether this is the 1953 exhibition or not is unclear, but highly possible. Compare also with the letter from Barada Ukil from AIFAC to the Embassy of Czechoslovakia in New Dehli in AMZV, TO-O 1955–59, Indie 6, Archive of the AMZV (MFA) of the Czech Republic.

[15] Letter from AMZV, TO-O 1955–59, Indie 6, Archive of the AMZV (MFA) of the Czech Republic.

[16] The exhibition was organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London and it was held at Burlington House from November 29, 1947 until February 29, 1948. The exhibition marked the transfer of power from British India to India.

[17] About the way India invested in the nation state via art through these two important and early exhibitions, see Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 175.

[18] Manuela Ciotti, "India's 'First' Pavilion in Venice," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*, Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 301–302.

[19] Francesca Orsini, Neelam Srivastava, and Laetitia Zecchini, "Introduction," in *The Form of Ideology and the Ideology of Form: Cold War, Decolonization and Third World Print Cultures*, Francesca Orsini, Neelam Srivastava, and Laetitia Zecchini (eds.) (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2022), 1.

[20] Cf. *Indian Art Exhibition: Visiting Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria. 1955–56*, exhibition catalogue (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1955), n.p.

[21] Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Brokering Identities: Art curators and the politics of cultural representation," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (eds.) (London: Routledge, 1996), 21–38.

[22] Compare with footnotes 62 and 63 in the Introduction; cf. Höh, Jaspter, and Oesterle, "Courts, Brokers and Brokerage in the Medieval Mediterranean," 9.

[23] In the framework of a conference that I co-organised in Prague in 2021, Sanjukta Sunderason presented a paper titled "Freedoms in Motion: Transists of Modern Indian Artists in Central Europe in the 1950s," in which she looked at Sanyal's journey in socialist Europe in connection with the exhibition of Indian art from 1955/56. The conference was titled *Collecting Asian Art in Prague: Cultural Politics and Transcontinental Networks in 20th Century Central Europe*, and it was organised by Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kado, Zdenka Klimtová, and Simone Wille (Prague, June 17–18, 2021), https://www.ngprague.cz/en/event/3092/collecting-asian-art-in-prague-conference (last visited February 27, 2025).

[24] Santo Datta, "Introduction," in *The Vertical Woman: Reminiscences of B.C. Sanyal: From 1947 to the Present*, Vol. II (New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art, 1998), n.p.

[25] The two-volume publication of Sanyal's personal memoirs and records of his life as an artist has been edited by Santo Datta as B. C. Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman: Reminiscences of B.C. Sanyal: 1902–1947. Dibrugarh, Calcutta, Lahore, Delhi,* Vol. I (New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art, 1998); and B. C. Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman: Reminiscences of B.C. Sanyal: From 1947 to the Present*, Vol. II (New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art, 1999).

[26] Silpi Chakra literally means 'artists' circle.' On the Delhi Silpi Chakra, see Atreyee Gupta, "The Delhi Silpi Chakra," 180–191.

[27] See Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. I, 73–76; Gupta, "The Delhi Silpi Chakra," 180–182.

[28] From AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6.

[29] From AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6.

[30] Typed text, documentation for the exhibition Modern Indian Art, 1979, NGP Collection of Asian Art. Also quoted in Zdenka Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 166 and footnote 30.

[31] *Mumbai Modern: Progressive Artists' Group 1947–2013* (New Delhi: DAG, 2013), 162–187.

[32] For more on Gade see the website http://www.ha-gade.com (last visited September 12, 2023).

[33] Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 27.

[34] Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 28.

35 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 28.
36 S. A. Krishnan, "H. A. Gade," in *Gade*, exhibition catalogue (Bombay: Sadanga Publications, 1961), 20.
37 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 28.
38 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 27.
39 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 28.
40 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 28.
41 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 28.
42 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 29.
43 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 29.
44 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 29.
45 For more on Madanjit Singh see Manuela Ciotti, "India's 'First' Pavilion in Venice," 301–302.
46 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 29.
47 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 29.
48 Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 101.
49 Cf. also Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, in which he describes Venice through real and imaginary encounters with a variety of places. The original *Le città invisibili* was published by Enaudi in 1972, and the first English translation appeared as Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1974).
50 Sanyal does not mention the date of his arrival in Vienna, but since he left India on November 7, 1955 on a three-week sea journey, it can be assumed that he came through Vienna at the end of the month of November.
51 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 30.
52 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 30.
53 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 29. On the World Peace Council see Andrew G. Bone, "Russell and the Communist-Aligned Peace Movement in the Mid-1950s," *The Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies* 21 (Summer 2001), 31–57. The Third World Congress of Partisans for Peace was held on December 12, 1952 in Vienna. Cf. https://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/9/1/9177/AC_24-D_16_ENG.pdf (last visited September 14, 2023).
54 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 30.
55 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 27.
56 The Department of Oriental Art of the NGP was established in 1952, and later became the Asian Art Collection of the NGP. For more on the genesis of this collection, cf. Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 61–82.
57 From AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6.
58 Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 161.
59 From AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6. Sanyal probably meant Adolf Hoffmeister (1902–1973). See also Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 167, where she quotes Krása who refers to Hájek and Hoffmeister as those two personalities in Prague, which were important for Indian artists.
60 Cf. AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6.
61 Cf. Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 30.
62 For more on Pramod Pati's stay in Prague see the Conclusion (Chapter 6).
63 From the report in AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6, where it says that Sanyal and Gade attended the opening of the exhibition *Ten years of People's Republic of Czechoslovakia in Fine Art*, and that they saw the collection of the National Gallery in Prague and in Bratislava and the statue collection in Zbraslav. They also visited Southern Czechia, the Slovak National Museum in Martin and the High Tatras.
64 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 30.
65 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 30.
66 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 32.
67 The exhibition catalogue was prepared by the LKA.
68 Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 161.

69 Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 161.

70 On artistic contact and decolonial transformation of modernism, see Kravagna, *Transmoderne* and Kravagna, *Transmodern*.

71 On Bulganin's and Khrushchev's visit to India, see Nikolay Aleksandrovich Bulganin, "Visit to India: Speeches and Interviews," *PRISM: Political & Rights Issues & Social Movements* 54 (1956), https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/328102783.pdf.

72 "Introduction," in *Indian Art Exhibition: Visiting Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria 1955–56*, exhibition catalogue (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1955), n.p.

73 See also Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-garde, 1922–1947* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), 15.

74 From AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6.

75 From AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6.

76 From AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6.

77 From AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6.

78 From AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6.

79 Information retrieved from the Archive of the National Gallery Bratislava.

80 There were two separate posters produced, one for the Prague edition of the exhibition and one for the Bratislava edition of the exhibition, both featuring the same details. The difference is only in the Czech and Slovak writing.

81 Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

82 Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 32.

83 See Sanjukta Sunderason, *Partisan Aesthetics: Modern Art & India's Long Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), 14.

84 File card from the archives of the NGP.

85 On the significance and symbolism of the colour red for socialism and communism, see Gerd Koenen, *Die Farbe Rot: Ursprünge und Geschichte des Kommunismus* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2017). About the glowing effect of the colour red, see also Ernesto Che Guevara, *The Motorcycle Diaries. Latinoamericana—Tagebuch einer Motorradreise 1951/52* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 2017).

86 Cf. Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 62–63.

87 For covers of *Nový Orient*, see the digital library of the Academy of Sciences, Prague, https://orient.cas.cz/cs/knihovny/elektronicke-zdroje/digiltalizace-novy-orient/ (last visited September 28, 2024). I would also like to thank Jaroslav Strnad for drawing my attention to this important detail. For a reflection about the long-term vision of *Nový Orient* see Jaroslav Strnad, "Nový Orient jako zrcadlo doby a české orientalistiky," Šárka Velhartická (ed.), *100 let české staroorientalistiky. České klínopisné bádání, předovýchodní archeologie a spřízněné obory v dokumentech* (Prague: Nakladatelství Libri, 2021), 538–575.

88 Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the Politics of Culture," in *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*, Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes (eds.) (Munich: Prestel and Haus der Kunst, 2016), 76.

89 See the newspaper article from Imre Jankovich, "India képzömüvészete," *Új Szó*, December 31, 1955, Bratislava.

90 Jankovich, "India képzömüvészete."

91 Jankovich, "India képzömüvészete."

92 See the newspaper article "Výstava indického umenia v Bratislave," *Sloboda*, January 1, 1956, Bratislava.

93 For a connection between medieval art and the modern, see Alexander Nagel, *Medieval Modern: Art out of time* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012).

94 For a characteristic feature of modernism and its close relationship to tradition in Bohemia, see the exhibition catalogue *Rembrandtova tramvaj. Kubismus, tradice a "jiné" umění*, Tomáš Winter, Lenka Bydžovská, Pavla Machalíková, and Tatiana Petrasová (eds.) (Plzeň: Západočeská galerie, 2015). The catalogue offers an English summary.

[95] Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 73.
[96] Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 77. For more on Hájek's publishing activities see Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 73–74 as well as the introduction to this book.
[97] Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 75.
[98] Lubor Hájek, "Výstava indického umění," "*Výtvarná práce*," no. 24 (1955), 12. Note that he published a very similar article in *Nový Orient*: Lubor Hájek, "K výstavě indického umění," *Nový Orient*, volume 11, no. 2 (1956), 26–27.
[99] See Hájek, "Výstava indického umění," 12.
[100] See Hájek, "Výstava indického umění," 12.
[101] Hájek, "Výstava indického umění," 12. Thákur is the Czech transcription of Tagore.
[102] See Hájek, "Výstava indického umění," 12.
[103] See Hájek, "Výstava indického umění," 12.
[104] Hájek, "Výstava indického umění," 12.
[105] Hájek, "Výstava indického umění," 12.
[106] Hájek, "Výstava indického umění," 12. Also quoted in Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 161.
[107] See Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 73.
[108] Hájek, "Výstava indického umění," 12.
[109] Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism*, 12.
[110] Compare with footnote 96.
[111] W. G. Archer, *India and Modern Art* (London: Ruskin House, 1959).
[112] Partha Mitter formulated the phenomenon of "the Picasso manqué syndrome" in his book *The Triumph of Modernism*, 7, and further elaborated on it in his important text "Decentering Modernism," 534.
[113] On the value of appreciation that comes from the periphery, see the conversation between Simone Wille and Partha Mitter, "Of Centres, Peripheries, Values, and Judgements: Simone Wille in Conversation with Partha Mitter on 'Decentering Modernism' and Modernist Routes beyond Western Europe," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 210–211.
[114] Apart from Hájek and Krása, who both regularly wrote about Indian contemporary and modernist art, I would like to mention Hana Knížková's contributions to *New Orient Bimonthly* about modern and contemporary Indian art and artists. See, for example, her text "Maqbool Fida Husain—Modern Painter of India," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 5, no. 1 (1966), 8–15.
[115] Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 34. According to AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6, the two left Czechoslovakia on January 7, 1956.
[116] Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 34.
[117] Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 64.
[118] I am currently conducting research for a book project on this topic.
[119] Sanyal, *The Vertical Woman*, Vol. II, 44.
[120] Greenblatt, "Cultural Mobility: An Introduction," 19.
[121] See also Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 163.
[122] The work by Jamini Roy, *Bengálská žena/A Woman of Bengal*, is listed in the catalogue as part of the collection of Shri Barada Ukil, but it was priced and offered for sale. It is documented in the exhibition catalogue in black and white. See *Indian Art Exhibition*, n.p.
[123] Documents from AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6.
[124] Hánová writes that the independent Department of Oriental Art was established by Hájek and renamed several times over the years. It is currently known as the Asian Art Collection. Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 61–82.
[125] Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 69.
[126] For an extensive summary and art historical account of the Collection of 20th Century Chinese Paintings at the NGP, see Michaela Pejčocková (ed.), *Masters of 20th-Century Ink Painting: from the*

Collections of the National Gallery in Prague (Prague: NGP, 2008). See also Michalea Pejčocková, "When East and West Met in the Heart of Europe: Vojtěch Chytil and His Contribution to Collecting Asian Art in Central Europe," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 113–125.

[127] Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 74.

[128] See Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 163; Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 76.

[129] Née Stránská.

[130] Charlotta Pocheová was the assistant in charge of the collection at that time. She was the great-granddaughter of T. G. Masaryk. She later migrated to the US, where she became a noted curator. I would like to thank Zdenka Klimtová for pointing this out. See https://www.memoryofnations.eu/en/kotikova-charlotta-1940 (last visited October 20, 2024).

[131] From a correspondence between the Dům Umění and the National Gallery Prague, archived in the Dům Umění, Brno.

[132] J. B. Svrček, "Umělecké památky asijských národů," *Lidová demokracie*, September 16, 1961.

[133] Compare with Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 74–77.

[134] For more images on the installation of *Masterpieces of Chinese Art* at the Château in Benešov nad Ploučnicí, see Michaela Pejčochová, *Sto let jednoho stromu* (Brno: Books&Pipes, 2021), 97–99.

[135] Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 75.

[136] Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 75.

[137] See Tomáš Winter, "Picasso's Meeting With Buddha," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 45–57, here 47.

[138] On World Art History, or *Weltkunstgeschichte*, see Kitty Zijlmans and Wilfried van Damme (eds.), *World Art Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches* (Amsterdam: Valuz, 2008); Wildfried van Damme, "'Good to Think': The Historiography of Intercultural Art Studies," *World Art* 1, no. 1 (2011), 43–57; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, "Reflections on World Art History," in *Circulations in the Global History of Art*, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (eds.) (Farnham: Ashgate Publishers, 2015), 23–45.

[139] John Clark, "The Worlding of the Asian Modern," in *Contemporary Asian Art and Exhibition: Connectivities and World-making*, Michelle Antoinette and Caroline Turner (eds.) (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014), 67–88. See also John Clark, *Modern Asian Art* (Sydney and Honolulu: Craftsman House and University of Hawai'i Press, 1998).

[140] Lubor Hájek, "Chinese Art in a Renaissance Castle," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 2, no. 5 (October 1961), 152. See also Lubor Hájek, "Czech Castle—Chinese Art," *Oriental Art* IX, no. 4 (Winter 1963), 216. Also quoted in Hánová, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks," 76.

[141] India's Republic Day is celebrated on January 26 every year; it is one of India's three national holidays. It remembers the adoption of the Constitution of India on January 26, 1950.

[142] Cf. Świtek, "Across Borders and Art Histories," 55–82.

[143] Compare with footnote 114.

[144] H. Knížková, "Moderní indické umění," *Lidová demokracie*, Prague, February 1, 1979.

[145] See text before footnote 135.

[146] Jaroslav Strand in conversation with Simone Wille, in Simone Wille, "Chittaprosad's Linocut Prints at the National Gallery in Prague," 16.

[147] For a list of Indian art exhibitions across East/Central Europe, see my project website https://www.uibk.ac.at/en/projects/south-asia-in-central-europe/ (last visited August 22, 2024).

[148] I am currently writing about the collections of modern Indian art in Warsaw. A publication is in preparation and will be published in 2026 with Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie.

[149] Compare with Ali Raza, *Revolutionary Pasts: Communist Internationalism in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 3. Raza, in his book, looks at the possibilities offered by the politics of communist internationalism in colonial India, and how Moscow became

the "undisputed centre of the communist world" (Raza, *Revolutionary Pasts*, 2), and a destination for intellectuals and party members alike.

[150] See Wille, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modern Art," 51–72.

[151] The village Ležáky, southeast of Prague, is lesser known, but suffered a similar fate to that of Lidice, as a result of retaliations by the Nazis after the killing of Reinhard Heydrich.

[152] There is an array of literature about Lidice. For a broad historical account, see Eleanor Wheeler, *Lidice* (Prague: Orbis, 1962). See also Uwe Naumann (ed.), *Lidice: Ein Böhmisches Dorf* (Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg Verlag, 1983).

[153] See also footnote 1 in Wille, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modern Art," 52.

[154] About René Block's three-part initiative, in which he collected and donated works by West German and international artists to the Lidice Solidarity Collection, see the publications and exhibition catalogues *Pro Lidice: 52 umělců z Německa/52 Künstler aus Deutschland*, René Block (ed.) (Prague: Goethe Institute Prague, 1997); *Lidická sbírka průvodce*, Luba Hédlová (ed.) (Lidice: Patmáník, 2013); *Remember Lidice*, René Block and Thomas Niemeyer (eds.) (Berlin: Edition Block, 2016); *Remember Lidice: 1967–2017. 50 years of the Lidice art collection*, exhibition catalogue (Lidice: Patmáník, 2017).

[155] From a private conversation with the artist in Colombo on July 29, 2017. See also Wille, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modern Art," 64.

[156] There was an exhibition of Senaka Senanayake's work on September 19, 1962, at Bremen, Böttcherstrasse, at the Paula-Becker-Modersohn-Haus. The artist, at that time, was only eleven years of age. There were many newspaper reports across West Germany about this exhibition. See "Gästebuch der Stadt," *Weser Kurier*, September 19, 1962; "Ein Wunderkind aus Ceylon," *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* no. 294, Tuesday, December 18, 1962, 7; "'Wunderknabe' stellt in Bremen aus: Der elfjährige Senaka Senanayake aus Ceylon," *Recklingshäuser Zeitung*, September 24, 1962. He had worked on commissions for the United Nations in New York, the White House in Washington, and the National Museum of American History in Washington.

[157] "Svět kultury a umění," *Rudé Právo*, January 17, 1968. For an extensive article with many colour reproductions of the artist's work see Reginald Perera, "SENAKA-a Transient Phenomenon or a Growing Genius," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 7, no. 4 (1968), 112–113.

[158] René Block, "Auf einer Reise nach Prag am 19. Januar 1997," in *Pro Lidice: 52 Künstler aus Deutschland,* René Block (ed.) (Prague: Goethe Institute Prague, 1997), n.p.

[159] Luba Hédlová, "Remember Lidice: 50 Years of the Lidice Art Collection," 17; Block, "Auf einer Reise nach Prag," n.p.

[160] Block, "Auf einer Reise nach Prag," n.p.

[161] See also Wille, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modern Art," 65.

[162] From a private conversation with Jan Marek in Prague, June 8, 2017. See also Wille, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modern Art," 62; Marek, "Shakir Ali," 112–118.

[163] From a private conversation with Jan Marek in Prague, June 8, 2017.

[164] See also Marcella Nesom Sirhandi, *Contemporary Painting in Pakistan* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1992), 53–54.

[165] K. K. Hebbar's work from around this time is also in the collection of Albertinum, Staatliche Kunstsammlung Dresden (SKD). The work titled *Der Abend* (*The Evening*), 1967, oil on canvas, 76 × 88.5 cm. Gal.No. 3856, is documented in *Revolutionary Romances? Globale Kunstgeschichten in der DDR*, Mathias Wagner et al. (eds.) (Dresden and Leipzig: SKD and Spector Books, 2024), 34.

[166] Wille, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modern Art," 66. See also footnote 32 in Wille's text.

[167] Hédlová, "Remember Lidice," 22.

[168] See Hédlová, "Remember Lidice," 22.

[169] I remember that day well. I was in Prague, and took the local bus to Lidice, to see the exhibition that Luba Hédlová curated for the occasion. It was a brilliantly curated exhibition, with new and old works from René Block's donations. I also had a chance to meet and introduce myself to Block, whom I asked if he was aware of the works by non-European modernist artists in the Lidice Collection. He told me that he was, and that he thinks it is remarkable. He also said that he does not know enough about it. From entries in my personal diary dated June 9, 2017.

[170] Parts of the Skopje Solidarity Collection were presented in the framework of the exhibition "No Feeling is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection" at the Kunsthalle in Vienna from April 4, 2023 until January 28, 2024. See also the exhibition catalogue, *No Feeling is Final: The Skopje Solidarity Collection* (Vienna: Kunsthalle Vienna, 2023).

[171] WHW, "No Feeling is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection," in *No Feeling is Final: The Skopje Solidarity Collection* (Vienna: Kunsthalle Vienna, 2023), 12. This exhibition traveled to Prague where it was shown at the NGP, where selected works from the Lidice Collection were included. See https://www.ngprague.cz/en/event/3915/%C5%BD%C3%A1dn%C3%BD%20pocit%20netrv%C3%A1%20v%C4%9B%C4%8Dn%C4%9B.%20Sb%C3%ADrka%20solidarity%20ve%20Skopji (last visited February 27, 2025).

[172] Bojana Piškur and Teja Merhar, "Third World: Prints from the Non-Aligned Countries at the International Biennial Exhibitions of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana between 1961 and 1991," in *Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned*, exhibition catalogue (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2019), 172; about Polish–Moroccon artistic relations during the Cold War (1955–1980) see Przemysław Strożek, "Ahmed Cherkaoui in Warsaw," https://www.themaghribpodcast.com/2021/04/ahmed-cherkaoui-in-warsaw-polish.html (last visited July 25, 2024).

[173] Piškur and Merhar, "Third World: Prints from the Non-Aligned Countries," 172.

[174] See Świtek (ed.), *Ikonotheka*, Special Issue: *Exhibition Histories*, where mainly exhibitions of Western countries in Poland are mentioned. See also the exhibition *cum* research project catalogue *Revolutionary Romances? Globale Kunstgeschichten in der DDR*, Mathias Wagner et al. (eds.) (Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlung Dresden, 2024).

[175] For a reproduction of the Polish version of the exhibition catalogue see Świtek, "Across Borders and Art Histories," 59.

[176] In the Czech catalogue, the caption for Bimal Dasgupt's work reads: *Krajina*, 1971, oil on canvas, 122 × 121 cm.

[177] In the Czech catalogue, the caption for M. F. Husain's work reads: *Višwamitra*, 1973, oil on canvas, 152.3 × 122.3 cm. This is the only work by Husain in this exhibition.

[178] See exhibition catalogue, Kathleen Reinhardt, Kerstin Schankweiler, and Mathias Wagner, "Internationalismus in der DDR—Kunst und visuelle Kultur zwischen Idealen und Widersprüchen," in *Revolutionary Romances? Globale Kunstgeschichten in der DDR,* 30.

[179] Reinhardt, Schankweiler, and Wagner, "Internationalismus in der DDR," 30.

[180] Uta Rahman-Steinert, "Big Presents Maintain the Friendship: The Gift of the People's Republic of China to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (National Museums in Berlin), GDR, in 1959," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 127–140.

[181] Compare with footnote 11 and 14 in this chapter.

[182] Haines and Sharpe, "Art, Institutions, and Internationalism, 1945–73," 28.

Chapter 4. Individual Journeys to Prague

1 Raza, *Revolutionary Pasts*, 2.

2 Mark Bradley, *The World Reimagined: Americans and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). About structures of feeling see also Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 128–135.

3 For more on Ram Kumar's time in Paris, see Wille, "South Asian Artists at the Académie André Lhote," 203–204. See also the interview between the artist and Yashodhara Dalmia, *Journeys: Four Generations of Indian Artists in Their Own Words*, Vol. 1 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 125; Mahesh Chandra, "Chronology," in *Ram Kumar: A Journey Within*, Gagan Gill (ed.) (New Delhi: Vadehra Art Gallery, 1996), 233-238.

4 See interview with the artist in Dalmia, *Journeys*, 126.

5 According to an entry that I found at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZV) in Prague, Nirmal Verma began to study in Prague on September 1, 1960. According to this entry, his address was Prague 2, Grégrova 22. He was registered as a postgraduate student, and he studied history, literature

and folklore production at the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University in Prague. Particularly interesting is a note in the archive, saying that he translated for Artia, which, as the note reads, "makes him very valuable for us," suggesting that he was approached by agents of the Communist Party. From an attachment from February 16, 1961, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 108.340/60-8 from April 9, 1960.

6 Letter by Miloslav Krása to Ram Kumar, dated December 30, 1950. Typewritten letter and envelope from Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS), Fond H, Sign. H-137 ("Orientální ústav" Všeobecný svazek, část 1/4), 245–246 (digitised photocopy).

7 Letter by Miloslav Krása to Ram Kumar, dated December 30, 1950. Typewritten letter and envelope from Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS), Fond H, Sign. H-137 ("Orientální ústav" Všeobecný svazek, část 1/4), 245–246 (digitised photocopy).

8 Letter by Miloslav Krása to Ram Kumar, dated December 30, 1950. Typewritten letter and envelope from Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS), Fond H, Sign. H-137 ("Orientální ústav" Všeobecný svazek, část 1/4), 245–246 (digitised photocopy).

9 Cf. B. W., "The Communist Peace Front," *Communist Affairs* 1, no. 7 (June-August 1963), 3–7.

10 Rachel Leow, "A Missing Peace: The Asia-Pacific Peace Conference in Beijing, 1952 and the Emotional Making of Third World Internationalism," *Journal of World History*, Special Issue: *Other Bandung: Afro-Asian Internationalisms in the Early Cold War* 30, no. 1/2 (2019), 29.

11 I have not been able to confirm the identity of Madjih Rahnema (1924–2015) with absolute certainty, but it is possible that he was the diplomat and former Minister of Iran, who represented Iran at the UN from 1957 to 1971.

12 See interview with the artist in Dalmia, *Journeys*, 126; see also Singh, *International Departures*, 125.

13 Artists Syed Haider Raza, Francis Newton Souza, Sadanand Bakre, and Akbar Padamsee were in Paris at the same time as Ram Kumar. Art critic Richard Bartholomew wrote a fairly large number of texts about Ram Kumar, and shared with him concerns about existentialism of that time. Some of these texts are reproduced in Richard Bartholomew, *The Art Critic* (Noida: BART, 2012). See also Geeta Kapur's introduction to Bartholomew's book, "An Indian Critic and the Bard's Puzzle," in Richard Bartholomew, *The Art Critic* (Noida: BART, 2012), 15. Artist Krishna Reddy was also engaged in such concerns while he was living in Paris, from 1952 until 1976, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. See my forthcoming article about Reddy, "Krishna Reddy in Central Europe."

14 Adamson, *Painting, Politics and the Struggle for the École de Paris, 1944–1964*, 116.

15 Nirmal Verma, "From Solitude to Salvation," in *Ram Kumar: A Journey Within*, Gagan Gill (ed.) (New Delhi: Vadehra Art Gallery, 1996), n.p.

16 *A Worker's Family* is depicted in Fig. 25 in Chapter 3. It is the painting on the right side of the wall where three paintings are hung.

17 Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship*, 13.

18 Ram Kumar, quoted in "Kultura: Indický malíř Rám Kumár," *Svobodné Slovo*, July 28, 1955, 8.

19 "Kultura: Indický malíř Rám Kumár," *Svobodné Slovo*, July 28, 1955, 8.

20 See also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 173. Compare also with B. C. Sanyal's account of how he was able to meet non-official artists in Prague with the help of his translator, in this volume, Chapter 3.

21 Mikuláš Medek, *Texty* (Prague: Torst, 1995), 188.

22 Bartholomew, *The Art Critic*, 69.

23 Cresswell, "The Production of Mobilities," 11–25; Cresswell, *On the Move*; Adey, *Mobility*, 33–82.

24 Cf. also Wille, "The Significance of Mobility and the Artistic Practice of Zahoor ul Akhlaq," 80.

25 Cf. also Ali Raza's assessment of mid-war Indian Communists and their international mobilities in Raza, *Revolutionary Pasts*.

26 See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 8.

27 Miloslav Krása, "The Artist and His Time," in *Ram Kumar: A Journey Within*, Gagan Gill (ed.) (New Delhi: Vadehra Art Gallery, 1996), 205.

[28] Letter from Ram Kumar to the Czechoslovak Embassy in New Delhi, dated September 9, 1960 and letter from Ram Kumar, dated February 24, 1960, Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.

[29] Letter by the Czechoslovak Charge d'Affaires in New Delhi, Dr J. Benes, to Mr Yunus from the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, where Benes states that he has been informed that the consignment arrived in Bombay in early December 1955, AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.

[30] Letter from Ram Kumar, dated February 24, 1960, Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.

[31] Letter from Ram Kumar, dated February 24, 1960, Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.

[32] Letter from Ram Kumar, dated February 24, 1960, Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.

[33] Letter from Ram Kumar to the Czechoslovak Embassy in New Delhi, September 9, 1960, Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.

[34] Copy of a letter Ram Kumar wrote to Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí from New Delhi on November 16, 1956, AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.

[35] Letter from Ram Kumar, dated February 24, 1960, AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.

[36] According to archival records, the port authority was represented by the American Express Co., Bombay.

[37] Greenblatt, "Cultural Mobility: An Introduction," 2.

[38] Greenblatt, "Cultural Mobility: An Introduction," 16.

[39] Greenblatt, "Cultural Mobility: An Introduction," 17.

[40] See Chapter 3, 21.

[41] AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.

[42] AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.

[43] Krása, "The Artist and His Time," 205–206.

[44] Krása, "The Artist and His Time," 205.

[45] Also known as Banares or Benares.

[46] In 1958, he had a solo exhibition in Krákow and in Warsaw. In Warsaw, the exhibition took place at Gallery Plastyków.

[47] The exhibition opened on January 19, 1967, and was officially organised by the Union of Czechoslovak Fine Artists.

[48] Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 165.

[49] See also Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 165.

[50] See *Ram Kumar: A Journey Within*, 205. The caption states that the third person is Mrs. Krásová. After consulting the Krása family, it can be confirmed that the female person is not Mrs. Krásová (from an email conversation with Helena Bonušová and the Krása family, June 23, 2025).

[51] Hana Knížková, "Dva indict malíri v Praze," *Nový Orient*, no. 2 (1967), 40–42.

[52] Krása, "The Artist and His Time," 206.

[53] Krása, "The Artist and His Time," 206. The exhibition folder announces that the opening will be held at Fragner Gallery's nearby Náprstek Museum, on May 19, 1976. Since Ram Kumar was unable to attend, it seems that the exhibition's opening date was shifted to June 22. Eventually, this turned out to be an exhibition of Husain's work only. See below in this chapter Fig. 65.

[54] Knížková, "Dva indict malíri v Praze," 41.

[55] Krása, "The Artist and His Time," 205–206.

[56] For a detailed analysis of Nirmal Verma's time and writing in Prague, see Kateřina Rührová, *Nirmal Varma a Československo,* Diplomová práce, vedoucí Jaroslav Strnad (Master's thesis, supervised by Jaroslav Strnad) (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, Filozofická fakulta, Ústav asijských studií, 2021). Rührová mentions Verma visiting his brother Kumar in Paris, travelling there from Prague. See Rührová, *Nirmal Varma*, 19.

[57] Interview with the artist in Dalmia, *Journeys*, 133. It is unclear in what capacity the group, which included the two artists, traveled to Helsinki. The World Assembly for Peace had a meeting in

Helsinki from June 22 to 29, 1955. The Bureau of the World Peace Council also had a meeting from December 11 to 13 in Helsinki.

58 Dalmia, *Journeys*, 133.

59 The group included Francis Newton Souza, Syed Haider Raza, Krishnaji Howlaji Ara, Sadanand Krishnaji Bakre, and Hari Ambadas Gade.

60 Dalmia, *Journeys*, 133.

61 Much has been written about the PAG. Selected writings include Geeta Kapur, *When Was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2000), 303–304; Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 90–129; Yashodhara Dalmia, "Bombay Modern: The Progressive Artists' Group and the Quest for Significant Form," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*, Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 156–179.

62 Bean, "East Meets East in Husain's Horses," 11–20. See also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 172.

63 Bean, "East Meets East in Husain's Horses," 12. Also quoted in Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 173.

64 See Chapter 3, footnote 65.

65 Maqbool Fida Husain, quoted in Pal, *Beyond the Canvas*, 78.

66 D. D. Kosambi, "For Peace in Asia and the Pacific, Peace is the World," *Bulletin of the Preparatory Conference* 11 (August 6, 1952), quoted in Leow, "A Missing Peace," 21. For an image of the setting of the conference with Picasso's *Dove of Peace* featured behind the delegates, see https://medium.com/afro-asian-visions/art-of-peace-ee4288a43514 (last visited February 14, 2024).

67 For reproductions of ink sketches on paper of M. F. Husain's sculptures from Khajuraho, dating from 1954, see, for example, Karin Zitzewitz, *The Art of Secularism: The Cultural Politics of Modernist Art in Contemporary India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 25–26.

68 Kapur, *When Was Modernism*, 299, 326.

69 Zitzewitz, *The Art of Secularism*, 24.

70 Monica Juneja, "Preface," in *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.) (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), xx.

71 Cf. Juneja, "Preface," xx.

72 Bean, "East Meets East in Husain's Horses," 11–20; Bean, "Viewed from Across the Globe," 246–249.

73 Bean, "Viewed from Across the Globe," 248.

74 Bean, "Viewed from Across the Globe," 246. About Husain's early travel abroad see also Pal, *Beyond the Canvas*, 82.

75 Pal, *Beyond the Canvas*, 82.

76 Gupta, "After Bandung," 635. Gupta refers to Husain in Pal, *Beyond the Canvas*, 92.

77 See also Chapter 3 and the detailed account of both artists B. C. Sanyal's and H. A. Gade's journey from Bombay to Europe. We also know that Zubeida Agha was in Egypt in 1950. These details are gathered in the personal archive of writer Saira Ansari. I would like to thank Saira Ansari for making this information available to me.

78 Gupta, "After Bandung," 637.

79 For an examination and appreciation of the formal language of Egyptian art at around the same time see Morad Montazami, "Meridional Trajectories in A World Without Fatherlands," and Mehri Khalil, "The Académie Lhote: A Rite of Passage," both in *Monaco-Alexandrie: Le grand detour. Villes-mondes et surréalisme cosmopolite*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Zaman Books, 2021), 29–39, 75–79.

80 See also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 173.

81 *Husain: Works from the Collection of the Late Badrivishal Pitti*, auction catalogue, Pundole's, Mumbai, Thursday January 17, 2013, 54–55.

82 *Husain: Works from the Collection of the Late Badrivishal Pitti*, 74.

83 *Husain: Works from the Collection of the Late Badrivishal Pitti*, 204.

84 *Husain: Works from the Collection of the Late Badrivishal Pitti*, 205.

85 *Husain: Works from the Collection of the Late Badrivishal Pitti*, 208, 209.

86 *Husain: Works from the Collection of the Late Badrivishal Pitti*, 39.

[87] See also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 171.

[88] See Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 163.

[89] See https://www.airindiacollector.com/blog/m-f-hussain-and-his-air-india-creations (last visited February 27, 2024). The Air India Prague office was located at Na Př.kopě 858/20, Prague 1. I would like to thank Zdenka Klimtova for this information. See also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 183, footnote 2.

[90] M. F. Husain, ink on paper, Pundole's auction catalogue 2013. According to Pundole's auction catalogue, the drawing is part of a collection of nineteen drawings of Prague. This one is from page 207. During the 2024 Venice Biennale, the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) showed twelve of the nineteen drawings as part of their collection in an exhibition titled *The Rooted Nomad: MF Husain, An Immersive Experience and Exhibition* at Magazzini Del Sale n. 5, Dorsoduro 262, curated by Roobina Karode with Avijna Bhattacharaya.

[91] See Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 175, 184 and footnote 14; Khalid Mohamed, *Where Art Thou: An Autobiography* (Mumbai: M. F. Husain Foundation, 2002); https://www.thequint.com/entertainment/mf-husain-maria-zourkova-an-incomplete-love-story-tabu-meenaxi-a-tale-of-3-cities#read-more (last visited February 27, 2024); see also Pradeep Chandra, *M.F. Husain: A Pictorial Tribute* (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2011), 132.

[92] Registration file Marie Jaroslava-Žurková. National Archive Prague.

[93] Mohamed, *Where Art Thou*; also quoted in Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 175.

[94] The work is titled *M. F. Husain, Drawing of Prague*, ink on paper/pencil on paper, D.34, July 23, 1957, reproduced in *Husain: Works from the Collection of the Late Badrivishal Pitti*, 208.

[95] Maqbool Fida Husain, quoted in Pal, *Beyond the Canvas*, 86.

[96] The work is titled *M. F. Husain, Drawing of Prague*, ink on paper/pencil on paper, D.33, July 23, 1957, reproduced in *Husain: Works from the Collection of the Late Badrivishal Pitti*, 209.

[97] The work is titled *M. F. Husain, Drawing of Prague*, ink on paper/pencil on paper, D.22, July 20, 1957, reproduced in *Husain: Works from the Collection of the Late Badrivishal Pitti*, 209.

[98] Pal, *Beyond the Canvas*, 90.

[99] See Mohamed, *Where Art Thou*; https://www.thequint.com/entertainment/mf-husain-maria-zourkova-an-incomplete-love-story-tabu-meenaxi-a-tale-of-3-cities#read-more (last visited February 29, 2024).

[100] Handwritten two-page letter by M. F. Husain to Miloslav Krása, dated Bombay, May 28, 1959, in Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, archival record Fond M. Krása, box no. 4.

[101] Handwritten two-page letter by M. F. Husain to Miloslav Krása, dated Bombay, May 28, 1959, in Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, archival record Fond M. Krása, box no. 4.

[102] Handwritten two-page letter by M. F. Husain to Miloslav Krása, dated Bombay, May 28, 1959, in Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, archival record Fond M. Krása, box no. 4. It is unclear who Jauris was, but the name appears in other documents, for example in reviews about Indian scholarship holders in Czechoslovakia.

[103] Handwritten two-page letter by M. F. Husain to Miloslav Krása, dated Bombay, May 28, 1959, in Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, archival record Fond M. Krása, box no. 4. There is no record of the artist Dashrath Patel in Prague.

[104] Printed letter by M. F. Husain to Krása, dated September 8, 1965, in Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, archival record Fond M. Krása, box no. 4. There is, however, no record of Husain's presence in Prague in 1965. Husain began to work on the mural in ceramic tiles on the façade of the Indraprastha Bhavan in New Delhi in 1966.

[105] In 1967 he also made his first film, *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, which was awarded with Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival. He also exhibited in Warsaw and in New York.

[106] From a file kept at the Ministry of Education and Culture, MŠK, Sign. 35, kart 7. The information, however, comes from a file from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, because the letter was handwritten and signed by the Embassy of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in Baghdad, December 15, 1966.

[107] Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 171–185.

[108] Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 183.

[109] Cf. footnote 95 in this Chapter.

[110] Lubor Hájek, "Wooden Images by Hussain," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 2, no. 4 (1962), 122.

[111] According to a press article, this exhibition then traveled on to Paris and Boston. See *Mladá Fronta*, June 23, 1976. The newspaper article speaks of Husain's work only. See also Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 165.

[112] Alena Vosečková, "Neobvyklá vernisáž," *Nový Orient*, no. 7 (1976), 217–218. See also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 179.

[113] Vosečková, "Neobvyklá vernisáž," 218. See also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 179.

[114] Vosečková, "Neobvyklá vernisáž," 217–218.

[115] Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Mapping India after Husain," in *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.) (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), 94–95. Ramaswamy references Susan S. Bean as a source of information about the five paintings of goddesses and Prague. See footnote 60 in Ramaswamy, "Mapping India after Husain," 94. In the newspaper article from *Mladá Fronta* of June 23, 1976, it says that the pivotal part of the exhibition, which has its premier in Prague, consists of five large canvases which are referred to as "The Feminine Principle of Energy," works which will subsequently be shown in Paris and in Boston, where they will then be installed permanently. I would like to thank Zdenka Klimtová for locating this information for me.

[116] Ramaswamy, "Mapping India after Husain," 94.

[117] Ramaswamy, "Mapping India after Husain," 94.

[118] Ramaswamy, "Mapping India after Husain," 94, 90.

[119] Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 97. Cf. Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 181.

[120] Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 97. Cf. Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 181.

[121] Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 181.

[122] I would like to thank Zdenka Klimtová for her close observations about these drawings. From a private conversation with Klimtová in Prague, February 20, 2021.

[123] Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 175 and 182.

[124] M. F. Husain, quoted in Pal, *Beyond the Canvas*, 84. See also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 179.

[125] Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 179.

[126] Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 179.

[127] Pal, *Beyond the Canvas*, 83. See also Zitzewitz, *The Art of Secularism*, 24.

[128] Zitzewitz, *The Art of Secularism*, 24.

[129] Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 179.

[130] Mohamed, *Where Art Thou*. See also Pal, *Beyond the Canvas*, 89; Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 177.

[131] Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 177.

[132] Hněvkovský and the Czech artist Otakar Nejedlý (1883–1957) went to Ceylon and India together in 1909. Nejedlý returned to Europe in 1911 and Hněvkovský in 1913 only to return to India in 1922 upon an invitation of Rabindranath Tagore to teach at Santiniketan. He then came back to Europe in 1923. For an informative article about these two artists, see Miloslav Krása, "Two Czech Painters and their Bohemian Travels through India and Ceylon," *New Orient Bimonthly*, vol. 6, no. 6 (December 1967), 177–184. See also the two-volume autobiography by Jaroslav Hněvkovský about his time in South Asia, *Malířovy listy z Indie* and *Malířovy listy z Indie: Druhý díl* (Prague: Sfinx, 1927). About Otakar Nejedlý see Otakar Nejedlý, *Malířovy toulky Evropê, Cejlonem a Indií* (Prague: NČSVU, 1960) (Nakladatelství československých výtvarných umělců—Publishing House of Czechoslovak fine artists).

[133] I would like to thank Zdenka Klimtová for this information.

[134] See Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 179. I would like to thank Zdenka Klimtová for drawing my attention to Čičmany.

[135] Alena Vosečková, "Neobvyklá vernisáž," *Nový Orient*, no. 7 (1976), 217–218.

[136] Jaroslav Strnad mentioned to me that he faintly remembers Cipka Durdilová as being associated with the Czechoslovak-India friendship Association. From a personal conversation with Strnad, June 22, 2025.

[137] Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 94; see also Gupta, "After Bandung," 635; Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 179.

[138] On processes of transculturality, see Monica Juneja and Christian Kravagna, "Understanding Transculturalism: Monica Juneja and Christian Kravagna in Conversation," in *Transcultural Modernisms*, Model House Research Group (ed.) (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013), 22, n23; *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies*, Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, and Susan Richter (eds.) (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2019); see also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 179.

[139] Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 90.

[140] Epigraph: Maqbul [Maqbool] F. Husain, quoted in Richard Bartholomew and Shiv. S. Kapur, *Husain* (New York: Abrams 1971), quoted in Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 90.

[141] See also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 181.

[142] Cf. Shakir Ali and his journey to places such as Mirmande and Prague in Chapter 2.

[143] Alena Vosečková, "Neobvyklá vernisáž," *Nový Orient*, no. 7 (1976), 218. See also the text which appears in Fig. 82.

[144] Vosečková, "Neobvyklá vernisáž," 218. See also Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 181. See also Fig. 82.

[145] Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 181.

[146] See Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*, 93.

[147] For an account on *Meenaxi* and the Prague episode, see Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 181–183.

[148] Owais Husain, "The Making of Meenaxi," included on the DVD of the film *Meenaxi: Tale of 3 Cities*.

[149] Patricia Uberoi, "The Bliss of Madhuri: Husain and His Muse," in *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.) (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), 218.

[150] See Wille, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague," 182.

[151] Bruce B. Lawrence, "A Metaphysical Secularist? Decoding M. F. Husain as a Muslim Painter in Exile," in *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.) (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), 253.

[152] Lawrence, "A Metaphysical Secularist?" 253.

Chapter 5. Chittaprosad's Immobile Mobility

1 Wille, "A Modernist Transnational Socialist Solidarity."

2 Mitter, "Decentering Modernism," 542.

3 Sanjoy Kumar Mallik, *Chittaprosad,* Vols. 1 and 2 (New Delhi: Delhi Art Gallery, 2011); Sanjoy Kumar Mallik (ed.), *A Sketchbook of 30 Portraits by Chittaprosad* (New Delhi: Delhi Art Gallery, 2011); Sanjoy Kumar Mallik, *Yours Chitta: Translated Excerpts from Select Letter of Chittaprosad* (New Delhi: Delhi Art Gallery, 2011).

4 Sanjukta Sunderason, "A melancholic archive: Chittaprosad and socialist art in postcolonial India," in *Forms of the Left in Postcolonial South Asia: Aesthetics, Networks and Connected Histories*, Sanjukta Sunderason and Lotte Hoek (eds.) (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 33–64.

5 Sanjukta Sunderason, "As 'Agitator and Organizer': Chittaprosad and Art for the Communist Party of India, 1941–8," *Object* 13 (2011), 77-95; *Partisan Aesthetics*; "A melancholic archive." See also Prodyot Ghosh, *Chittaprosad: A Doyen of Art-World* (Calcutta: Shilpayan Artists Society, 1995). For my own engagement with Chittaprosad, see Wille, "A Modernist Transnational Socialist Solidarity;" "Chittaprosad's Linocut Prints at the National Gallery in Prague."

6 For more information about Růžena Kamath, see Simone Wille, "Růžena Kamath," in *Metromod Archive*,

https://archive.metromod.net/viewer.p/69/2951/object/5138-12041440 (last visited July 28, 2024).

7 Sunderason, "A melancholic archive," 50.

8 The original Czech title is *Konfese: indického grafika Čittaprasáda*. An English version was produced and sent to India shortly after the film was produced, but there are no traces of it. In Leipzig the film appeared with a German title next to the Czech title. The English title is usually referred to as *Confession*.

9 The festival took place from November 18–25, 1972, in Leipzig. See also excerpt from the Filmobibliografischer Jahresbericht 1972 (Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1974), 363.

10 The photographs are reproduced in Mallik, *Chittaprosad*, Vol. 1, 143–151.

11 Mallik, *Chittaprosad,* Vol. 2, 487.

12 To his mother, Letter 6, March 10, 1965, in Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 75.

13 To his mother, Letter 6, March 10, 1965, in Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 75.

14 To his mother, Letter 6, March 10, 1965, in Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 75.

15 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

16 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

17 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

18 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

19 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

20 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

21 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

22 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

23 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

24 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

25 See also Wille, "A Modernist Transnational Socialist Solidarity."

26 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

27 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

28 Handwritten letter from Chittaprosad to Mrs Kamath, dated Bombay, May 17, 1968, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

29 The first International Conference in Defence of Children took place in Vienna on April 12–16, 1952. For more about the poster that Chittaprosad made for the World Peace Council between 1949 and 1955, see Sunderason, "A melancholic archive," 49.

30 After the artist passed away, three retrospectives were organised: one at Mladá Fronta Gallery in Prague in October 1979, followed by one in Litoměřice in March 1980, and one in Brno in 1981.

31 See Chapter 4.

32 Leow, "A Missing Peace," 29. Also quoted in Chapter 4.

33 Sunderason, "A melancholic archive," 48.

34 In a letter from Chittaprosad to Murari Gupta, dated July 31, 1957, the artist says that Salaba left on June 27, 1957, see Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 19.

35 F. Salaba, "Reminiscences of Chittaprosad. In conversation with František Salaba," in Mallik, *Chittaprosad*, Vol. II, 485–486. A photograph of Salaba delivering the puppet stage is reproduced

in Mallik, Vol. II, 487. In a letter from Chittaprosad to Murari Gupta, the artist says that the puppet stage was delivered July 23, 1957, see Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 19.

[36] Salaba organised money for the realisation of the project by sending 100 Rupees for a period of six months, see Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 19. See also Sunderason, *Partisan Aesthetics*, 203.

[37] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[38] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[39] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[40] See the interview with František Salaba in Mallik, *Chittaprosad*, Vol. 2, 485–490; see also Sunderason, *Partisan Aesthetics*, 203; Wille, "A Modernist Transnational Socialist Solidarity."

[41] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[42] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[43] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4. About Vodičková and Malik see https://www.damu.cz/en/department/department-of-alternative-and-puppet-theatre/about-of-department/; https://wepa.unima.org/en/jan-malik/; https://www.loutkari.cz/malik-jan-phdr/ (last visited July 29, 2024).

[44] Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 21; also quoted in Sunderason, *Partisan Aesthetics*, 203.

[45] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[46] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[47] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[48] Chittaprosad speaks about the lack of manpower in several letters, both to Murari Gupta and Miloslav Krása.See for example Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 19; machine typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[49] Letter from Chittaprosad to Murari Gupta, in Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 24.

[50] Letter from Chittaprosad to Murari Gupta, in Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 24.

[51] Letter from Chittaprosad to Murari Gupta, in Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 24.

[52] Letter from Chittaprosad to Murari Gupta, in Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 24.

[53] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, March 25, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[54] Letter from Chittaprosad to Murari Gupta, in Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 29.

[55] The Brno-based Radost Theatre began with its first professional performance in October 1949. Its first international tour in 1956 took them to Vietnam and Mongolia, followed by a tour in 1958 to India, Ceylon, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Egypt.

[56] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, December 24, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[57] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, December 24, 1958, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[58] For a depiction of some of the marionettes, see Mallik, *Chittaprosad*, Vol. 2, 438–439.

[59] In a 1957 edition of *Nový Orient* Chittaprosad's illustrations appear next to Běla Tišlerová's writing of the popular Indian legend of the *Two Audacious Brothers*, which she retold and paraphrased in Czech. *Nový Orient* 12, no. 1 (1957), 4–5. This was a precursor for the book that followed in Czech, *Indické Bajky a Pohádky* (Prague: Státní Nakladatelství, 1959). The English translation appeared ten years later as *Indian Fables and Fairy Tales* (Bombay: IBH Publishing Company, 1969). Chittaprosad illustrated both books. The English translation was undertaken by Růžena Kamath.

[60] Machine-typed letters and envelopes from Chittaprosad to Krása, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.
[61] See also Wille, "Chittaprosad's Linocut Prints," 11 and footnote 20.
[62] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, December 13, 1963, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.
[63] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, December 13, 1963, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.
[64] Machine-typed letter from Chittaprosad to Krása, dated Bombay, December 13, 1963, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.
[65] Octavio Paz, "La búsqueda del presente (In Search of the Present)," Nobel lecture, December 8, 1990, in *The Nobel Prizes, 1990*, Tore Frängsmyr (ed.) (Stockholm, 1991).
[66] Paz, "In Search of the Present."
[67] Mitter, "Decentering Modernism," 542.
[68] Mitter, "Decentering Modernism," 542.
[69] Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations*.
[70] Mallik, *Yours Chitta*, 5.
[71] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Chittaprosad, dated August 2, 1972, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.
[72] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Chittaprosad, dated August 2, 1972, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.
[73] About the Arsfilm Festival in Kroměříž, see Denisa Jašová, "Umenie Art," in *Alphabet of Slovak Cinema 1921–2021* (Bratislava: Slovak Film Institute, 2022), 273–277.
[74] See footnote 9 in this chapter.
[75] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Chittaprosad, dated August 2, 1972, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.
[76] Milosav Krása, "Cittaprasád: Bangladés," *Nový Orient* 27, no. 7 (1972), 200–201; https://kramerius.lib.cas.cz/view/uuid:95492b3e-4c6a-11e1-8339-001143e3f55c?page=uuid:95492b48-4c6a-11e1-8339-001143e3f55c (last visited April 24, 2024). One drawing is dated January 19, 1972.
[77] *Brána do Indie*, commercial film produced for Czechoslovak Airlines, 1973.
[78] *Features from India* appeared with commentary in Slovak, 1967, with expert cooperation by Dr Miloslav Krása, as a black and white film, with shooting locations in India (Bombay, New Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Hyderabad) and the film studios Koliba in Bratislava. Story by and directed by Vlado Kubenko; camera by A. Strelinger; sound by E. Palček; edited by M. Remeň; with music from the archive.
[79] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 318.
[80] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 318.
[81] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 318.
[82] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 318.
[83] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 318.
[84] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 318.
[85] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 318.
[86] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 324, handwritten notes by Vlado Kubenko.
[87] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 318.

[88] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 318.

[89] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 324.

[90] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 324. From a machine-typed note by Vlado Kubenko dated Bratislava, December 12, 1969.

[91] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Chittaprosad, dated June 26, 1978, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 5. See also Wille, "A Modernist Transnational Socialist Solidarity."

[92] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Chittaprosad, dated June 26, 1978, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 5.

[93] Pavel Hobl, in an interview titled "Konfese," prepared by O. H., *Kino* XXVII, no. 1 (1973), 13.

[94] Cf. also with Sunderason's description of the film in Sunderason, "A melancholic archive," 59–60.

[95] Transcript of *Konfese*. Kindly provided by Kratky Film, Prague.

[96] Sunderason, "A melancholic archive," 60.

[97] Krása, "Cittaprasád: Bangladés;" https://kramerius.lib.cas.cz/view/uuid:95492b3e-4c6a-11e1-8339-001143e3f55c?page=uuid:95492b48-4c6a-11e1-8339-001143e3f55c (last visited April 24, 2024). Cf. also footnote 76.

[98] From the transcript of *Konfese*.

[99] See footnote 92 in this chapter.

[100] See footnote 72 in this chapter.

[101] Sunderason, "A melancholic archive," 60.

[102] Camera: Vlastimil Kosík.

[103] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 318.

[104] Jašová, "Umenie Art," 279.

[105] Pavel Hobl, in an interview titled "Konfese," prepared by O. H., *Kino* XXVII, no. 1 (1973), 13.

[106] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Chittaprosad, dated Prague, June 26, 1978, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4. In a letter from Krása to Chittaprosad's sister Gouri Chatterjee from 1992, he tells her that a copy of the film should be located in the Embassy of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic in New Delhi, where it was used for their cultural activities. See machine-typed letter from Krása to Gouri Chatterjee, dated Prague, August 12, 1992, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[107] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Chittaprosad, dated June 26, 1978, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 5. See footnote 94 in this chapter.

[108] Machine-typed letter from Sara and Erik Stinus to Krása, dated Copenhagen, November 13, 1978, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[109] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Chittaprosad, dated June 26, 1978, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 5.

[110] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Gouri Chatterjee, dated Prague, December 7, 1978, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[111] The Union of Czechoslovak Artists, after having organised and financed Chittaprosad's exhibition at Hollar Gallery in Prague in May 1963, was unhappy with the economically unsuccessful outcome of the exhibition. This was why they refused Krása's subsequent request to cover Chittaprosad's airplane ticket to Prague. From CAS Archive, Fond Orientální ústav, File Styky Indie 1961–1963, dated July 1963. According to Jaroslav Strnad, the poor turnout at the exhibition was most likely due to the "Czech public's low interest in the kind of work Chittaprosad and Krása were offering." See Jaroslav Strnad in conversation with Simone Wille, in Wille, "Chittaprosad's Linocut Prints at the National Gallery in Prague," 16.

[112] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Gouri Chatterjee, dated Prague, December 7, 1978, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[113] The cultural monthly *Kulturní měsíčník* was published by the Painting Collection at Roudnice nad Labem in Litoměřice. Miloslav Krása, "Cittaprasád V Litomerické Galerii," *Kulturní měsíčník* XVI, no. 4 (1980), 61–62.

[114] Krása, "Cittaprasád V Litomerické Galerii," 61. For a translation of Chittaprosad's poem by Dušan Zbavitel see *Nový Orient* (1979).

[115] Krása, "Cittaprasád V Litomerické Galerii," 61.

[116] Krása, "Cittaprasád V Litomerické Galerii," 62.

[117] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Gouri Chatterjee, dated Prague, July 14, 1979, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[118] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Gouri Chatterjee, dated Prague, July 14, 1979, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[119] Peter Kalliney, "Afterword: A World of Print," in *The Form of Ideology and the Ideology of Form: Cold War, Decolonization and Third World Print Culture*, Francesca Orsini, Neelam Srivastava, and Laetitia Zecchini (eds.) (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2022), 302.

[120] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Gouri Chatterjee, dated Prague, June 16, 1979, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[121] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Gouri Chatterjee, dated Prague, June 16, 1979, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4. Srimati Kamath is probably Růžena Kamath, with whom Krása was obviously in contact.

[122] Machine-typed letter from Gouri Chatterjee to Krása, dated Calcutta, May 6, 1980, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4, 3.

[123] Machine-typed letter from Krása to Gouri Chatterjee, dated Prague, July 4, 1980, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[124] Krása was probably talking about the Indian Czechoslovak Cultural Society.

[125] Machine-typed letter from Gouri Chatterjee to Krása, dated Calcutta, May 20, 1992, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[126] Machine-typed letter from Gouri Chatterjee to Krása, dated Calcutta, May 20, 1992, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[127] Machine-typed letter Krása to Gouri Chatterjee, dated Prague, August 12, 1992, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[128] Machine-typed letter Krása to Gouri Chatterjee, dated Prague, August 12, 1992, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 4.

[129] See also Chapter 6.

[130] See Sunderason, *Partisan Aesthetics*, 203–204. Mulk Raj Anand was part of the advisory editorial team of *New Orient Bimonthly*. See also Rachel Lee and Mareike Schwarz, "Mulk Raj Anand," in *Metromod Archive*, https://archive.metromod.net/viewer.p/69/2951/object/5138-7554744 (last visited July 29, 2024).

[131] Mitter, "Decentering Modernism," 542.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

[1] Juneja, *Can Art History be Made Global?*, 15.

[2] Beáta Hock, "Managing Trans/Nationality: Cultural Actors within Imperial Structures," in *Globalizing East European Art Histories: Past and Present* (London: Routledge, 2018), 47–49; compare with Richard Kosinksy, Jan Elantkowski, and Barbara Dudás, "A Way to Follow: Interview with Piotr Piotrowski," *ARTMargins Online* (2015), https://artmargins.com/a-way-to-follow-interview-with-piotr-piotrowski (last visited February 22, 2025); see also Marie Rakušanová, "Writing on the History of Modern Art: From Particularism to a New Universalism," *Umění/Art* LXIX, no. 2 (2021), 168–174.

[3] Chen Kuan-Hsing, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

[4] Greenblatt, "A Mobility Studies Manifesto," 252.

5 See Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

6 Cf. how Sarah Rogers positions Beirut in the Cold War, Rogers, *Modern Art in Cold War Beirut*, 3.

7 Bruchet and Tiampo, "Slade, London, Asia."

8 According to archival records, some student applications were rejected. In some archives, files have been shredded due to a lack of space, so not all students' records can be fully reconstructed. However, what I noticed is that in several cases, shredding was ordered, but not followed through. This is how some files still exist. The decision about what to shred and what to keep was sometimes based on an assessment by the person being observed, perhaps because they had distinguished themselves as left-wing students and could therefore be persuaded to cooperate, if necessary.

9 The exhibition *Biafra of Spirit. Third World Students in Czechoslovakia* was hosted by tranzit.sk in Bratislava in 2016 and at the NGP from October 2017 until January 2018 at the Trade Fair Palace, Prague. The accompanying publication is *Filmmakers of the World, Unite! Forgotten Internationalism, Czechoslovak Film and the Third World*, Tereza Stejskalová (ed.) (Prague: tranzit.cz, 2017).

10 Teresa Stejskalová, "Foreword," in *Filmmakers of the World, Unite! Forgotten Internationalism, Czechoslovak Film and the Third World*, Tereza Stejskalová (ed.) (Prague: tranzit.cz, 2017), 17.

11 AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 10.

12 Silika Mohapatra, "The Un/Paralleled Universe of Pramod Pati: Deleuzian Reflections on Abid, Explorer and Trip," in *Deleuze, Guattari and India: Exploring a Post-Postcolonial Multiplicity*, Ian Buchanan, George Varghese K., and Manoj N. Y. (eds.) (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2022), 144–157; Kamayani Sharma, "Archeology of an experiment: The science-fiction cinema of Pramod Pati," *Studies in South Asian Film & Media* 6, no. 2 (2014), 149.

13 Mohapatra, "The Un/Paralleled Universe of Pramod Pati," 144–157.

14 Sharma, "Archaeology of an experiment," 147–164.

15 AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 13.

16 AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 13.

17 AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 13.

18 MŠK, Sign. 26, kart 1691, Registry March 29, 1960.

19 MŠK, Sign. 26, kart 1691, Registry March 3, 1960.

20 MŠK, Sign. 26, kart 1691, report for Indian Embassy, after a report by the FAMU dean and pro-rector of VŠUP.

21 Dr Eva Vodičková was also in touch with Chittaprosad. She sent him literature on puppet-making and invited him for a workshop at DAMU. See Chapter 5, footnote 43.

22 From a file titled "Taking care of Indian scholarship holders in Czechoslovakia," June 8, 1958, MŠK, Sign. 26, kart 1691. It is quite possible that this is a reference to Jan Kučera.

23 For selected writing on the artist see Ratan Parimoo, "Modern Movement in Indian Sculpture," *Kalavritt*, no. 19 (1990), 2–48; Rakesh Sahni, *Sculptures: The Bengal Connection* (Calcutta: Gallery Rasa, 2006).

24 MŠK, Sign. 26, kart 1691, Registry March 29, 1960.

25 Inv. nos. Vm 1813, Vm 1814, Vm 1815, Vm 1816, Vp 892, Vp 893. See also Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 163.

26 Hájek, "Two Indian Artists in Prague."

27 Hájek, "Two Indian Artists in Prague."

28 Hájek, "Two Indian Artists in Prague."

29 From a postcard from Ajit Chakravarty to Miloslav Krása, sent from Florence, August 26, 1961, from Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, archival record Fond M. Krása, box no. 6.

30 See also https://www.karlprantl.at/skulpturen/steinbruch/ajit-chakravarti (last visited March 18, 2024). For literature about the sculpture symposium in St Margarethen see Wolfgang Hartmann and Werner Pokorny, *Das Bildhauersymposion: Entstehung und Entwicklung einer neuen Form kollektiver und künstlerischer Arbeit* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1988); Jutta Birgit Wortmann, *Bildhauersymposien: Entstehung—Entwicklung-Wandlung* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006).

31 Adamson, *Painting, Politics and the Struggle for the École de Paris, 1944–1964*, 116.

[32] Marcel Fišer, *Výtvarná sympozia v šedesátých letech: Art Symposia in the 1960s*, dissertation (Prague: Univerzita Karlova V Praze Filozofická Fakulta, 2011), 44–45, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/45548/140017842.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (last visited March 19, 2024). I would like to than Jan Wollner for bringing this dissertation to my attention.

[33] Hájek, "Two Indian Artists in Prague."

[34] Michaela Hüttner, "Die Hockerstatue des Chai-hapi," in *Zu Gast in Ambras*, exhibition catalogue, Sabine Haag and Veronika Sandbichler (eds.) (Vienna and Innsbruck: Schloss Ambras Innsbruck, 2014), 1. This connection was first made by Alexandra Danninger, a student of mine, during a seminar at the University of Innsbruck, where I took a group of students to the former site of the sculpture symposium in St Margarethen.

[35] From a letter by Miloslav Krása to Ajit Chakravarty, dated Prague, December 19, 1989, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 6.

[36] From a letter by Miloslav Krása to Ajit Chakravarty, dated Prague, December 26, 1987, in Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 6.

[37] Selected writings on the artist include Satish Gujral, "The Graphics of Bishamber Khanna," *Design* 7, no. 11 (November 1963), 30–32; Kishore Singh (ed.), *Indian Abstracts: An Absence of Form* (New Delhi: DAG, 2014), 214; Kishore Singh (ed.), *A Visual History of Indian Modern Art*, Vol. VII: *Alternate Sensibilities* (New Delhi: DAG, 2015), 1346.

[38] AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 13.

[39] AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 13.

[40] František Dvořak, *Bishamber Khanna*, exhibition catalogue (Prague: SČVU, 1960), n.p.

[41] Hájek, "Two Indian Artists in Prague."

[42] Hájek, "Two Indian Artists in Prague."

[43] MŠK, Sign. 26, kart 1691, Registry March 29, 1960.

[44] AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 13.

[45] Cf. also the study of Moroccan artist Ahmed Cherkaoui, who studied from 1960–1961 at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, where he became part of the local avant-garde. See Strożek, *Ahmed Cherkaoui in Warsaw: Polish-Moroccan Artistic Relations in 1955–1980*, 15.

[46] Handwritten letter dated July 12, 1971, from Leningrad, Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 6. In this letter, Biren De says that he is in the Soviet Union as a cultural delegate from India, and says that he comes to Czechoslovakia for two weeks on a similar cultural exchange programme, taking a flight from Moscow on July 29.

[47] From Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása, box no. 6.

[48] From personal memories about the artist's stay in Prague by Helena Honcoopová. From an email conversation with Honcoopová, March 3, 2025.

[49] Knížková, "Moderní indické uměni," 35(27). A painting by Biren De titled *August 71* appeared on the cover of *Nový Orient* in 1983.

[50] See also Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," 164 and footnote 21.

[51] From an email conversation with Honcoopová, March 3, 2025.

[52] See Kapur, *When Was Modernism*, 309.

[53] See the conversation between Yashodhara Dalmia and Biren De in Dalmia, *Journeys*, 152–167.

[54] See Chapter 3.

[55] Cf. Huyssen's formulation, "Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World," 189–207.

[56] See Wille, "The Significance of Mobility and the Artistic Practice of Zahoor ul Akhlaq."

[57] Klimtová, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modern Art," 167.

[58] Höh, Jaspert, and Oesterle, "Courts, Brokers and Brokerage in the Medieval Mediterranean," 9. Cf. the introduction to this book, footnote 62.

[59] Krása is mentioned in the film credits of *Bajon and Angkorvat*. Moreover, both Krása and Hájek are mentioned in the film credits of *Usmevy Angkor*. *Features from India* was produced in Bratislava in November 1966; head of production was G. Adamica; story by and directed by V. Kubenko; camera by A. Strelinger; sound by E. Palček; edited by M. Remeň; with music from the archive and with expert cooperation by Dr M. Krása.

[60] The Pantomime Theatre from Bratislava carried out twelve performances in India; see Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 7, inventory no. 102.

[61] From an oral history project, https://www.vsmu.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ALEXANDER_STRELINGER-Oral-history.pdf (last visited June 3, 2024).

[62] https://www.vsmu.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ALEXANDER_STRELINGER-Oral-history.pdf (last visited June 3, 2024). Translated by the author.

[63] https://www.vsmu.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ALEXANDER_STRELINGER-Oral-history.pdf (last visited June 3, 2024).

[64] https://www.vsmu.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ALEXANDER_STRELINGER-Oral-history.pdf (last visited June 3, 2024).

[65] https://www.vsmu.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ALEXANDER_STRELINGER-Oral-history.pdf (last visited June 3, 2024).

[66] Jašová, "Umenie Art," 279.

[67] Jašová, "Umenie Art," 275.

[68] On the importance of folk culture for a socialist society, see Václav Frolec, "Lidová kultura v současném kulturním životě," in *Lidové umění a dnešek*, Václav Frolec (ed.) (Brno: Blok, 1977), 23.

[69] Boris Baromykin, "Arsfilm. Záznam besedy uspořádané v Kroměříži v rámci XVI," *Film a doba 1980*, no. 3 (1979), 156, quoted in *Alphabet of Slovak Cinema 1921–2021* (Bratislava: Slovak Film Institute, 2022), 278.

[70] Compare with Karin Zitzewitz, "Bal Chhabda (1923–2013)," https://criticalcollective.in/ArtistInner2.aspx?Aid=302&Eid=307 (last visited June 3, 2024).

[71] Zitzewitz, "Bal Chhabda (1923–2013)."

[72] Notes found in the Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 68, inventory no. 324.

[73] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 68, inventory no. 324. This is referred to as proposal no. three.

[74] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 68, inventory no. 324.

[75] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 68, inventory no. 324.

[76] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 68, inventory no. 324.

[77] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 68, inventory no. 324.

[78] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 68, inventory no. 324.

[79] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 68, inventory no. 324.

[80] Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 68, inventory no. 324.

[81] Apart from Krása, Hana Knižková also appears in the credits. Knižková was an Indologist from the Oriental Institute, Czech Academy of Sciencies, in Prague, and a regular contributor to *Nový Orient* and *New Orient Bimonthly*. She had written on Kalighat paintings but also on modern Indian art and on the history of Czechoslovak Indology. See Hana Knižková, "Bibliography of Oldřich Friš," *Archiv Orientální* 23 (1955), 506–509.

[82] The Slovak voiceover, throughout the film, is by the well-known Slovak actors Karol Machata and Gustáv Valach. I would like to thank Zuzana Orsagova for identifying the voices of these actors.

[83] I would like to thank Ashutosh Bhardwaj for helping me identify the drum-shaped building in New Delhi.

[84] The *sarangi* is an Indian bowed string instrument which Samant started playing during high school.

[85] For more on Mohan Samant, see Ranjit Hoskote, Marcella Sirhandi, and Jeffrey Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings* (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., 2013).

[86] I would like to thank Branislav Frlička from the documentation and library department of the Slovak Film Institute for his help, together with his team, to find out whether *Moderni indicki maliari* was shown at Arsfilm Festival in Kroměříž. Accordingly, there is no record of it being screened.

[87] Newspaper clipping from an unknown source, from Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 5, inventory no. 20.

[88] Type-written letter from Miloslav Krása to Vlado Kubenko, May 1, 1969, Prague, from Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 23.

[89] Handwritten postcard, from Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 23.

[90] See Chapter 5.

[91] Type-written letter from Miloslav Krása to Vlado Kubenko, May 1, 1969, Prague, from Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko, box no. 6, inventory no. 23.

[92] Cf. footnote 73.

[93] Cf. Höh, Jaspert, and Oesterle, "Courts, Brokers and Brokerage in the Medieval Mediterranean," 9, but also with Nikolas Jaspert, "Mobility, mediation and transculturation in the medieval Mediterranean: Migrating mercenaries and the challenges of mixing," in *Engaging with… Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies*, Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, and Susan Richter (eds.) (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 136–152.

[94] I was unable to source any Czechoslovak film productions about Pakistan and Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

Bibliography

Abu-Er-Rub, Laila, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, and Susan Richter (eds.), *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2019).

Adamson, Natalie, *Painting, Politics and the Struggle for the École de Paris, 1944–1964* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009).

Adey, Peter, *Mobility* (London: Routledge, 2010).

Ali, Kamran Asdar, *Communism in Pakistan: Politics and Class Activism 1947–1972* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

Allemann, Beda, *Zeit und Figur beim späten Rilke: Ein Beitrag zur Poetik des Modernen Gedichts* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961).

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (Verso: London, 1991).

Ansari, Saira, *Zubeida Agha: le chapitre silencieux du modernism pakistanais* (Paris: École des Modernités, 2024).

Archer, W. G., *India and Modern Art* (London: Ruskin House, 1959).

Askari, Muhammad Hasan, *Sitara ya badban* (Karachi: Maktaba-yi Sat Rang, 1963).

Baromykin, Boris, "Arsfilm. Záznam besedy uspořádané v Kroměříži v rámci XVI," *Film a doba 1980*, no. 3 (1979), 156.

Bartholomew, Richard, *The Art Critic* (Noida: BART, 2012).

Bartholomew, Richard, and Shiv. S. Kapur, *Husain* (New York: Abrams 1971).

Bean, Susan S., "East Meets East in Husain's Horses," in *Lightning,* Marguerite Charugundla and Deepanjana Klein (eds.*)* (New York: Tamarind Gallery, 2007), 11–20.

Bean, Susan S., "Viewed from Across the Globe: The Art of M. F. Husain," in *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.) (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 235–252.

Bean, Susan S., "Post-Independence Indian Art and the American Art World, 1953–1970," in *Indian Painting: Themes, Histories, Interpretations. Essays in Honor of B.N. Goswamy*, Mahesh Sharma and Padma Kaimal (eds.) (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2014), 378–389.

Bermann Martin, Dominique, "The Life of André Lhote," in *André Lhote and his International Students*, Zeynep Kuban and Simone Wille (eds.) (Innsbruck: iup, 2020), 17–39.

Block, René, "Auf einer Reise nach Prag am 19. Januar 1997," in *Pro Lidice: 52 Künstler aus Deutschland,* René Block (ed.) (Prague: Goethe Institute Prague, 1997), n.p.

Bone, Andrew G., "Russell and the Communist-Aligned Peace Movement in the Mid-1950s," *The Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies* 21 (Summer 2001), 31–57.

Bradley, Mark, *The World Reimagined: Americans and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Bruchet, Liz, and Ming Tiampo, "Slade, London, Asia: Contrapuntal Histories between Imperialism and Decolonization 1945–1989 (Part 1)," *British Art Studies* 20 (2021), https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-20/tiampobruchet (last visited February 9, 2025).

Bulganin, Nikolay Aleksandrovich, "Visit to India: Speeches and Interviews," *PRISM: Political & Rights Issues & Social Movements* 54 (1956), https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/328102783.pdf (last visited February 9, 2025).

Burke, Peter, *Kultureller Austausch* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000).

B. W., "The Communist Peace Front," *Communist Affairs* 1, no. 7 (June-August 1963), 3–7.

Calvino, Italo, *Le città invisibili* (Milan: Enaudi, 1972).

Calvino, Italo, *Invisible Cities* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1974).

Chakrabarty, Dipesh, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Chakrabarty, Dipesh, "Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the Politics of Culture," in *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*, Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes (eds.) (Munich: Prestel and Haus der Kunst, 2016), 74–79.

Chand, Tara, "Foreword," in Miloslav Krása, *Looking Towards India: A Study in East-West Contacts*, trans. Boleslav Seidl (Prague: Oribs, 1969), 5–8.

Chandra, Mahesh, "Chronology," in *Ram Kumar: A Journey Within*, Gagan Gill (ed.) (New Delhi: Vadehra Art Gallery, 1996), n.p.

Chandra, Pradeep, *M.F. Husain: A Pictorial Tribute* (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2011).

Chen Kuan-Hsing, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

Ciotti, Manuela, "India's 'First' Pavilion in Venice," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*, Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 301–302.

Clark, John, "The Worlding of the Asian Modern," in *Contemporary Asian Art and Exhibition: Connectivities and World-making*, Michelle Antoinette and Caroline Turner (eds.) (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014), 67–88.

Clark, John, *Modern Asian Art* (Sydney and Honolulu: Craftsman House and University of Hawai'i Press, 1998).

Cornell, Richard, *Youth and Communism: An Historical Analysis of International Communist Youth Movements* (New York: Walker and Company, 1965).

Cresswell, Tim, "The Production of Mobilities," *New Formations* 43 (2001), 11–25.

Cresswell, Tim, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (London: Routledge, 2006).

DaCosta Kaufmann, Thomas, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

DaCosta Kaufmann, Thomas, "Reflections on World Art History," in *Circulations in the Global History of Art*, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (eds.) (Farnham: Ashgate Publishers, 2015), 23–45.

Dadi, Iftikhar, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

Dalmia, Yashodhara, *The Making of Modern Indian Art: The Progressives* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Dalmia, Yashodhara, *Journeys: Four Generations of Indian Artists in Their Own Words*, Vol. 1 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Dalmia, Yashodhara, "Bombay Modern: The Progressive Artists' Group and the Quest for Significant Form," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*, Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 156–179.

Dalmia, Yashodhara, and Salima Hashmi (eds.), *Memory, Metaphor, Mutations: Contemporary Art of India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Damme, Wildfried van, "'Good to Think': The Historiography of Intercultural Art Studies," *World Art* 1, no. 1 (2011), 43–57.

Damodaran, Sumangala, *The Radical Impulse: Music in the Tradition of the Indian People's Theatre Association* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2017).

Datta, Santo, "Introduction," in *The Vertical Woman: Reminiscences of B.C. Sanyal: From 1947 to the Present*, Vol. II (New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art, 1998), n.p.

Drugeon, Fanny, "From Paris to Mirmande, International Aspects of Lhote's Academy through Lhote's Writings and Correspondence," in *André Lhote and His International Students*, Zeynep Kuban and Simone Wille (eds.) (Innsbruck: iup, 2020), 41–49.

Fišer, Marcel, *Výtvarná sympozia v šedesátých letech: Art Symposia in the 1960s*, dissertation (Prague: Univerzita Karlova V Praze Filozofická Fakulta, 2011).

Foster, Hal, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin Buchloh, *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004).

Frolec, Václav, "Lidová kultura v současném kulturním životě," in *Lidové umění a dnešek*, Václav Frolec (ed.) (Brno: Blok 1977).

Fučík, Julius, *Reporter of Revolution—Part II: Report from the Gallows* (Prague: International Organization of Journalists, 1983).

Gabriel, Douglas, and Adri Kácsor, "Fraternal Encounters: Socialist Art and Architecture between Budapest and Pyongyang in the 1950s," in *Universal—International—Global: Art Historiographies of Socialist Eastern Europe*, Marina Dimitrieva, Beata Hock, and Antje Kemp (eds.) (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2023), 240–57.

Gardner, Anthony, and Charles Green, "Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global," *Third Text* 27, no. 4 (July 1, 2013), 442–455.

Getachew, Adom, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

Ghobrial, John-Paul, "Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian," in *Global History and Microhistory: A Supplement Volume of Past and Present*, John-Paul Ghobrial (ed.), Vol. 242, Issue Supplement 14, 2019, 1–21.

Ghosh, Prodyot, *Chittaprosad: A Doyen of Art-World* (Calcutta: Shilpayan Artists Society, 1995).

Ginwala, Natasha, "Arrival, Incision. Indian Modernism as Peripatetic Itinerary," in *Hello World: Revising a Collection*, exhibition catalogue, Udo Kittelmann and Gabriele Knapstein (eds.) (Berlin and Munich: SMB and Hirmer Verlag, 2018), 225–232.

Gopal, Priyamvada, *Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence* (London: Routledge, 2005).

Greenblatt, Stephan, "Cultural Mobility: An Introduction," in *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, Stephen Greenblatt, Ines G. Županov, Reinhard Meyer-Kalkus, Heike Paul, Pál Nyíri, and Friederike Pannewick (eds.) (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1–23.

Griswold, Wendy, *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2004).

Guevara, Ernesto Che, *The Motorcycle Diaries. Latinoamericana—Tagebuch einer Motorradreise 1951/52* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 2017).

Guha, Ranajit, "The Migrant's Time," in *The Migrant's Time: Rethinking Art History and Diaspora*, Saloni Mathur (ed.) (Williamstown: Clark Art Institute, 2011), 3–9.

Guha-Thakurta, Tapati, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

Guilbaut, Serge, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

Gujral, Satish, "The Graphics of Bishamber Khanna," *Design* 7, no. 11 (November 1963), 30–32.

Gupta, Atreyee, "After Bandung: Transacting the Nation in a Postcolonial World," in *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*, Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes (eds.) (Munich: Prestel, 2016), 633–637.

Gupta, Atreyee, "The Delhi Silpi Chakra: Art and Politics after the Radcliffe Line," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*, Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 180–191.

Haines, Chelsea, and Gemma Sharpe, "Art, Institutions, and Internationalism, 1945–73," *ARTMargins* 8, no. 2 (2019), 3–14.

Hájek, Lubor, *Chinesische Kunst* (Prague: Artia, 1954).

Hájek, Lubor, "Výstava indického umění," *Výtvarná práce* 24 (1955), 12.

Hájek, Lubor, "K výstavě indického umění," *Nový Orient*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1956), 26–27.

Hájek, Lubor (ed.), *Kunst ferner Länder 1: Aegypten, Afrika, Amerika, Ozenaien, Indonesien* (Prague: Artia, 1956).

Hájek, Lubor (ed.), *Kunst ferner Länder 2: Voderasien, Indien, Tibet, China, Japan, Tschuktschen Halbinsel* (Prague: Artia, 1957).

Hájek, Lubor, *Utamaro: das Porträt im japanischen Holzschnitt* (Hanau am Main: Dausien, 1958).

Hájek, Lubor, "Two Indian Artists in Prague," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 1, no. 5 (October 1960), n.p.

Hájek, Lubor, *Indische Miniaturen vom Hof der Mogulkaiser* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Lesering, 1961).

Hájek, Lubor, "Chinese Art in a Renaissance Castle," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 2, no. 5 (October 1961), 152.

Hájek, Lubor, "Czech Castle—Chinese Art," *Oriental Art* IX, no. 4 (Winter 1963), 216.

Hájek, Lubor, "Wooden Images by Hussain," New Orient Bimonthly vol 3., no. 4 (1962), 122.

Hánová, Markéta, "Twentieth-Century Cultural Politics and Networks: The Genesis of the Asian Art Collection at the National Gallery in Prague," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 61–82.

Hartmann, Wolfgang, and Werner Pokorny, *Das Bildhauersymposion: Entstehung und Entwicklung einer neuen Form kollektiver und künstlerischer Arbeit* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1988).

Hashmi, Salima, "Foreword," in *Naya Daur: Shakir Ali and Lahore Art Circle*, exhibition catalogue, Salima Hashmi and Samina Iqbal (eds.) (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2017), 13–18.

Hashmi, Salima, and Samina Iqbal (eds.), *Naya Daur: Shakir Ali and Lahore Art Circle*, exhibition catalogue (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2017).

Hassan, Ijaz ul, *Painting in Pakistan* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1991).

Hédlová, Luba, "Remember Lidice: 50 let Lidické sbírky umění: 1967–2017"/"Remember Lidice: 50 Years of the Lidice Art Collection," in *Remember Lidice: 1967–2017*, exhibition catalogue (Lidice: Památník, 2017), 12–30.

Hněvkovský, Jaroslav, *Malířovy listy z Indie* and *Malířovy listy z Indie: Druhý díl* (Prague: Sfinx, 1927).

Hobl, Pavel, "Konfese," prepared by O. H., *Kino* XXVII, no. 1 (1973), 13.

Hock, Beáta, "Managing Trans/Nationality: Cultural Actors within Imperial Structures," in *Globalizing East European Art Histories: Past and Present*, Beáta Hock and Anu Allas (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2018), 39–52.

Hoek, Lotte, and Sanjukta Sunderason, "Journeying through Modernism: Travels and Transits of East Pakistani Artists in Post-Imperial London," *British Art Studies* 13 (2019), n.p. https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-13/hoek-sunderason.

Hoffmann, David L., *Stalinist Values. The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

Höh, Marc von der, Nikolas Jaspter, and Jenny Oesterle, "Courts, Brokers and Brokerage in the Medieval Mediterranean," in *Cultural Brokers at Mediterranean Courts in the Middle Ages*, Marc von der Höh, Nikolas Jaspter, and Jenny Oesterle (eds.) (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013).

Hookham, Kutty, *Czechoslovakia* (Prague: Mladá Fronta, 1947).

Hoskote, Ranjit, Marcella Sirhandi, and Jeffrey Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings* (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., 2013).

Husain, Intizar, *Chiraghon ka dhuan: Yadon ke pachas baras* (Lahore: Sang-I Mil, 2003).

Husain, Owais, "The Making of Meenaxi," included on the DVD of the film *Meenaxi: Tale of 3 Cities*.

Hüttner, Michaela, "Die Hockerstatue des Chai-hapi," in *Zu Gast in Ambras*, exhibition catalogue, Sabine Haag and Veronika Sandbichler (eds.) (Vienna and Innsbruck: Schloss Ambras Innsbruck, 2014).

Huyssen, Andreas, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

Huyssen, Andreas, "Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World," *New German Critique* 100 (Winter 2007), 189–207.

Iqbal, Samina, "The Matrix of Biennales and Pakistan," artnowpakistan.com, https://www.artnowpakistan.com/the-matrix-of-biennales-and-pakistan/ (last visited July 22, 2024).

Iqbal, Samina, "Naya Daur: Shakir Ali and Lahore Art Circle," in *Naya Daur*: *Shakir Ali and Lahore Art Circle*, exhibition catalogue, Salima Hashmi and Samina Iqbal (eds.) (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2017), 19–31.

Iqbal, Samina, "Karachi Biennale 2019: Censorship and Curatorial Responsibilities," first published in Sharjah March Meeting, 2021 and re-published in *Art Violence and State: In the Killing Fields of Karachi*, Adeela Suleman (ed.) (Lahore: Topical Printers, 2022), 205–219.

Jakubowska, Agata, and Magdalena Radomska (eds.), *Horizontal Art History and Beyond: Revising Peripheral Critical Practices* (New York: Routledge, 2024).

Jalal, Ayesha, *The State of Martial Rule: The origins of Pakistan's political economy of defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Jankovich, Imre, "India képzömüvészete," *Új Szó*, December 31, 1955, Bratislava.

Jašová, Denisa, "Umenie Art," in *Alphabet of Slovak Cinema 1921–2021* (Bratislava: Slovak Film Institute, 2022), 273–277.

Jaspert, Nikolas, "Mobility, mediation and transculturation in the medieval Mediterranean: Migrating mercenaries and the challenges of mixing," in *Engaging with… Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies*, Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, and Susan Richter (eds.) (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 136–152.

Jeronimo, Miguel B., and Jose P. Monteiro, *Internationalism, Imperialism and the Formation of the Contemporary World: The Pasts of the Present* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

Juneja, Monica, "Preface," in *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.) (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), xvii–xxii.

Juneja, Monica, *Can Art History be Made Global? Meditations from the Periphery* (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2023).

Juneja, Monica, and Christian Kravagna, "Understanding Transculturalism: Monica Juneja and Christian Kravagna in Conversation," in *Transcultural Modernisms*, Model House Research Group (ed.) (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013), 22–33.

Kalliney, Peter, "Afterword: A World of Print," in *The Form of Ideology and the Ideology of Form: Cold War, Decolonization and Third World Print Culture*, Francesca Orsini, Neelam Srivastava, and Laetitia Zecchini (eds.) (Open Book Publishers, 2022), 301–312.

Kapur, Geeta, *When Was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2000).

Kapur, Geeta, "An Indian Critic and the Bard's Puzzle," in Richard Bartholomew, *The Art Critic* (Noida: BART, 2012), 8–28.

Kapur, Geeta, "Proposition Avant-Garde: A View from the South," *Art Journal* 77, no. 1 (2018), 87-89.

Kee, Joan, *The Geometries of Afro Asia: Art beyond Solidarity* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023).

Khalil, Mehri, "André Lhote and Egypt," in *André Lhote and His International Students*, Zeynep Kuban and Simone Wille (eds.) (Innsbruck: iup, 2020), 171–187.

Khalil, Mehri, "The Académie Lhote: A Rite of Passage," in *Monaco-Alexandrie: Le grand detour. Villesmondes et surréalisme cosmopolite*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Zaman Books, 2021), 75–79.

Khullar, Sonal, *Worldly Affiliations: Artistic Practice, National Identity, and Modernism in India, 1930–1990* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).

Klimtová, Zdenka, "Lubor Hájek and Indian Modernist Art," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 159–169.

Knižková, Hana, "Bibliography of Oldřich Friš," *Archiv Orientální* 23 (Prague:1955), 506–509.

Knížková, Hana, "Maqbool Fida Husain—Modern Painter of India," *New Orient Bimonthly*, no. 1 (1966), 8–15.

Knížková, Hana, "Dva indict malíri v Praze," *Nový Orient*, no. 2 (1967), 40–42.

Knížková, Hana, "Moderní indické umění" *Lidová demokracie*, Prague, February 1, 1979.

Koenen, Gerd, *Die Farbe Rot: Ursprünge und Geschichte des Kommunismus* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2017).

Koivunen, Pia, *Performing Peace and Friendship: The World Youth Festivals and Soviet Cultural Diplomacy* (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2023).

Kol. autorů, *Lidice 1942–2002. Soupis publikací, dokumentů a uměleckých děl v rešerších domácích a zahraničních institutcí* (Nymburk: n. p., 2012).

Kosambi, D. D., "For Peace in Asia and the Pacific, Peace is the World," *Bulletin of the Preparatory Conference* 11 (August 6, 1952).

Koselleck, Reinhart, "'Erfahrungsraum' und 'Erwartungshorizont'—zwei historische Kategorien," in Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 349–375.

Koselleck, Reinhart, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

Kosinksy, Richard, Jan Elantkowski, and Barbara Dudás, "A Way to Follow: Interview with Piotr Piotrowski," *ARTMargins Online* (2015) https://artmargins.com/a-way-to-follow-interview-with-piotr-piotrowski (last visited February 22, 2025).

Kotek, Joël, *Students and the Cold War*, trans. Ralph Blumenau (London: Macmillan Press, 1996).

Kotek, Joël, "Youth organizations as a Battlefield in the Cold War," *Intelligence and National Security* 18, no. 2 (2010), 168–191.

Krása, Miloslav, "Two Czech Painters and their Bohemian Travels through India and Ceylon," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 6 (December 1967), 177–184.

Krása, Miloslav, *Looking Towards India: A Study in East-West Contacts*, trans. Boleslav Seidl (Prague: Orbis, 1969).

Krása, Milosav, "Cittaprasád: Bangladés," *Nový Orient* 27, no. 7 (1972), 200–201.

Krása, Miloslav (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru—a political leader: a collection of contributions presented to the Symposium on Jawaharlal Nehru organized to commemorate the 85th anniversary of his birth and the 10th anniversary of his death*, trans. Karel Strádal (Prague: Czechoslovak-Indian Committee of the Czechoslovak Society for International Relations, 1974).

Krása, Miloslav, "Cittaprasád V Litomerické Galerii," *Kulturní měsíčník* XVI, no. 4 (1980), 61–62.

Krása, Miloslav, "The Artist and His Time," in *Ram Kumar: A Journey Within*, Gagan Gill (ed.) (New Delhi: Vadehra Art Gallery, 1996), 205–206.

Kravagna, Christian, *Transmoderne: Eine Kunstgeschichte des Kontakts* (Berlin: b_books, 2017).

Kravagna, Christian, *Transmodern: An Art History of Contact, 1920–60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022).

Krishnan, S. A., "H. A. Gade," in *Gade*, exhibition catalogue (Bombay: Sadanga Publications, 1961).

Lawrence, Bruce B., "A Metaphysical Secularist? Decoding M. F. Husain as a Muslim Painter in Exile," in *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.) (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), 253–273.

Leow, Rachel, "A Missing Peace: The Asia-Pacific Peace Conference in Beijing, 1952 and the Emotional Making of Third World Internationalism," *Journal of World History*, Special Issue: *Other Bandungs: Afro-Asian Internationalisms in the Early Cold War* 30, no. 1/2 (2019), 21–54.

Lipska, Magda, and Piotr Słodkowski (eds.), *Was Socialist Realism Global? Modernism, Soc-Modernism, Socially Engaged Figuration* (Warsaw: Books N°21, 2023).

Lhote, André, *Traité du paysage* (Paris: Floury, 1939).

Lhote, André, *Treatise on Landscape Painting* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1950).

Lhote, André, *Les Chefs d'Oeuvre de la Peinture Égyptienne* (Paris: Hachette, 1954).

Louda, Vlastimil, *Lidice. Čin kravého teroru a porušení zákonů I základních lidských práv* (Prague: Ministry of the Interior, Department of Political Ingelligence, 1945).

Mallik, Sanjoy Kumar, *Chittaprosad*, Vols. 1 and 2 (New Delhi: Delhi Art Gallery, 2011).

Mallik, Sanjoy Kumar (ed.), *A Sketchbook of 30 Portraits by Chittaprosad* (New Delhi: Delhi Art Gallery, 2011).

Mallik, Sanjoy Kumar, *Yours Chitta: Translated Excerpts from Select Letter of Chittaprosad* (New Delhi: Delhi Art Gallery, 2011).

Mansbach, Steven (ed.), *Umění/Art* LXIX, no. 2 (2021).

Marek, Jan, "Persian Literature," in *Dějiny perské a tádžické literatury*, Jan Rypka (ed.), 2nd edition (Prague: Československé Akad. věd, 1963), n.p.

Marek, Jan, "Studies in Indian Languages and Literatures at Prague: I. Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu," *Mahfil* 2, no. 4 (1966), 31–39.

Marek, Jan, "Shakir Ali," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 6, no. 4 (August 1967), 112–114.

Marek, Jan, *Po stopách sultánů a rádžů* (Prague: Panorama, 1973).

Medek, Mikuláš, *Texty* (Prague: Torst, 1995).

Mercer, Kobena (ed.), *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* (Cambridge, MA and London: Institute of International Visual Arts and MIT Press, 2005).

Mitter, Partha, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

Mitter, Partha, *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-garde, 1922–1947* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).

Mitter, Partha, "Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-Garde Art from the Periphery," *The Art Bulletin* 90, no. 4 (December 2008), 531–548.

Mitter, Partha, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.), *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022).

Mitter, Partha, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram, "Introduction: The Geopolitics of Modernism in the 20th Century," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary,* Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 11–15.

Mohamed, Khalid, *Where Art Thou: An Autobiography* (Mumbai: M. F. Husain Foundation, 2002).

Mohapatra, Silika, "The Un/Paralleled Universe of Pramod Pati: Deleuzian Reflections on Abid, Explorer and Trip," in *Deleuze, Guattari and India: Exploring a Post-Postcolonial Multiplicity*, Ian Buchanan, George Varghese K., and Manoj N. Y. (eds.) (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2022), 144–157.

Montazami, Morad, "Meridional Trajectories in A World Without Fatherlands," in *Monaco-Alexandrie: Le grand detour. Villes-mondes et surréalisme cosmopolite*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Zaman Books, 2021), 29–39.

Moxey, Keith, "A 'Virtual Cosmopolis': Partha Mitter in Conversation with Keith Moxey," *The Art Bulletin* XCV, no. 3 (September 2013), 381–392.

Nagel, Alexander, *Medieval Modern: Art out of time* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012).

Naqvi, Akbar, *Image and Identity: Fifty Years of Painting and Sculpture in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Naumann, Uwe (ed.), *Lidice: Ein Böhmisches Dorf* (Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg Verlag, 1983).

Nejedlý, Otakar, *Malířovy toulky Evropê, Cejlonem a Indií* (Prague: NČSVU, 1960).

Orsini, Francesca, Neelam Srivastava, and Laetitia Zecchini, "Introduction," in *The Form of Ideology and the Ideology of Form: Cold War, Decolonization and Third World Print Cultures*, Francesca Orsini, Neelam Srivastava, and Laetitia Zecchini (eds.) (Open Book Publishers, 2022), 1–30.

Pal, Ila, *Beyond the Canvas: An Unfinished Portrait of M.F. Husain* (New Delhi: Indus, 1994).

Papastergiadis, Nikos, *Modernity as Exile: The Stranger in John Berger's Writing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).

Papastergiadis, Nikos (ed.), *Complex Entanglements: Art, Globalisation, and Cultural Difference* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2003).

Parimoo, Ratan, "Modern Movement in Indian Sculpture," *Kalavritt*, no. 19 (1990), 2–48.

Paz, Octavio, "La búsqueda del presente (In Search of the Present)," Nobel lecture, December 8, 1990, in *The Nobel Prizes, 1990*, Tore Frängsmyr (ed.) (Stockholm, 1991).

Pejčocková, Michaela (ed.), *Masters of 20th-Century Ink Painting: from the Collections of the National Gallery in Prague* (Prague: NGP, 2008).

Pejčochová, Michaela, *Sto let jednoho stromu* (Brno: Books&Pipes, 2021).

Pejčocková, Michalea, "When East and West Met in the Heart of Europe: Vojtěch Chytil and His Contribution to Collecting Asian Art in Central Europe," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 113–125.

Perera, Reginald, "SENAKA-a Transient Phenomenon or a Growing Genius," *New Orient Bimonthly* vol. 7, no. 4 (1968), 112–113.

Piotrowski, Piotr, "On the Spatial Turn, or Horizontal Art History," *Umění* 56, no. 5 (2008), 378–383.

Piotrowski, Piotr, "Toward a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde," in *Europa! Europa? The Avant-Garde, Modernism and the Fate of a Continent*, Sascha Bru and Peter Nicholls (eds.) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 49–58.

Piškur, Bojana, "Southern Constellations: Other Histories, Other Modernities," in *Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned,* exhibition catalogue (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2019), 9–21.

Piškur, Bojana, "Yugoslavia: other modernities, other histories," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 20, no. 1 (2019), 131–139.

Piškur, Bojana, and Teja Merhar, "Third World: Prints from the Non-Aligned Countries at the International Biennial Exhibitions of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana between 1961 and 1991," in *Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned*, exhibition catalogue (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2019), 171–174.

Prashad, Vijay, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007),

Pratt, Mary Louise, "Arts of the Contact Zone," in *Profession* (1991), 33–40.

Pratt, Mary Louise, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

Rahman-Steinert, Uta, "Big Presents Maintain the Friendship: The Gift of the People's Republic of China to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (National Museums in Berlin), GDR, in 1959," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 127–140.

Rakušanová, Marie, "Writing on the History of Modern Art: From Particularism to a New Universalism," *Umění/Art* LXIX, no. (2021), 168–174.

Ramaswamy, Sumathi, "Mapping India after Husain," in *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.) (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), 75–99.

Ramírez, Mari Carmen, "Brokering Identities: Art curators and the politics of cultural representation," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (eds.) (London: Routledge, 1996), 21–38.

Raza, Ali, *Revolutionary Pasts: Communist Internationalism in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Raza, Ali, Franziska Roy, and Benjamin Zachariah, *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views, 1917–39* (New Delhi and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2014).

Reinhardt, Kathleen, Kerstin Schankweiler, and Mathias Wagner, "Internationalismus in der DDR—Kunst und visuelle Kultur zwischen Idealen und Widersprüchen," in *Revolutionary Romances? Globale Kunstgeschichten in der DDR* (Dresden and Leipzig: SKD and Spector Books, 2024).

Rogers, Sarah, *Modern Art in Cold War Beirut: Drawing Alliances* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2021).

Romain, Gemma, *Race, Sexuality and Identity in Britain and Jamaica: The Biography of Patrick Nelson, 1916–1963* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

Roopa Lekha 1&2 (1978–79), "Drawings by Sarada Charan Ukil on the Krishna legend," 7–10.

Rührová, Kateřina, *Nirmal Varma a Československo*, Master's thesis, supervised by Jaroslav Strnad (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, Filozofická fakulta, Ústav asijských studií, 2021).

Sahni, Rakesh, *Sculptures: The Bengal Connection* (Calcutta: Gallery Rasa, 2006).

Said, Edward, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

Salaba, F., "Reminiscences of Chittaprosad. In conversation with František Salaba," in Sanjoy Kumar Mallik, *Chittaprosad*, Vol. II (New Delhi: Delhi Art Gallery, 2011), 485–490.

Sandler, Irving, *The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism* (New York: Harper & Rox, 1996).

Sanyal, B. C., *The Vertical Woman: Reminiscences of B.C. Sanyal: 1902–1947. Dibrugarh, Calcutta, Lahore, Delhi*, Vol. I (New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art, 1998).

Sanyal, B. C., *The Vertical Woman: Reminiscences of B.C. Sanyal: From 1947 to the Present*, Vol. II (New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art, 1999).

Sharma, Kamayani, "Archeology of an experiment: The science-fiction cinema of Pramod Pati," *Studies in South Asian Film & Media* 6, no. 2 (2014), 147–164.

Singh, Devika (ed.), *Marg*, Special Issue: *India-France: Artistic Exchanges* 69, no. 1 (2017).

Singh, Devika, *International Departures: Art in India After Independence* (London: Reaktion Books, 2024).

Singh, Kishore (ed.), *Indian Abstracts: An Absence of Form* (New Delhi: DAG, 2014).

Singh, Kishore (ed.), *A Visual History of Indian Modern Art*, Vol. VII: *Alternate Sensibilities* (New Delhi: DAG, 2015).

Sinha, Gayatri, "Satish Gujral (1916–2020): A Singular Journey," in *20th Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*, Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 181–182.

Sirhandi, Marcella Nesom, *Contemporary Painting in Pakistan* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1992).

Sluga, Glenda, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

Stanek, Łukasz, *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020).

Stejskalová, Teresa, "Foreword," in *Filmmakers of the World, Unite! Forgotten Internationalism, Czechoslovak Film and the Third World*, Tereza Stejskalová (ed.) (Prague: tranzit.cz, 2017), 17–23.

Stejskalová, Tereza, "Students from the Third World in Czechoslovakia: The paradox of racism in communist society and its reflection in film," in *Filmmakers of the World Unite! Forgotten Internationalism, Czechoslovak Film and the Third World*, Tereza Stejskalová (ed.) (Prague: tranzit.cz, 2017), 51–63.

Stejskalová, Tereza, "I believe film could have a great influence on people: An interview with Piyasiri Gunaratna," in *Filmmakers of the World Unite! Forgotten Internationalism, Czechoslovak Film and the Third World*, Tereza Stejskalová (ed.) (Prague: tranzit.cz, 2017), 203–207.

Stoler, Ann Laura, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Strnad, Jaroslav, "Nový Orient jako zrcadlo doby a české orientalistiky," Šárka Velhartická (ed.), *100 let české staroorientalistiky. České klínopisné bádání, předovýchodní archeologie a spřízněné obory v dokumentech* (Prague: Nakladatelství Libri, 2021), 538–575.

Strozek, Przemyslaw, *Ahmed Cherkaoui in Warsaw: Polish-Moroccan Artistic Relations in 1955–1980*, trans. Paulina Bożek (Warsaw: Zachęta, National Gallery of Art, 2020).

Sunderason, Sanjukta, "As 'Agitator and Organizer': Chittaprosad and Art for the Communist Party of India, 1941–8," *Object* 13 (2011), 77–95.

Sunderason, Sanjukta, *Partisan Aesthetics: Modern Art & India's Long Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020).

Sunderason, Sanjukta, "A melancholic archive: Chittaprosad and socialist art in postcolonial India," in *Forms of the Left in Postcolonial South Asia: Aesthetics, Networks and Connected Histories*, Sanjukta Sunderason and Lotte Hoek (eds.) (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 33–64.

Sunderason, Sanjukta, and Lotte Hoek (eds.), *Forms of the Left in Postcolonial South Asia: Aesthetics, Networks and Connected Histories* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022).

Svrček, J. B., "Umělecké památky asijských národů," *Lidová demokracie*, September 16, 1961.

Świtek, Gabriela (ed.), *Ikonotheka*, Special Issue: *Exhibition Histories* 26 (2016).

Świtek, Gabriela, "Across Borders and Art Histories: Travelling Exhibitions," *Artium Quaestiones* 35 (2024), 55–82.

Tarar, Nadeem Omar, *The Colonial and National Formations of the National College of Arts, Lahore, circa 1870s to 1960s: De-scripting the Archive* (New York and London: Anthem Press, 2022).

Teržan, Vesna, "Opening Story," in *Mnemosyne: The Time of Ljubljana's Biennial of Graphic Arts* (Ljubljana: MGLC, 2010), 16–32.

Tišlerová, Běla, *Indické Bajky a Pohádky* (Prague: Státní Nakladatelství, 1959).

Tišlerová, Běla, *Indian Fables and Fairy Tales,* trans. Růžena Kamath (Bombay: IBH Publishing Company, 1969).

Toukan, Hanan, *The Politics of Art: Dissent and Cultural Diplomacy in Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021).

Uberoi, Patricia, "The Bliss of Madhuri: Husain and His Muse," in *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.) (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), 213–234.

Verma, Nirmal, "From Solitude to Salvation," in *Ram Kumar: A Journey Within*, Gagan Gill (ed.) (New Delhi: Vadehra Art Gallery, 1996), n.p.

Videkanić, Bojana, *Nonaligned Modernism: Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945–1985* (Québec: McGill-Queens University Press, 2019).

Vosečková, Alena, "Neobvyklá vernisáž," *Nový Orient*, no. 7 (1976), 217–218.

Wagner, Mathias (ed.), Revolutionary Romances? *Globale Kunstgeschichten in der DDR* (Dresden and Leipzig: SKD and Spector Books, 2024).

Wheeler, Eleanor, *Lidice* (Prague: Orbis, 1962).

WHW, "No Feeling is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection," in *No Feeling is Final: The Skopje Solidarity Collection* (Vienna: Kunsthalle Vienna, 2023), 10–21.

Wilder, Gary, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

Wille, Simone, *Modern Art in Pakistan: History, Tradition, Place* (London and New Delhi: Routledge, 2015).

Wille, Simone, "A Modernist Transnational Socialist Solidarity: Chittaprosad's Prague Connection," *Stedelijk Studies* 9 (2019), n.p.

Wille, Simone, "St. Margarethen: Ein Experimentierfeld der transnationalen Nachkriegsmoderne," in *Kunst und Literatur. Der Literatur Raum im Bildhauerhaus in St. Margarethen im Burgenland*, Beatrice Simonsen (ed.) (Vienna: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2019), 8–13.

Wille, Simone, "The Lidice Collection of Postwar Modernist Art: An Art History Informed by Engagement and Circulation," in *Come Closer: The Biennale Reader*, Vít Havránek and Tereza Stejskalová (eds.) (Prague: Sternberg Press and tranzit.cz, 2020), 51–72.

Wille, Simone, "South Asian Artists at the Académie André Lhote," in *André Lhote and His International Students*, Zeynep Kuban and Simone Wille (eds.) (Innsbruck: iup, 2020), 189–207.

Wille, Simone, "Chittaprosad's Linocut Prints at the National Gallery in Prague: Understanding Indo-Czech Cultural Relations in the Postwar Era," *Bulletin of the National Gallery in Prague* XXX (2020), 6–21 and for the Czech version 137–149.

Wille, Simone, "The Prague Connection of Chittaprosad (1915–1978)," in *20th Century Indian Art*: *Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary,* Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram (eds.) (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), 120.

Wille, Simone, "The Significance of Mobility and the Artistic Practice of Zahoor ul Akhlaq," *The Journal of Transcultural Studies* 13, no. 1–2 (2022), 76–111.

Wille, Simone, "M. F. Husain's Work in the Collection of the National Gallery in Prague: Connecting East and West," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 171–185.

Wille, Simone, "Of Centres, Peripheries, Values, and Judgements: Simone Wille in Conversation with Partha Mitter on 'Decentering Modernism' and Modernist Routes beyond Western Europe," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 205–216.

Wille, Simone, "Krishna Reddy in Central Europe," in *Exhibitions as Sites of Artistic Contact*, Katalin Cseh-Varga (ed.) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming in 2026).

Williams, Raymond, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

Winter, Tomáš, "Picasso's Meeting With Buddha," in *Collecting Asian Art: Cultural Politics & Transregional Networks in Twentieth-Century Central Europe*, Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kadoi, and Simone Wille (eds.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 45–57.

Wintle, Claire, "India on Display: Nationalism, Transnationalism and Collaboration, 1964–1986," *Third Text* 31, no. 2–3 (2017), 301–320, https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2017.1393926.

Wintle, Claire, "Displaying Independent India Abroad: nationalism, cultural diplomacy and collaboration at the Nehru memorial exhibition, 1965–2015," in *Heritage at the Interface: Interpretation and Identity*, G. Hooper (ed.) (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018), 1–19.

Wortmann, Jutta Birgit, *Bildhauersymposien: Entstehung—Entwicklung-Wandlung* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006).

Zaheer, Hassan, *The Times and Trial of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy, 1951: The First Coup Attempt in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Zijlmans, Kitty, and Wilfried van Damme (eds.), *World Art Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches* (Amsterdam: Valuz, 2008).

Zitzewitz, Karin, *The Art of Secularism: The Cultural Politics of Modernist Art in Contemporary India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Exhibition catalogues

Biafra of Spirit. Third World Students in Czechoslovakia, tranzit.sk, Bratislava, 2016 and NGP, October 2017–January 2018 at the Trade Fair Palace, Prague.

Filmmakers of the World, Unite! Forgotten Internationalism, Czechoslovak Film and the Third World, Tereza Stejskalová (ed.) (Prague: tranzit.cz, 2017).

Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned, exhibition catalogue (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2019).

Revolutionary Romances? Global Art Histories in the GDR, Albertinum, Dresden, November 11, 2023–June 2, 2024.

Parapolitics: Cultural Freedom and the Cold War, Anselm Franke, Nida Ghouse, Paz Guevara, and Antonia Majaca (eds.) (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2021).

Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960–1980, New York Museum of Modern Art, 2015.

The Other Trans-Atlantic. Kinetic and Op Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1950s—1970s, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow and Sesc (Serviço Social do Comércio) in São Paulo, 2017–2018.

Pakistan: Another Vision. Fifty years of painting and sculpture from Pakistan, exhibition catalogue, Timothy Wilcox (ed.) (London: Arts & The Islamic World, 1997).

Indian Art Exhibition: Visiting Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria 1955–56, exhibition catalogue (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1955).

Modern Indian Art, National Gallery Prague, 1979.

Mumbai Modern: Progressive Artists' Group 1947–2013 (New Delhi: DAG, 2013).

Gade, exhibition catalogue (Bombay: Sadanga Publications, 1961).

Rembrandtova tramvaj. Kubismus, tradice a "jiné" umění, Tomáš Winter, Lenka Bydžovská, Pavla Machalíková, and Tatiana Petrasová (eds.) (Plzeň: Západočeská galerie, 2015).

Pro Lidice: 52 umělců z Německa/52 Künstler aus Deutschland, René Block (ed.) (Prague: Goethe Institute Prague, 1997).

Lidická sbírka průvodce, Luba Hédlová (ed.) (Lidice: Patmáník, 2013).

Remember Lidice, René Block and Thomas Niemeyer (eds.) (Berlin: Edition Block, 2016).

Remember Lidice: 1967–2017. 50 years of the Lidice art collection, exhibition catalogue (Lidice: Patmáník, 2017).

No Feeling is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection (Vienna: Kunsthalle Vienna, 2023).

Husain: Works from the Collection of the Late Badrivishal Pitti, auction catalogue, Pundole's, Mumbai, Thursday January 17, 2013.

Dvořak, František, *Bishamber Khanna*, exhibition catagloue (Prague: SČVU, 1960).

Online Resources

https://archive.metromod.net (last visited May 23, 2024).

https://zacheta.art.pl/en/dokumentacja-i-biblioteka/projekt-badawczy?setlang=1 (last visited October 9, 2023).

https://www.bubinekrevolveru.cz/u-prilezitosti-narozenin-lubora-hajka-hajkovo-desatero-o-peti-bodech-vzpominky-viktora-karlika (last visited June 26, 2024).

https://www.uibk.ac.at/en/projects/south-asia-in-central-europe/ (last visited August 22, 2024).

https://www.uibk.ac.at/de/kunstgeschichte/forschung/ (last visited July 18, 2024).

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/slade/research/slade-archive-project/class-photos/ (last visited December 15, 2024).
https://dagworld.com/sarada-charan-ukil.html (last visited July 22, 2024).
http://www.ha-gade.com (last visited September 12, 2023).
https://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/9/1/9177/AC_24-D_16_ENG.pdf (last visited September 14, 2023).
https://orient.cas.cz/cs/knihovny/elektronicke-zdroje/digiltalizace-novy-orient/ (last visited September 28, 2024).
https://www.memoryofnations.eu/en/kotikova-charlotta-1940 (last visited October 20, 2024).
https://www.ngprague.cz/en/event/3915/%C5%BD%C3%A1dn%C3%BD%20pocit%20netrv%C3%A1%20v%C4%9B%C4%8Dn%C4%9B.%20Sb%C3%ADrka%20solidarity%20ve%20Skopji (last visited February 27, 2025).
Przemysław Strożek, "Ahmed Cherkaoui in Warsaw," https://www.themaghribpodcast.com/2021/04/ahmed-cherkaoui-in-warsaw-polish.html (last visited July 25, 2024).
https://medium.com/afro-asian-visions/art-of-peace-ee4288a43514 (last visited February 14, 2024).
https://www.airindiacollector.com/blog/m-f-hussain-and-his-air-india-creations (last visited February 27, 2024).
https://www.thequint.com/entertainment/mf-husain-maria-zourkova-an-incomplete-love-story-tabu-meenaxi-a-tale-of-3-cities#read-more (last visited February 27, 2024).
Wille, Simone "Růžena Kamath," in *Metromod Archive*, https://archive.metromod.net/viewer.p/69/2951/object/5138-12041440 (last visited July 28, 2024).
https://www.damu.cz/en/department/department-of-alternative-and-puppet-theatre/about-of-department/ (last visited July 29, 2024).
https://wepa.unima.org/en/jan-malik/ (last visited July 29, 2024).
https://www.loutkari.cz/malik-jan-phdr/ (last visited July 29, 2024).
https://kramerius.lib.cas.cz/view/uuid:95492b3e-4c6a-11e1-8339-001143e3f55c?page=uuid:95492b48-4c6a-11e1-8339-001143e3f55c (last visited April 24, 2024).
Lee, Rachel, and Mareike Schwarz, "Mulk Raj Anand," in *Metromod Archive,* https://archive.metromod.net/viewer.p/69/2951/object/5138-7554744 (last visited July 29, 2024).
https://www.karlprantl.at/skulpturen/steinbruch/ajit-chakravarti (last visited March 18, 2024).
https://kas.vsmu.sk/projekty/oral-history/alexander-strelinger/ (last visited June 3, 2024).
Zitzewitz, Karin, "Bal Chhabda (1923–2013)," https://criticalcollective.in/ArtistInner2.aspx?Aid=302&Eid=307 (last visited June 3, 2024).

Archival Resources

British Library, Archives of the East India Company and the India Office from 1900 to 1948, Vol. II, IOR/L/MIL/5/1070.
Annual Report, Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay, For the Year 1939–40 (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1951).
Annual Report, Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay, For the Year 1942–47 (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1951).
First Entry Form, University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, registry file 7075, January 1947.
Re-Entry Form, University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, from the UCL special collections, registry file 7075, 1947–1948.
University College London, Faculty of Arts: Slade School, file 1429, 1945–1946.
Typewritten letter by Shakir Ali, dated July 5, 1948, Archives André Lhote, Le Raincy.
Národní archiv, Policejní ředitelství Praha II—evidence obyvatelstva 1914–1953 (The National Archives, The Police Headquarters Prague II—Civil Register 1914–1953).
UMPRUM Archive, Prague.
Sbor národní bezpečnosti, Archive of Security Service/The National Security Corps/SNB.
Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS) ("Orientální ústav" Všeobecný svazek, část 1/4)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZV) in Prague. AMZV, TO-O 1955–59, Indie 6, Archive of the AMZV (MFA) of the Czech Republic.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZV) in Prague. AMZV, TO-O 1945–59, Indie 6, Archive of the AMZV (MFA) of the Czech Republic.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZV) in Prague. AMZV, TO-O 1960–64, Indie 4.
Dům Umění, Brno.
Masaryk Institute and Archive of the CAS (MIA CAS), archival record Fond Miloslav Krása.
MŠK: Ministry of Education and Culture.
Slovak Film Institute National Film Archive, personal fond Vlado Kubenko.
CAS Archive, Fond Orientální ústav, File Styky Indie 1961–1963.
Archives André Lhote.

Newspaper Articles

"Kultura: Indický malíř Rám Kumár," *Svobodné Slovo*, July 28, 1955, 8.
"Výstava indického umenia v Bratislave," *Sloboda*, January 1, 1956, Bratislava.
Imre Jankovich, "India képzömüvészete," *Új Szó*, December 31, 1955, Bratislava.
"Gästebuch der Stadt," *Weser Kurier*, September 19, 1962, n.p.
"'Wunderkanabe' stellt in Bremen aus: Der elfjährige Senaka Senanayake aus Ceylon," *Recklingshäuser Zeitung*, September 24, 1962, n.p.
"Ein Wunderkind aus Ceylon," *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* no. 294, Tuesday, December 18, 1962, 7.
"Svět kultury a umění," *Rudé Právo*, January 17, 1968, n.p.
Mladá Fronta, June 23, 1976, n.p.

Conference Paper Presentations

Khullar, Sonal "Strangers in the City: The Progressive Artists Group (1947–1967) and Indian Modernity," The École des Modernités, Institute Giacometti, May 23, 2023, https://www.fondation-giacometti.fr/en/event/276/strangers-in-the-city-the-progressive-artists-group-1947-1967-and-indian-modernity (last visited May 20, 2024).
Saehrendt, Christian, "Die bildende Kunst als Ferment für das sozialistische Weltsystem […]," paper presentation at the international conference *The Global GDR. A Transcultural History of Art (1949–1990)*, June 9–11, 2022.
Sunderason, Sanjukta, "Freedoms in Motion: Transits of Modern Indian Artists in Central Europe in the 1950s," paper presentation at the international conference *Collecting Asian Art in Prague: Cultural Politics and Transcontinental Networks in 20th Century Central Europe*, organised by Markéta Hánová, Yuka Kado, Zdenka Klimtová, and Simone Wille, Prague, June 17–18, 2021, https://www.ngprague.cz/en/event/3092/collecting-asian-art-in-prague-conference (last visited February 27, 2025).
Wille, Simone, "Krishna Reddy (1925–2018) between Santiniketan, London, Paris, Ljubljana, and Vienna: Cold War Friendships and Networks, Collaborations and Aesthetic Solidarities," presented on May 27, 2021 in the framework of the conference *London, Asia, Art, Worlds*, Paul Mellon Centre, https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/whats-on/forthcoming/sociality-and-affect (last visited February 18, 2025).

Index

Page numbers in **bold** refer to illustrations.