

Artist profile, Kota Neelima

Kota Neelima is an artist and her work is impressionist-abstract that seeks to deconstruct contemporary reality through spirituality. She holds a Master's Degree in International Relations from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, and a Doctorate in political science from the University of Delhi. Neelima was Senior Research Fellow, South Asia Studies at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC.

Neelima's follows an elaborate process of making the works, which begins with extensive research of texts, followed by charcoal drawings on paper before, finally converting them to oil paintings. The symbols used in the paintings are trees, sky, the moon and birds, which undergo multi-faceted and complex redefinition. The accessible symbols, each immersed in one or the other aspect of the concept, assist in the elaborate exploration of each painting. Besides the solo exhibitions, her paintings have been featured in art shows in India and abroad. Her work is also a part of the permanent collection at the Museum of Sacred Art, Belgium.

Her work for over a decade had deconstructed contemporary reality through spirituality, presented in seven solo exhibitions in Delhi. Her fourth solo show, First Cause (2012), was based on the Upanishadic exploration of the cause of all Creation, the cause of all causes. Three works from this series can be seen on display at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi. Neelima's fifth solo exhibition, What the Eyes Can See (2015), continued her inquiry into causation by a contemporary and critical understanding of questions from Indian philosophy. The works articulated the questions of Nachiketa in Katha Upanishad, about that which is beyond the right and wrong, the cause and effect, and the questions of Kena Upanishad on what drives the eye, the mind, the speech, and highlight a force that is separate from choice or survival. Her sixth solo exhibition, Places of Worship in 2017, reimagined devotion spiritually and through symbols of nature. Her seventh exhibition in 2018, Metaphors of the Moon, charts the trajectories of the mind as it travels from absence to presence in an eternal cycle. Her upcoming eighth exhibition, The Manifest Absence is in September 2018 at Nehru Centre, London.

Neelima is also an author and her book on devotion, *Tirupati: A Guide To Life* (2012) has been translated into several languages. The book drew from Skanda Mahapurana to explore the temple of Tirupati in Southern India. She also co-authored another book with Dr. AV Ramana Dikshitulu, *Tirumala, Sacred Foods of God* (2017), which explains the traditions of Naivedyam. Besides religion and spirituality, Neelima is the author of four bestselling novels on poverty and political corruption, of which one book, *Shoes of the Dead* (2013), is being made into a movie. Her non-fiction book, *Widows of Vidarbha, Making of Shadows* (2018) traces the life and times of women after farmer suicides. She paints from her studio, StudioAdda, and lives in New Delhi.

Highlights of Exhibitions

Selected International Shows:

Forms of Devotion: The Spiritual in Indian Art

- Conde Duque, Madrid, Spain, 2017
- Las Francesas, Valladolid, Spain, 2016
- China Art Museum, Shanghai, China, 2016
- Art and Culture Building, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, 2015
- Lalit Kala Akademi, 2015

ICCR-Seher's Puducherry Blue

- Jaffna Hindu College, Sri Lanka, 2011
- Bengal Gallery, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2011
- Puducherry, India, 2010

The Epic Journey of Indian Art, Contemporary Art Exhibition

- Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India, 2017.
- National Museum of Fine Arts, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2016.

Selected Indian Group Shows:

1. *Yoga Chakra: Tradition and Modernity*, a multimedia art exhibition at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 2015
2. *Aparajita, The Indomitable Spirit of Woman* at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, 2015
3. Art Positive's *Imaging Sai* exhibition, New Delhi, 2010
4. Indian Art Circle's 10th anniversary exhibition, New Delhi, 2010
5. Ati Art Gallery's *India Rising* exhibition, New Delhi, 2009
6. Christie's *India on Canvas*, New Delhi, 2009
7. Legends of India-ICCR exhibition, Kolkata, 2008
8. Khushii Foundation exhibition, Bengaluru, 2008
9. Harmony Art Show, Mumbai, 2008
10. Sanjha Safar, International Federalism Conference, Government of India, 2007

Seven Solo Shows:

1. *Metaphors of the Moon*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 2018
2. *Places of Worship* at Alliance Francaise, New Delhi, 2017
3. *What the Eyes Can See* at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, 2015
4. *First Cause* at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, 2012
5. *Neutral Witness* at Open Palm Court, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, 2009
6. *Sliver of Time* at Travancore Palace, New Delhi, 2007
7. *Echoing Life of Nature* at Arpana Caur's Academy of Fine Arts and Literature, New Delhi, 2006