

THE GOLDEN FLUTE



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ACRYLIC, OIL AND CHARCOAL ON CANVAS

50" X 40"

SHUVAPRASANNA



PAINTINGS BY
SHUVAPRASANNA

PRESENTED BY:
CYMROZA ART GALLERY & INDIA FINE ART
MUMBAI



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Melodies of the Blue God

Throughout the centuries, Indian artists have explored the rather colorful spectrum of the life of Krishna in various modes. In the Indian religious context, especially Hinduism, the concept of play or *lila* as a divine activity assumes a unique significance. The importance of play indicates that it is a positive activity, an activity that partakes in the realm of the Gods. The Krishna *Lila* as a divine activity is nowhere more fully illustrated than in the playful activities of Krishna, in Vrindavana, both as a child and a young lover. His sport is diverse and sustained, and both the cosmic and playful dimensions of the Lord, are celebrated in Indian literature, religion and Art.

The legend of Krishna is expounded till the present times, through story telling, television, popular culture and contemporary art. Shuvaprasanna explores this timeless theme in his recent works, recreating the *madhura* of Radha and Krishna's eternal love activity. A consistent feature of the Radha/Krishna dalliance is that it takes place in a world apart, in an ideal world that shuns the ordinary world, away from all social obligations and taboos. It is a world of joy, and their love is a celebration that enables them to enter completely the extraordinary other world of the divine, where everything is solved in bliss. Radha's *prema* (selfless love) transcends to the divine in its intensity, passion and fervour, and in her *bhakti*, she immerses herself in the essential nature of the Blue God who is the ultimate Godhead. Krishna's sport with Radha and the *Gopis*, is only but a blissful eternal love activity of divine self-enhancement, infinitely exalted.

The idea of universality has been one that has engaged Shuvaprasanna at various levels, both as an artist and philosopher. Departing from his earlier concerns of existential agony and societal disparities through specific images of the city of Kolkata, the recent works of the artist, which depict divinities and their associated narratives, signifies a major creative breakthrough in his creative oeuvre. Apart from being modern representations and sophisticated idealizations of the Krishna *Lila*, these images also inform the spiritual quest of the artist, of finding universal love, peace and harmony in today's fractured world. Affirming to the modernist idea of the two-dimensionality of the canvas, these works display a fine and sensitive understanding of surface quality, where the forms play against each other through shimmering, contrasting colours and vivid layers of paint.

In terms of technique, Shuvaprasanna's works display a precise, finely executed style that yields an unmistakable visual intensity. In the color palette too, the Krishna *Lila* series breaks significant ground for the artist. The vibrant blues, yellows, and oranges represent a joyful liberation as opposed to the somber browns and grays of the stifling urban experience. What is interesting too, is the textural use of gold and silver foil, pressed delicately onto the canvases, sometimes outlining a face, but at other times curving free, in long lyrical lines. The use of gold might be traced back to the tradition of Indian miniature paintings, in which gold was used to embellish the surface and to glorify the divinities/kings portrayed in the paintings.

Strongly figurative, the protagonists in these works exult in the joy of love and creation. To Shuvaprasanna, complete abstraction is too artificial, too 'lifeless'. But Shuvaprasanna reduces; he therefore abstracts gradually. A recurrent motif is the golden flute of Krishna and the delineation of the eyes, which in realistic terms, is not complete. The abstraction here is to portray the mood of the theme, the gentle melodies of the flute compelling all aspects of creation to immerse into the Absolute, while the inward gazes speak of a meditative quality and the principle of divine *bhakti*, spontaneous and complete, free and unbound. Shuvaprasanna's body of work bears the imprint of a journey that has touched many shores. Poetic in flavour, it stands testimony to the power of the imagination to transform an artwork into a speaking resonant entity.

Amrita Gupta Singh



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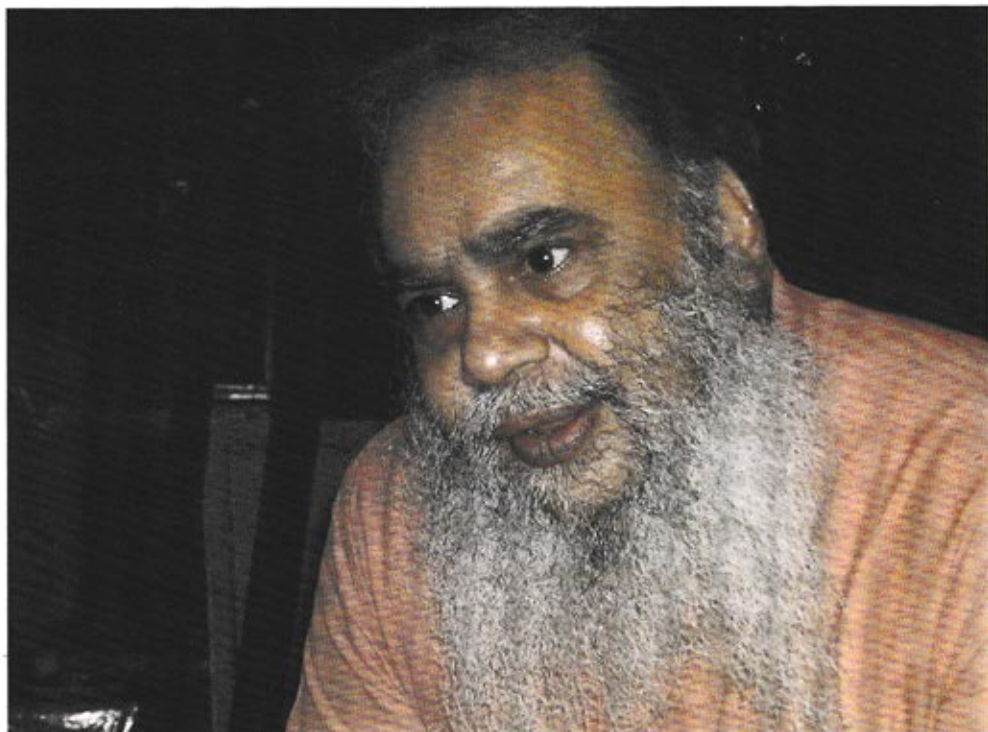
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Born in Kolkata in 1947. He has had 55 solo and numerous group exhibitions in India and abroad. He has participated in various international exhibitions viz. The III International Biennial, Bangladesh in 1985, the VI EME Triennale Mondiale D'Estampes Petit Format 2003 in France. He has received various awards like the Award by the Birla Academy, Kolkata; the Award by the State Lalit Kala Academy, West Bengal and the Award by AIFACS, New Delhi. He has been a founder member of the Art and Artists in 1969 and founded the College of Visual Arts in 1976, Kolkata. He has also established the Arts Acre, an arts village, Kolkata in 1984. There have been various publications to his credit and his autobiography "*Aamaar Chhelebeli*" was published in 2002 and '*Ananya Nagarik*' book on his collective essays, published in 2005. His paintings have been in many prominent collections in India and abroad.



CYMRØZA ART GALLERY

72, BHULABHAI DESAI ROAD
MUMBAI 400026, INDIA

TEL NO: 91-22-23671983 Fax : 91-22-23671999
Email: cymroza@vsnl.net Website: www.cymroza.com



India Fine Art

428/A-1 SHAH & NAHAR INDUSTRIAL EST.
LOWER PAREL(W), MUMBAI 400013
TEL NO: 022-24912839 Fax: 022-24912833

Email: indiafin@indiafineart.com
Website: www.indiafineart.com