KINDRED DICHOTOMIES

SUDHANSHU SUTAR
& ANDREA ZUCCHI





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Photography: Raj Salhotra

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BLACKCUBE

In association with *Namtech Fine* Art

Sanya Malik is the founder and curator of Black Cube Gallery in New Delhi. Her academic background includes studies in art criticism and curation with her bachelor's from Central Saint Martins London, and Masters from Royal College of Art, London. Under her leadership, Black Cube challenges traditional gallery norms by offering a platform that bridges the gap between established and emerging artists, aiming to make art more accessible and engaging for diverse audiences.

Curator: Sanya Malik

CURATORIAL NOTE:

Bridging Histories, Transcending Language

The exhibition brings together two contemporary artists—Sudhanshu Sutar (b. 1988, Bhubaneswar, India) and Andrea Zucchi (b. 1964, Milan, Italy)— whose works, though born from distinct cultural and historical contexts, engage in a profound visual and conceptual dialogue. Despite the fact that the artists do not share a common spoken language, their practices speak to one another in a way that transcends verbal communication, exploring themes of historical continuity, identity, memory, and reinterpretation.

Sutar and Zucchi both work with imagery that blurs temporal boundaries, merging past and present through visual storytelling. They delve into historical materials—archival photographs, literature, and cultural symbols—reinterpreting them to address contemporary concerns. Their approaches, however, differ in tone and execution: while Sutar constructs narratives rooted in his personal and cultural history, focusing on lost royalty and shifting identities, Zucchi plays with appropriation and juxtaposition, layering historical imagery with an irreverent, almost surreal energy.



SUDHANSHU SUTAR

Lost Royalty and Theatrical Storytelling



Sutar's work is deeply rooted in the historical and cultural landscape of Odisha, India. Inspired by Kanika Palace—a structure reminiscent of Buckingham Palace, yet one whose original grandeur has faded over time—Sutar's series on kingship and lost royalty reflects on the ephemeral nature of power and identity. Through his paintings, he resurrects forgotten histories, capturing the echoes of a past that still lingers in contemporary consciousness.

Sutar's background is instrumental in shaping his artistic vision. Growing up in Odisha, he absorbed stories of Indian independence, royal life, and theatre, all of which find expression in his work. His father, a theatre director and writer, and his grandfather, a carpenter for the palace, provided him with a unique perspective on both the grandeur and decay of historical legacies. These influences manifest in his highly staged compositions, where each painting functions as a meticulously arranged theatre set, evoking the tradition of Indian Nataks (theatre performances) that Sutar has witnessed throughout his life.

His artistic approach involves stripping faces of their individuality, allowing the figures in his work to embody broader concepts of kingship, power, and historical displacement. He constructs a dialogue between the past, present, and future, where history does not remain static but is constantly reinterpreted. His use of archival photographs, literary influences, and surrealist undertones (a classification he did not originally intend but later embraced) results in a body of work that feels both deeply personal and universally resonant.



Recapitulatory Treasure
Acrylic on canvas
48” x 60”, 2021









Game Changer
Acrylic on canvas
60” x 48”, 2021

Alchemist of Delhi (II)
Acrylic on canvas
48" x 60", 2010





Lost Paradise
Acrylic on canvas
48” x 60”, 2010







Treasure Hunt (Rani Lakshmi Bai)
Oil & acrylic on canvas
36" x 48", 2012



Dynasty Land
Acrylic on canvas
36” x 48”, 2022





Recalibration
Acrylic on canvas
36” x 48”, 2019



King of Aileron Rebloomer
Oil & acrylic on canvas
36” x 48”, 2021



Song of the South
Acrylic on canvas
36” x 48”, 2021





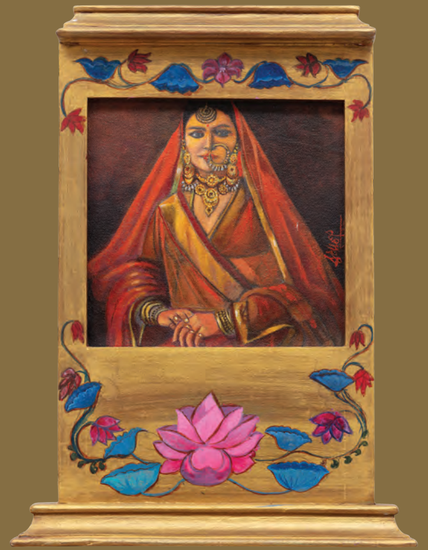
Queen's inner circle
Oil on canvas
48" x 72", 2021





Resting Itinerary
Acrylic on canvas
24” x 48”, 2021







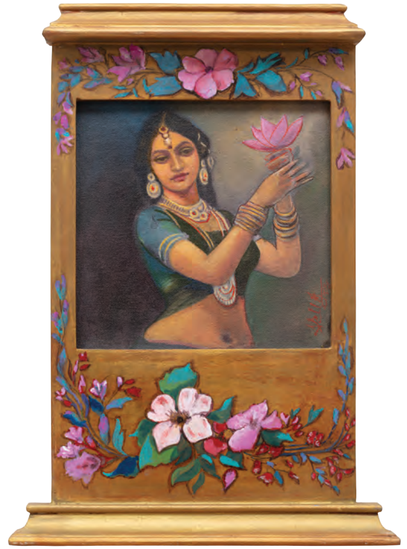


Unsung Queen Series
Acrylic on canvas board with painted frame, 14" x 10"









Unsung Queen Series
Acrylic on canvas board with painted frame, 14" x 10"









Unsung King Series
Acrylic on canvas board with frame, 9" x 7.5"









Unsung King Series
Acrylic on canvas board with frame, 9" x 7.5"









Unsung King Series
Acrylic on canvas board with frame, 9” x 7.5”





Unsung King Series
Acrylic on canvas board with frame, 9" x 7.5"



ANDREA ZUCCHI

The Art of Appropriation and Reinterpretation

Zucchi's artistic practice is characterized by his engagement with historical imagery, which he transforms through the lens of contemporary visual culture. Born in Milan, Zucchi's early artistic influences stemmed from classicism, philosophy, and literature, eventually leading him toward a unique visual language that fuses historical references with striking modern interventions.

His latest series involves the appropriation of 19th-century photographs, which he reimagines through exaggerated, almost psychedelic colours and compositions. This process of 'psychedelic plagiarism'—as it has been described—imbues historical figures and classical subjects with a disorienting, contemporary sensibility. By manipulating these images, Zucchi questions notions of authenticity, originality, and the way history is mediated through visual representation.

Unlike Sutar, who reconstructs lost narratives through deeply personal connections, Zucchi engages in a playful yet critical examination of how history is preserved, copied, and repurposed. His work taps into the modern phenomenon of 'copy and paste' culture, where digital technology enables endless reproduction and recontextualization of images. This interrogation of appropriation extends beyond mere aesthetic exercise—it becomes a commentary on globalization, memory, and the fluidity of historical interpretation.



Bridging Histories, Transcending Language

What unites Sutar and Zucchi in this exhibition is their shared fascination with history—not as a fixed entity, but as a space for reinterpretation. Both artists engage with archival materials and historical imagery, transforming them into contemporary visual narratives that invite viewers to reconsider the past in new ways.

At the same time, their methodologies highlight intriguing contrasts. Sutar's work carries a meditative and theatrical quality, where the weight of history is felt through carefully composed scenes that honour the dignity of lost figures. In contrast, Zucchi disrupts historical imagery with irreverence and chromatic intensity, creating an almost Pop-infused revision of the past. One artist seeks to preserve and reimagine, while the other deconstructs and subverts.

This exhibition presents a rare opportunity to witness how two artists from vastly different backgrounds can converge in their exploration of time, memory, and identity. Despite linguistic and cultural differences, their works engage in a rich conversation—one that demonstrates the power of art to bridge gaps, create connections, and foster a dialogue that transcends words. Here, history is not merely remembered but reimagined, proving that the past is never truly behind us; it is always in flux, waiting to be rediscovered.



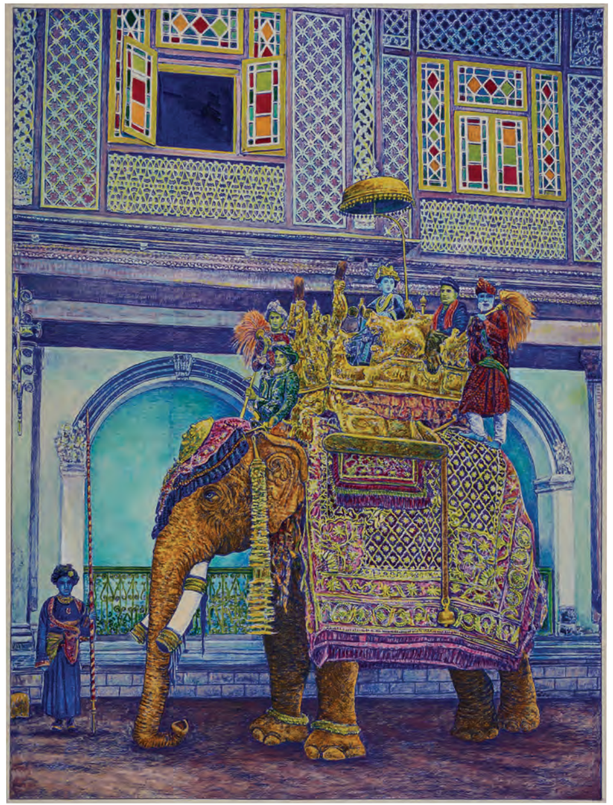
Raghubir Singh, Maharao of Bundi
Watercolour and pencil on paper
18.8" x 15.7", 2024

Sardar Singh, Maharaja of Jodhpur
Watercolour and pencil on paper
21.2” x 16.1”, 2024



The son of the Maharaja of Bansda on the royal elephant
Watercolour and pencil on paper
31.4" x 23.6", 2024







The magician Chambly summons a spirit
Oil on linen
62.9” x 43.3”, 2011





Raghuraj Singh, Maharaja of Rewa
Oil on linen
59” x 47.2”, 2010

Karl Marx
Oil on linen
31.4" x 23.6", 2012





Sculpture Workshop
Oil on linen
62.9” x 62.9”, 2011

Takht Singh, Maharaja of Jodhpur
Watercolour and pencil on paper
19.6” x 15.7”, 2024





Allegorical Future
Watercolour and pencil on paper
39.3” x 31.4”, 2010



The two ways of life
Watercolour and pencil on paper
59” x 110.2”, 2010





Nihal Singh, The Maharana of Rampur
Watercolour and pencil on paper
10.6" x 8.2", 2024



Giuseppe Garibaldi
Oil on linen
47.2” x 35.4”, 2010

Nawab Sadiq Muhammad, Khan in Bahawalpur
Watercolour and pencil on paper
20.8” x 15.7”, 2024





Fateh Singh, Maharana of Mewar
Watercolour and pencil on paper
21.2” x 15.7”, 2024





Tukoji Rao Holkar, Maharaja of Indore
Watercolour and pencil on paper
21.2” x 16.1”, 2024





Yadvindra Singh, Maharaja of Patiala
Watercolour and pencil on paper
22.4" x 16.1", 2024



Maharaja Rudra Pratap Singh
Oil on linen
39.3” x 31.4”, 2010



Pratap Singh, Maharaja of Orcha
Watercolour and pencil on paper
20.4” x 15.7”, 2024





Lokendra Govind Singh, Maharaja of Bansda with the pigmented son
Watercolour and pencil on paper
19.6” x 15.7”, 2024





ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Sudhanshu Sutar

Sudhanshu Sutar was born in Kalikapur village of Orissa in 1969. Whether it is Buddhism, sculpture (The Sun Temple at Konark) or Odissi dance, Orissa has an impressionable image in Indian psyche and its history.

After graduating in Fine Arts from Utkal University (1993), Orissa. Sudhanshu started with a quest to travel across Orissa on his bicycle to explore more than what he visualized of life outside his village. Convinced that he was to pursue art as a career, he felt the need to shift base to Delhi in 1994. Sutar made ends meet in the capital by painting large format billboards surrounding Delhi's most expansive exhibition space at Pragati Maidan. He continued to do a variety of odd jobs and endured as an artist; finding some recognition through a gallery in Japan that helped him sustain a modest living in the capital for the last decade.

His new work is representational of his roots from Orissa and the time he spent in Delhi. A marvellous combination of his rural psychological imagery and his complex survival in the big city reveals some visually salient images.

The artist lives and works in Delhi.

Andrea Zucchi

Andrea Zucchi was born in Milan in 1964. Although he studies philosophy and shows interest in literature, he has not been able to resist the passion for drawing and painting. At the outset of his artistic career, Zucchi considered De Chirico and Bacon as his reference points, even though he is strongly attracted by classicism. His research leads him to delve deep into the classics of mysticism, with the conviction that there exists basically a kind of universal religion, characterized by the recurring and constant elements over time. With this thought in mind, he realizes various series, in which he integrates images selected from different cultures.

Appropriation, remix, and even plagiarism—real or presumed—are central to today's art debate across cinema, music, literature, and visual arts. While art has always evolved through exchanges and transformations, digital tools have amplified reworking of past materials. In his latest series, Zucchi transforms 19th-century photographs into vivid, exaggerated paintings. His "psychedelic plagiarism" reinvents historical and allegorical figures, turning the familiar into a playful, ironic, and unexpectedly Pop vision.

The artist lives and works in Milan.

ABOUT BLACK CUBE

Black Cube Gallery is a modern and contemporary art space that challenges conventional hierarchies by bringing together established and emerging artists in a shared dialogue. Founded on the belief that art should exist beyond structured divisions, Black Cube creates a space where different artistic languages interact, where tradition and experimentation coexist, and where critical discourse is extended to all artists, not just the historically recognized. The gallery remains committed to fostering meaningful engagement with contemporary art, offering exhibitions that challenge, provoke, and expand the way we experience visual culture. At its core, Black Cube is more than a gallery—it is a space of exchange, experimentation, and new possibilities for artistic thought and presentation.

BLACKCUBE

Black Cube Gallery | G12A, 2nd Floor, Hauz Khas, New Delhi



