

THE REAL PROGRESSIVE
KRISHEN KHANNA AT 101

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THE REAL PROGRESSIVE

Krishen Khanna's Bandwalla's

On the fifth of July, 2025, Krishen turned one hundred. He spent the morning, as he has spent most mornings of the past seventy-five years, painting. This book documents the work of an artist still entirely at his easel, in his hundred-and-first year of life and his eighth decade of practice. **The Real Progressive** celebrates Krishen not only as the last living artist of the Progressive Artists Group still actively working, but as a true progressive in spirit, continuously evolving at his age, embracing new materials, processes, and forms of expression with the same curiosity, courage, and humanity that defined his remarkable artistic journey.

This publication documents a collection of Krishen's Bandwalla's; small format oils on paper and a selection of works on canvas which the artist has continuously returned to, not just as a subject but as a statement. These Bandwalla's are built through Krishen's elegant impasto, where paint gathers, rises, and holds light like sound held in the air. Each thickened stroke becomes a kind of rhythm: a physical record of movement, music, and presence. The Bandwalla's embody a subtle irony; they perform at the most celebratory moments of our lives yet live modestly and depend on the joy of others for survival. Krishen captures them not as background characters, but as the quiet center of human truth: Ordinary lives carrying extraordinary spirit. A key figure of Indian modernism and an integral part of the Progressive Artists Group; Krishen's progressiveness is not confined to history or affiliation, but is embedded in his method and compassion. His impasto is not decorative; it is empathetic. It gives weight to ordinary lives, elevating them through attention, tenderness and respect. Krishen remains generous in vision, inclusive in attitude and unwavering in his sincerity. "The Real Progressive" is the artist who insists that everyday deserves monumental; that celebration is not complete unless we truly see those who make it possible.

Krishen has resisted the idea of retrospection. "A retrospective is not about the high peaks of your career," he has said, "it is about the lock, stock and barrel of it all. It's about the journey of time and tide as it were." The book in your hands is something more partial and, we hope, more intimate: one century of looking, refracted through a single subject — the Bandwalla — and through the colours an artist has spent a lifetime mixing.

NFA
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KRISHEN KHANNA
101 YEARS YOUNG



OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 27″

In conversation with Karan Khanna

Karan You've been painting for over seven decades now. But I've seen you most closely in your nineties, still waking up every day with the need to work. Where does that need come from?

Krishen I don't think of it as discipline or ambition anymore. It is simply a habit, like breathing. Painting has never been separate from life for me. When you do something long enough, it becomes the way you understand the world. At this age, I don't work to achieve anything. I work because I would not know how to exist otherwise.

Karan Growing up, I saw the bandwalla's appear again and again in your work. Why did they stay with you for so long?

Krishen The association was very easy as I was a member of my school band and the connect was immediate when I saw the uniform bandsman in Garhi. This came from a very simple observation those men waiting on the roadside, dressed in faded uniforms, between celebrations. There was dignity, but also loneliness, and over time, they became something larger for me - about performance, about invisibility, about life itself. I suppose I kept returning to them because I never exhausted what they could say.

Karan You were part of the Progressive Artists Group, a movement that changed Indian art. Did you feel at the time that you were part of something historic?

Krishen Not at all. We were simply trying to find a language that felt honest to us. India had just become independent, and we were also trying to become independent as well, from inherited ways of seeing. History comes later. At the time, it was just work, discussion, disagreement, and a lot of uncertainty.

Karan You began your career working at Grindlays Bank before becoming a full-time artist. Did that dual life shape you?

Krishen Very much. The bank gave me structure, but it also gave me distance. I was not desperate for my art to succeed immediately. I think that allowed me to grow slowly. And perhaps it kept me grounded—I was never only an "artist," I was also someone observing ordinary life.

Karan In your nineties and recent years, when you did not have the same strength as you did earlier, you didn't stop—you adapted. The mixed media works, the oil bars... did that feel like a challenge or discovery?

Krishen It felt like necessity, and necessity often leads to discovery. When the hand changes, the work will also change, as does the process of creation of the artwork. Even with physical limitations in recent years, it has not taken away from my mental agility and thus I did not see it as losing something..in fact, I saw it as finding another way to continue the conversation, and I found joy in the freedom of new materials and processes for continuing my work.

Karan This evolution in your process also required assistance. How did you approach working with others at this stage?

Krishen This required assistance, which I was fortunate to find, and under my extensive guidance and involvement we were able to create a new body of work. It is not the first time I have used assistance. Even at the time of the Maurya Mural I invited some of my friends including Ramachandran, Manjit Bawa and Gurcharan to assist me by contributing their skills to a few parts of the mural where I felt their input and skill would enhance the overall idea and concept of this monumental project. I have since used assistance as required over the years, based on the project at hand.

Karan Your take on the impasto paintings—thick paint, quick strokes, almost abstract. They feel very different, and yet completely yours. What drew you to this way of working?

Krishen At this stage, I am less interested in detail and more in energy. The impasto allows the painting to hold movement and to register the act of making. I let the paint speak more directly. It becomes less about describing and more about evoking.

Karan Your retrospective at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Mumbai brought together decades of your work. What did it feel like to see your life laid out like that?

Krishen I unfortunately could not visit Mumbai to see it myself. Seeing images and videos, it was strange, almost like looking at someone else's life. You don't experience your own work as a whole, you experience it one painting at a time. The retrospective showed me continuity, but also change. It reminded me that I have always been searching, even when I did not realise it. It would be marvellous to see it in Delhi.

Karan You are now the last surviving member of that generation of modernists. Does that awareness sit with you?

Krishen It comes and goes. Of course, I think of my friends; M. F. Husain, S. H. Raza, F. N. Souza, but I do not feel like a "last representative." I am simply continuing my own journey. The work must remain alive, not become a monument. My work will always survive through my paintings, sculptures, drawings, mixed media works, photography, my writings, images in publications and through those that have collected my artworks over time.

Karan I've often felt that your work carries compassion—even when it is about struggle or suffering. Is that something you consciously bring into your paintings?

Krishen I think it comes from how you look at people. If you observe without judgement, compassion follows naturally. I have never wanted to expose or dramatise, I have just wanted to understand. Perhaps that is what you are sensing.

Karan What has changed the most in how you see painting now, at 101, compared to when you were young?

Krishen When you are young, you are trying to prove something, to yourself, to others. Now, there is nothing to prove. The painting becomes quieter, but also more honest. You accept what you can and cannot do, and within that, you find freedom.

Karan You've often said you want to keep working till the very end. Why is that so important to you?

Krishen Because stopping would feel like giving up on curiosity. As long as I can hold a tool, even imperfectly, I want to continue asking questions. Painting is not about perfection; it is about engagement. And I would like to remain engaged with life for as long as possible.



OIL ON CANVAS, 48" X 108"

Karan As your son, I've seen both the artist and the person at home. Did you ever feel that art demanded too much from family life?

Krishen Art always demands time, and time is always limited. There are compromises, of course. But I have been fortunate, I have had understanding around me. Without that, none of this would have been possible.

Karan When you look back now, is there anything you feel you were always trying to say—but never quite could?

Krishen I don't think a painting ever fully says what you intend. That is why you keep making another one. The unfinished quality is important because it keeps you moving. If I had said everything, I would have stopped long ago.

Karan What would you want younger artists—and even me—to take from your journey?

Krishen Patience. And honesty. Also, do not be afraid of change. Your work should evolve as you do.

Karan And finally—when you sit in front of a blank canvas today, at 101, what do you feel?

Krishen The same thing I always felt.. a mixture of uncertainty and possibility. That has never changed. Perhaps that is why I am still here, still working.



FROM LYALLPUR TO LUTYENS

Krishen was born in the Punjab in 1925, in a town called Lyallpur. The town no longer answers to that name. Like the boy himself, it would come, in time, to belong to a different country: today it is Faisalabad, Pakistan. The country, the century, and the painter all came of age together — and all three have spent the intervening hundred years working out what to make of partition. He was educated, first, at the Imperial Service College at Windsor, on a scholarship sent from a colony to its capital. He returned to a Punjab that was still one Punjab. He took his BA at Government College, Lahore, and in the evenings walked across the city to the Mayo School of Art for classes in drawing. There, briefly, he apprenticed under Sheikh Ahmed at a place called Studio One. He was not yet a painter. He was a young man with a degree, a job in prospect, and the capacity to draw what he saw. In August of 1947 the country he had grown up in was cut in two. The Khanna's left Lahore for Shimla. They did not all arrive. The crossing — and the things he saw on it — would never leave his work. Refugees 1947, a painting he made decades later and which appears in this volume, is not a memory recovered. It is a memory that never went anywhere. In 1948 he went down to Bombay and took a job at Grindlay's Bank. He painted at night. He painted on Sundays. He painted in the small flat behind the bank. By the early 1950s the painters of the Progressive Artists' Group — Husain, Souza, Raza, Ara, Bakre, Gade — had become his friends. In 1959 they invited him in. He was the latest of the Progressives to join, the youngest, the least credentialed; he was also the only one of them with a regular salary, and for a while he subsidised the others. In 1961, fourteen years into his banking career, he resigned. He has been a full-time painter ever since.

The next six decades read like a list, but they were lived as a life. A Rockefeller Fellowship took him to America and Japan in 1962. The Padma Shri came in 1990. The Lalit Kala Ratna in 2004. The Padma Bhushan in 2011. He painted Christ in the 1960s and Lazarus in the 1970s. He painted a Last Supper and a Pieta. He painted truck drivers and refugees and bus conductors and the bodies floating face-down in rivers no one wanted to name. He painted, eventually, the men who play the trumpets at Indian weddings. He moved from Bombay to Madras and then to Delhi, where his studio at Nizamuddin became, for fifty years, one of the few addresses every working Indian artist knew by heart. He moved out to Gurugram, where he paints today, and up to Ravensdale, the small house in Shimla where his grandchildren visited him in summer. He is the last of the Progressives. He is, at the time of this book's publication, in the hundred-and-first year of his life, and the only one still alive and painting.



OIL ON CANVAS

ON COLOUR

Krishen has said, more than once, that his favourite colour is Indian Yellow. It is a Mughal pigment, a colour whose history is its own kind of journey: ground from a pale paste, traded through Bengal and Rajasthan, used in miniatures and devotional painting for centuries before the European academy gave it its name. To say that an Indian modernist's favourite colour is Indian Yellow is to say something about how he understands his own lineage. He paints in the language of European modernism — impasto, fauve heat, expressionist mass — but the pigment underneath is older than any of that. The works in this book are organised into five colours. They are not the only colours in his palette. They are the five colours that, between them, hold most of what the Bandwalla series is.

Red is the colour of the band itself. It is the coat, the flushed face, the sanguine throat of the trumpet, the throb of the drum. Krishen paints red so thickly that it is almost sculpted: paint piled the way sound piles in air.

Orange and Gold are the colour of the instrument, and of the late-afternoon light that the procession moves in. Indian Yellow burns through these works like the sun through a parade. Where red is body, gold is voice.

Blue is the colour of the time before and the time after. Krishen's blues are the blues of Delhi's twilight. The figures in the blue works are quieter; the trumpets are lowered.

Earth and smoke — the browns, ochres, charcoals, greys —are the colour of the man under the uniform. These are the most quietly autobiographical works in the book.

White is the colour of neutrality and uniformity, and a symbol of sustenance. The air around the figure, the breath between notes, the page reasserting itself through the paint.

OIL ON CANVAS, 48" X 72"



OIL ON CANVAS, 48" X 108"





OIL ON CANVAS, 48″ X 36″

OIL ON CANVAS, 48″ X 36″





OIL ON CANVAS, 35″ X 24″

OIL ON CANVAS, 72″ X 48″



OIL ON CANVAS, 48″ X 72″





OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 32″

OIL ON CANVAS, 35″ X 24″





OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 32″

OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 21″





OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 32″

OIL ON CANVAS, 24″ X 21″





OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 21″

OIL ON CANVAS, 44″ X 18″





OIL ON CANVAS, 34″ X 46″



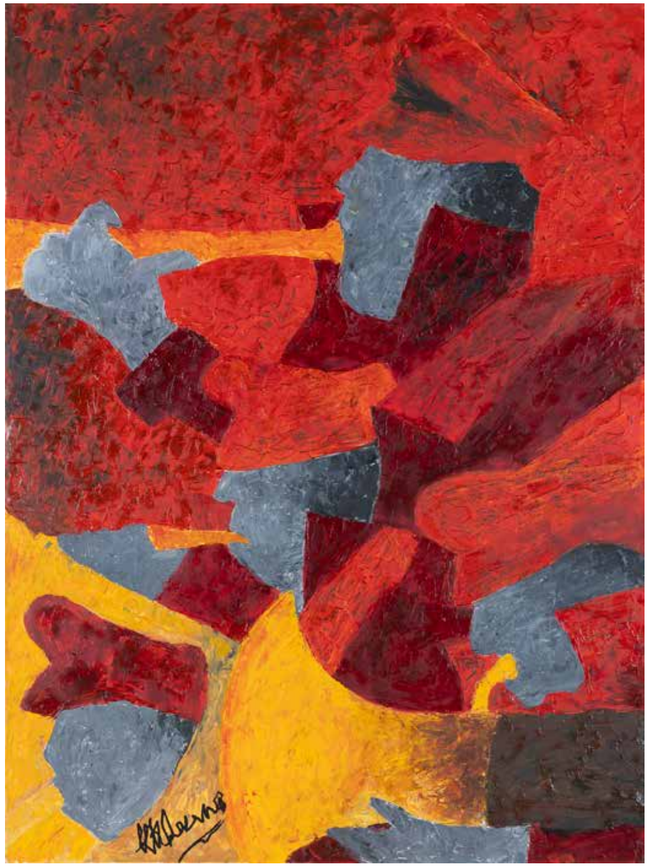
OIL ON CANVAS, 34″ X 46″



OIL ON CANVAS, 39″ X 27″

OIL ON CANVAS, 35″ X 24″





OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 30″

OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 30″





OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 21″

OIL ON CANVAS, 44″ X 18″





OIL ON CANVAS, 42″ X 26″

OIL ON CANVAS, 24″ X 15″







OIL ON CANVAS, 48″ X 36″ (EACH)



OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 30″

WHY THE BANDWALLA



CONTE ON PAPER, 30" X 22"

It happened in the 1970s, when Krishen was driving out of his studio one afternoon. The road was blocked. A Punjabi wedding band, in red coats and gold braid, was marching at the head of a baraat, drums first, trumpets second, a horse with a small boy on it third. Krishen sat in the car and watched them, and felt an instant connection to them. This was because he had been one of them; as a boy at the Imperial Service College in Windsor, where he had been sent on a Rudyard Kipling scholarship in 1938, he had himself played in the school band. So the red coat, the brass instrument, the formation of musicians marching in step—was all familiar. When the wedding procession blocked his car at Garhi nearly forty years later, the recognition was instantaneous: he was looking, in some quiet way, at a version of himself. Then he went home and started painting them. He has not really stopped.

The Bandwalla — the brass-band musician hired out to lead a wedding procession — is a subject Krishen has returned to for fifty years. Other painters have a phase. Krishen has had a half-century. "I would repeat the contours of a subject I have tackled before," he has said, "which is not to say that I would not go back to the same subject in the hope of discovering another dimension." The Bandwalla is the dimension he has not finished discovering. What is in the figure, that it should hold him so long? To begin with, an irony. The Bandwalla performs at the most celebratory moments of other people's lives — weddings, processions, the occasional political rally — and goes home to a one-room set in a colony you have never visited. He provides joy on contract. He is the loudest person on the street and the most invisible person at the party. Ordinary lives carrying extraordinary spirit. The Bandwalla is the paradigm case. The red coat, the brass buttons, the peaked cap, the trumpet of the British military bandsman: these are not Indian uniforms. They are a relic of the British Raj, costumes left behind by the regimental bands of the colonial army and absorbed, by sheer practicality, into the wedding industry of independent India. For an artist who lived through Partition — for whom the British exit and the Indian crossing are part of the same wound — to paint Indian musicians in Raj uniforms playing Hindi film tunes at Punjabi weddings is to paint the whole tangled afterlife of empire in one figure.

To finish, a personal note. Many Bandwalla outfits, especially in north India, are run by Punjabis whose own families crossed the line in 1947. When Krishen paints them — when, more precisely, he paints them again and again and again — he is painting, in some quiet way that he has never quite said out loud, his own people. He is painting the Lahore he left. He is painting the Punjab that, somehow, kept playing its trumpets even after the country it played them in was cut in two. This is the figure that sits at the centre of this book. He stands, in red, waiting for the procession to begin. He blows. Krishen paints him. Krishen keeps painting him. He is 101 years old and he is still finding another dimension.



OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 72″



OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 72″



OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 26″

OIL ON CANVAS, 45″ X 30″





OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 21″

OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 21″





OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 21″

OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 21″





OIL ON CANVAS, 35″ X 24″

OIL ON CANVAS, 20″ X 16″



OIL ON CANVAS, 42″ X 78″

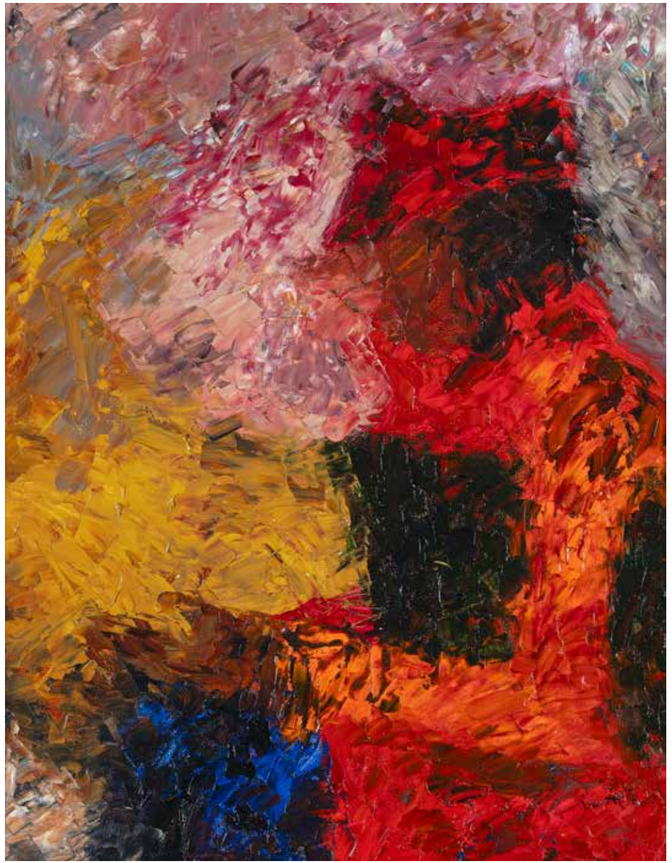




OIL ON CANVAS, 34″ X 46″



OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 46″



OIL ON CANVAS, 20″ X 16″

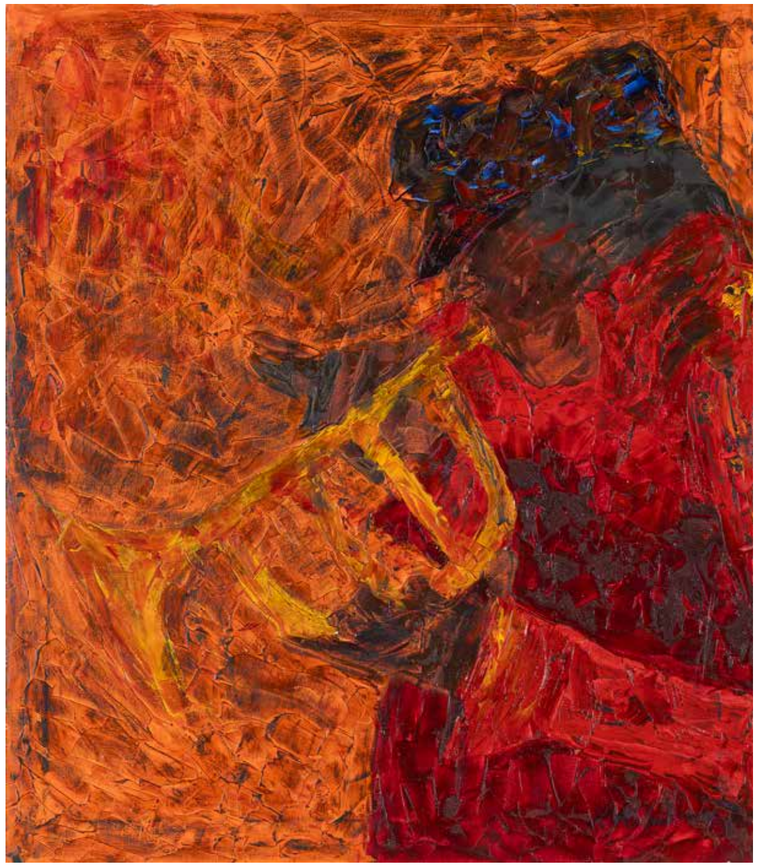
OIL ON CANVAS, 30″ X 19″





OIL ON CANVAS, 35″ X 24″

OIL ON CANVAS, 26″ X 21″





OIL ON CANVAS, 30″ X 19″

OIL ON CANVAS, 30″ X 19″





OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 21″

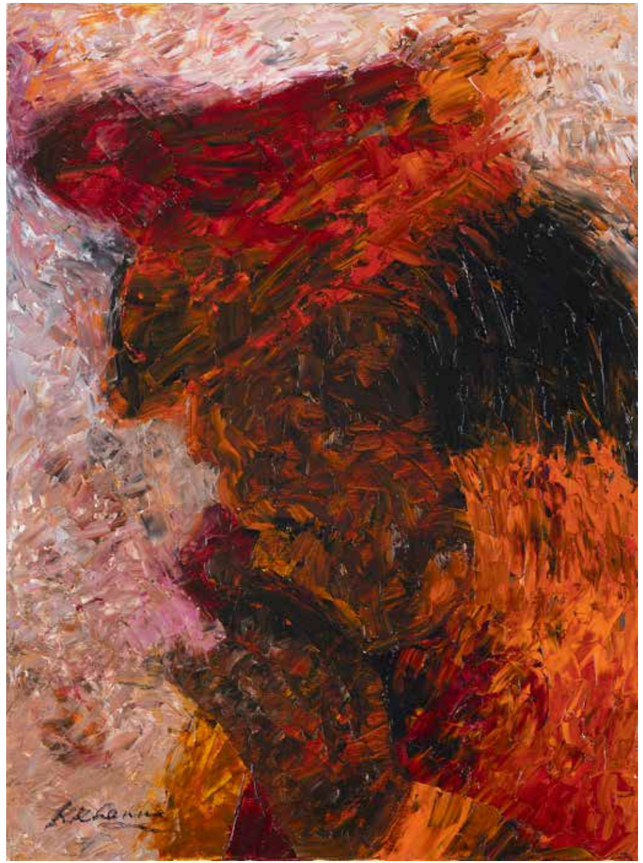
OIL ON CANVAS, 20″ X 16″





OIL ON CANVAS, 46″ X 31″

OIL ON CANVAS, 24″ X 17″





OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 32″

OIL ON CANVAS, 42″ X 18″





OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 27″



OIL ON CANVAS, 16″ X 20″



OIL ON CANVAS, 43″ X 18″



OIL ON CANVAS, 48″ X 72″

OIL ON CANVAS, 42″ X 78″



OIL ON CANVAS, 48″ X 72″





OIL ON CANVAS, 48″ X 144″



OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 72″



OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 72″



OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 72″



OIL ON CANVAS, 34″ X 46″



OIL ON CANVAS, 42″ X 78″

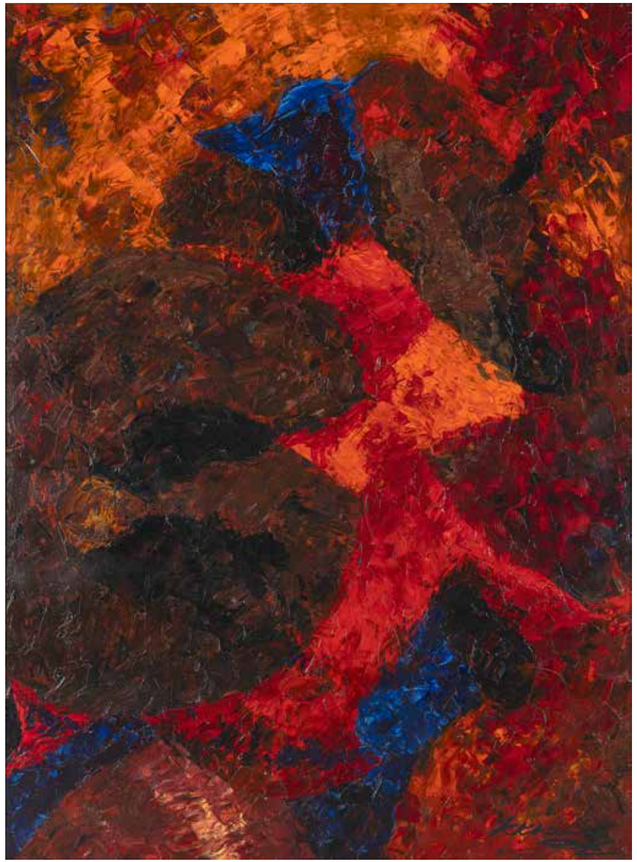


OIL ON CANVAS, 42″ X 78″



OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 30″

OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 30″





OIL ON CANVAS, 24″ X 17″

OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 31″





OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 21″

OIL ON CANVAS, 31″ X 21″





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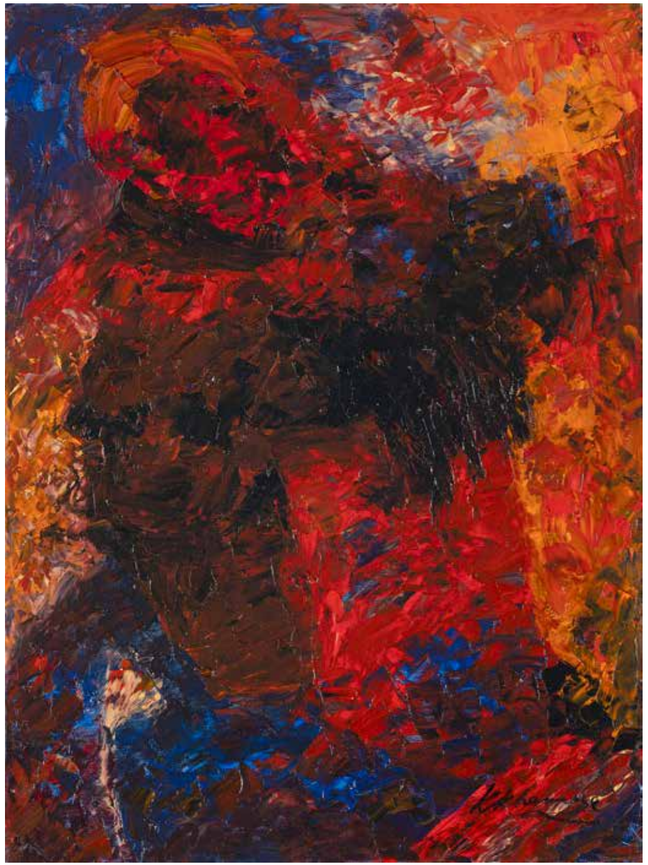




OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 32″

OIL ON CANVAS, 30″ X 19″

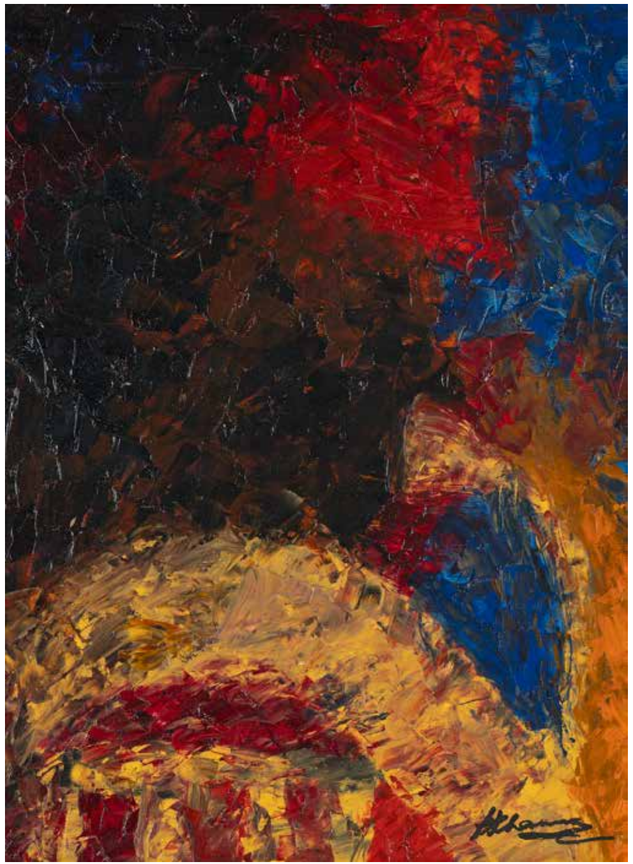




OIL ON CANVAS, 24″ X 17″

OIL ON CANVAS, 24″ X 17″





OIL ON CANVAS, 24″ X 17″

OIL ON CANVAS, 35″ X 24″





OIL ON CANVAS, 34″ X 46″



OIL ON CANVAS, 20″ X 16″

OIL ON CANVAS, 42" X 78"





OIL ON CANVAS, 18″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON CANVAS, 18″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON CANVAS, 18″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON CANVAS, 18″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON CANVAS, 18″ X 15″ (EACH)



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OIL ON CANVAS, 18″ X 15″ (EACH)



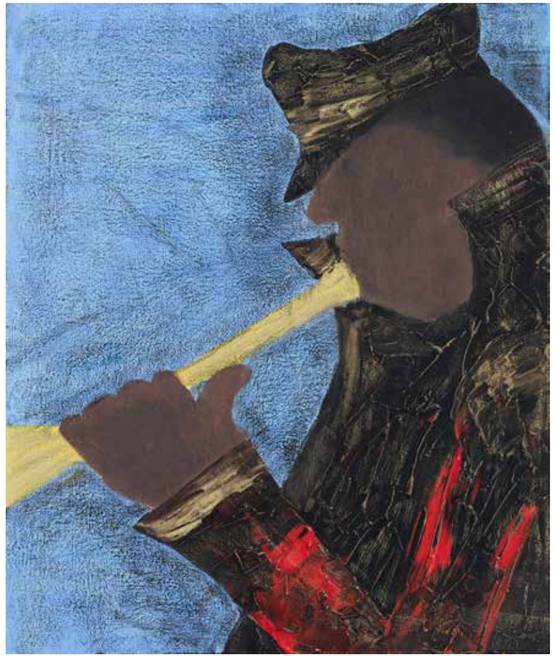
OIL ON CANVAS, 18″ X 15″ (EACH)





OIL ON CANVAS, 18″ X 15″ (EACH)





OIL ON CANVAS, 18″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON CANVAS, 15″ X 18″ (EACH)



OIL ON CANVAS, 15″ X 18″ (EACH)



OIL ON CANVAS, 15″ X 18″ (EACH)



OIL ON CANVAS, 15″ X 18″ (EACH)

OIL ON CANVAS, 20″ X 16″ (EACH)









OIL ON CANVAS, 14″ X 11″



OIL ON CANVAS, 11″ X 14″



OIL ON CANVAS, 11″ X 9″ (EACH)



OIL ON CANVAS, 9″ X 11″

KRISHEN KHANNA'S BANDWALLAS

Uma Nair

For the 100 year old Krishen Khanna who calls himself the last man standing, his preoccupation with the theme of labour and its relationship to the grace of being as well as everyday idioms of oppression have been graphed across musicians on the streets of Delhi.

For Khanna, these bandwalla's are emblematic symbols of the struggle for everyday living even though they bring gaiety and fervour to marriages and celebrations.

These impasto images in shades of crimson or blue of the bandwalla's and their wind instruments create a balance of discourse as well as a commentary on the predicament of the human condition.

In an interview more than 60 years ago he said: "I used to do abstracts earlier and then moved on to human forms. I thought that the person or the individual was being neglected – the person in a particular situation who is influenced by the conditions around. I wanted to henceforth emphasise the plight of human beings caught in their particular condition."

In Delhi, during the Covid pandemic he was in despair thinking about the earnings of the bandwalla's because there were no weddings. Khanna's bandwalla's border on the soulful narrative, he captures not just moments in history, but translates his observations onto his canvases with a quiet zest and spontaneity. His resplendent use of colour and expressionist brushwork make the most mundane moments rise to the charisma of the creative.



OIL ON CANVAS, 12" X 12" (EACH)



“Through a series of happy coincidences, I have received so much from everyone in my life.”

KRISHEN KHANNA



OIL ON PAPER

The works that follow began their lives as drawings. For most of his career, Krishen has worked in sketchbooks. Many of the canvases now hanging in collections across India started here, on a single page, as a Bandwalla worked out in line and tone - the angle of a trumpet, the lean of a shoulder, the weight of a coat - before the larger paintings began. The following series of Oil on Paper are leaves from his sketchbooks that have been painted and have emerged from their gestation as sketches to colourful impasto paintings on paper. They are also a quiet record of how he has continued to find new ways into the same subject and returned to his work in different ways time and again, remaining the most contemporary of all modern Indian artists.

OIL ON PAPER, 14" X 11"





OIL ON PAPER, 11″ X 15″



OIL ON PAPER, 11″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 11″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 11″ X 15″



OIL ON PAPER, 15″ X 11″



OIL ON PAPER, 15″ X 11″ (EACH)



“I don’t think a painting ever fully says what you intend. That is why you keep making another one. The unfinished quality is important because it keeps you moving. If I had said everything, I would have stopped long ago.”

KRISHEN KHANNA



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 15″ X 20″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 15″









OIL ON PAPER, 15″ X 20″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 15″ X 20″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 15″ X 20″



OIL ON PAPER, 15″ X 20″



OIL ON PAPER, 15″ X 20″ (EACH)





OIL ON PAPER, 15″ X 20″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 15″ X 20″



“When painters have lived through that length of time, they have a lot to look back to and reflect upon. A retrospective is not about the high peaks of your career, it is about the lock, stock and barrel of it all. It’s about the journey of time and tide as it were.”

KRISHEN KHANNA



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″ (EACH)



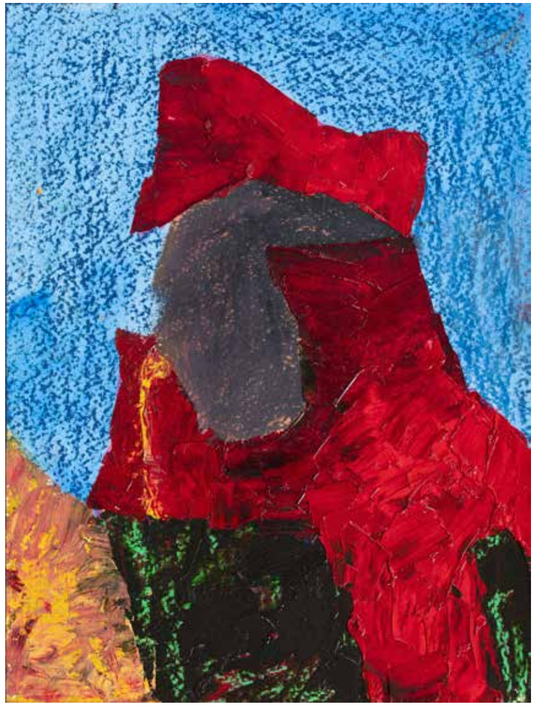
OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″ (EACH)



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OIL ON PAPER, 8″ X 10″ (EACH)






OIL ON PAPER, 8″ X 10″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 8″ X 10″



OIL ON PAPER, 8″ X 10″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 8″ X 10″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 8″ X 10″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



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OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″

OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″





OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 8″ X 10″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 8″ X 10″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



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OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 11″ X 8″



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 6″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 10″ X 6″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 14″ X 11″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 11″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 14″ X 11″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 14″ X 11″



OIL ON PAPER, 14″ X 11″



OIL ON PAPER, 11″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 11″ X 14″



“

The function of art is not decorative. True art defeats time, place and people. Art must go beyond a pretty picture. My gaze is independent of my pencil-holding hand. I think I could shut my eyes without ceasing to scribble. People say, ‘A map of an unknown galaxy’, ‘the pencil has become an extension of the nerves of my hand’, and other such nonsense. Sustained scribbling achieves only a small inroad which may dislodge an image. Sounds dramatic, doesn’t it? But it isn’t always so. I would repeat the contours of a subject I have tackled before, which is not to say that I would not go back to the same subject in the hope of discovering another dimension."

”

KRISHEN KHANNA



OIL ON PAPER, 14″ X 20″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″



OIL ON PAPER, 20″ X 14″

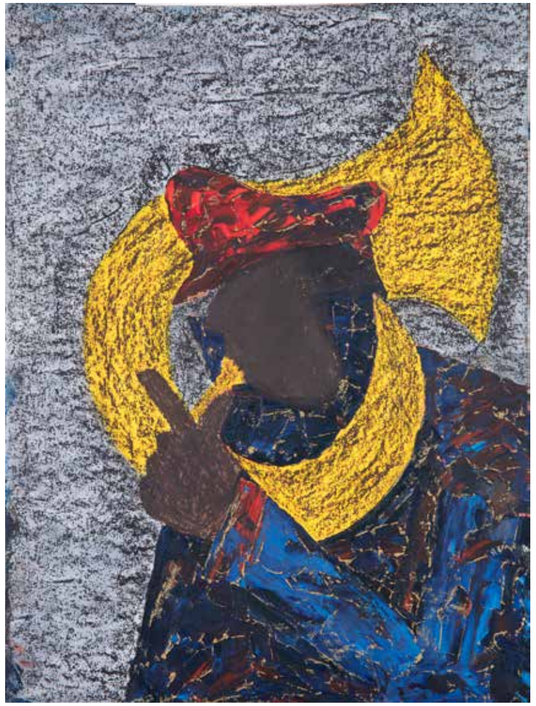


OIL ON PAPER, 16″ X 12″ (EACH)

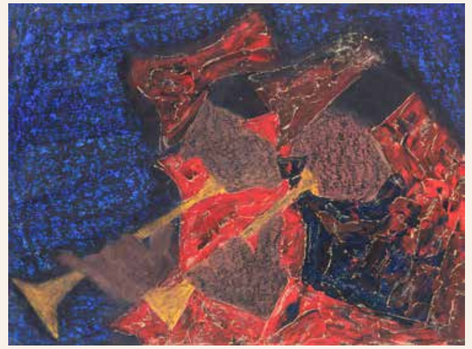


OIL ON PAPER, 16″ X 12″ (EACH)





OIL ON PAPER, 16″ X 12″ (EACH)





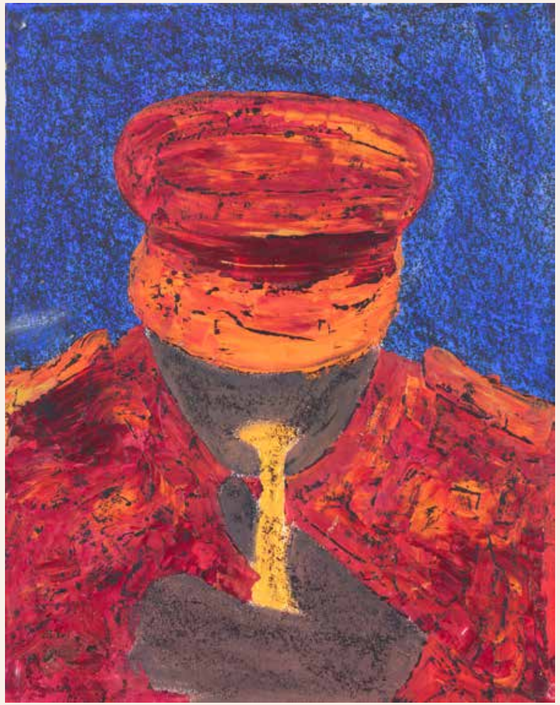
OIL ON PAPER, 12″ X 16″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 14″ X 11″ (EACH)

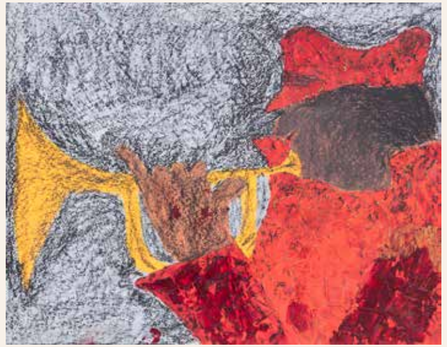


OIL ON PAPER, 14″ X 11″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 14″ X 11″





OIL ON PAPER, 11″ X 14″ (EACH)













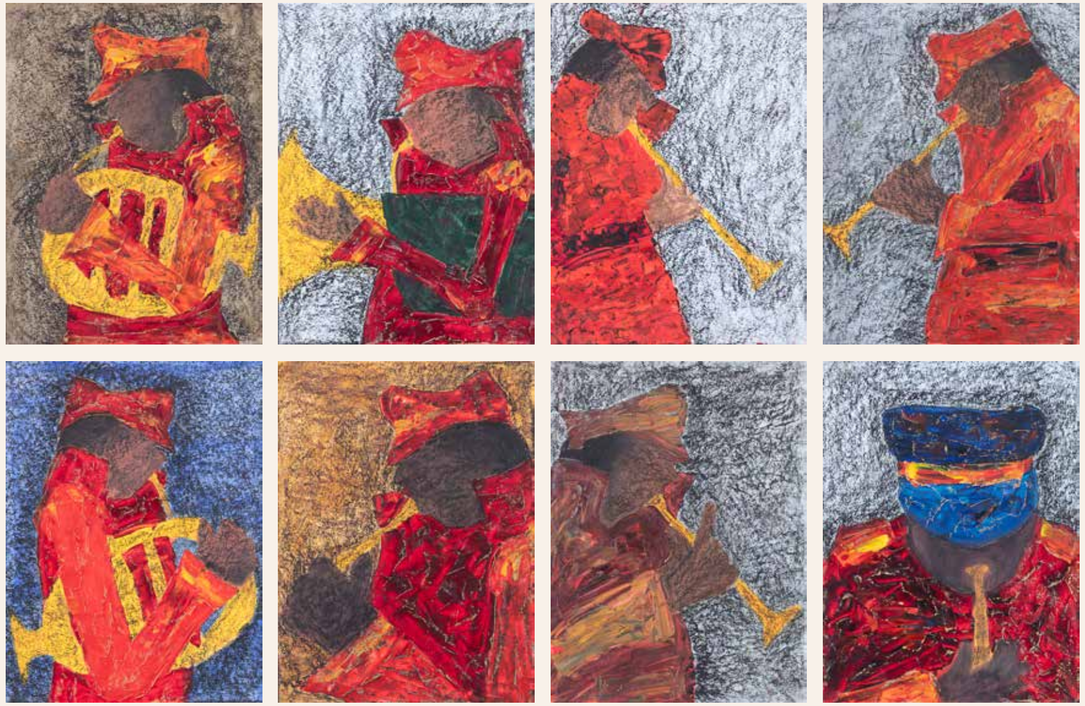
OIL ON PAPER, 12″ X 9″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 12″ X 9″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 12″ X 9″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 12″ X 9″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 12″ X 9″ (EACH)

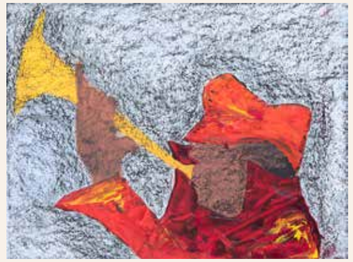
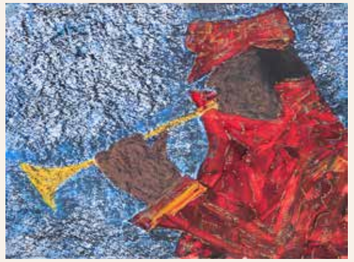


OIL ON PAPER, 12″ X 9″ (EACH)






OIL ON PAPER, 12″ X 9″ (EACH)

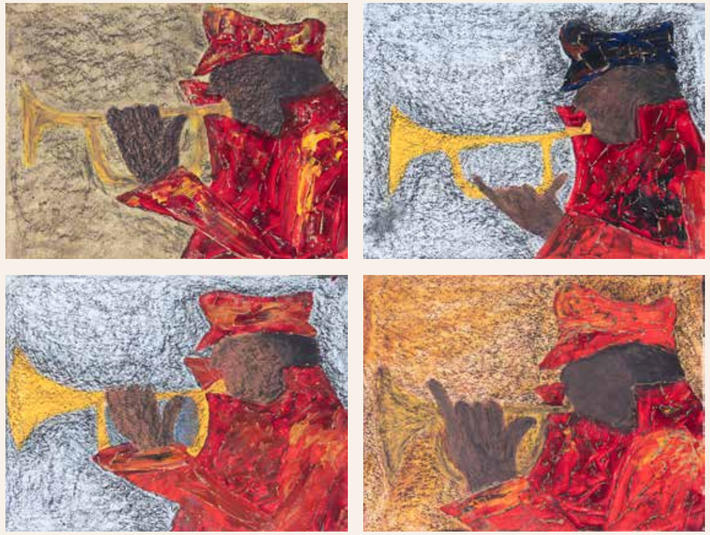




OIL ON PAPER, 9″ X 12″ (EACH)



OIL ON PAPER, 9″ X 12″ (EACH)



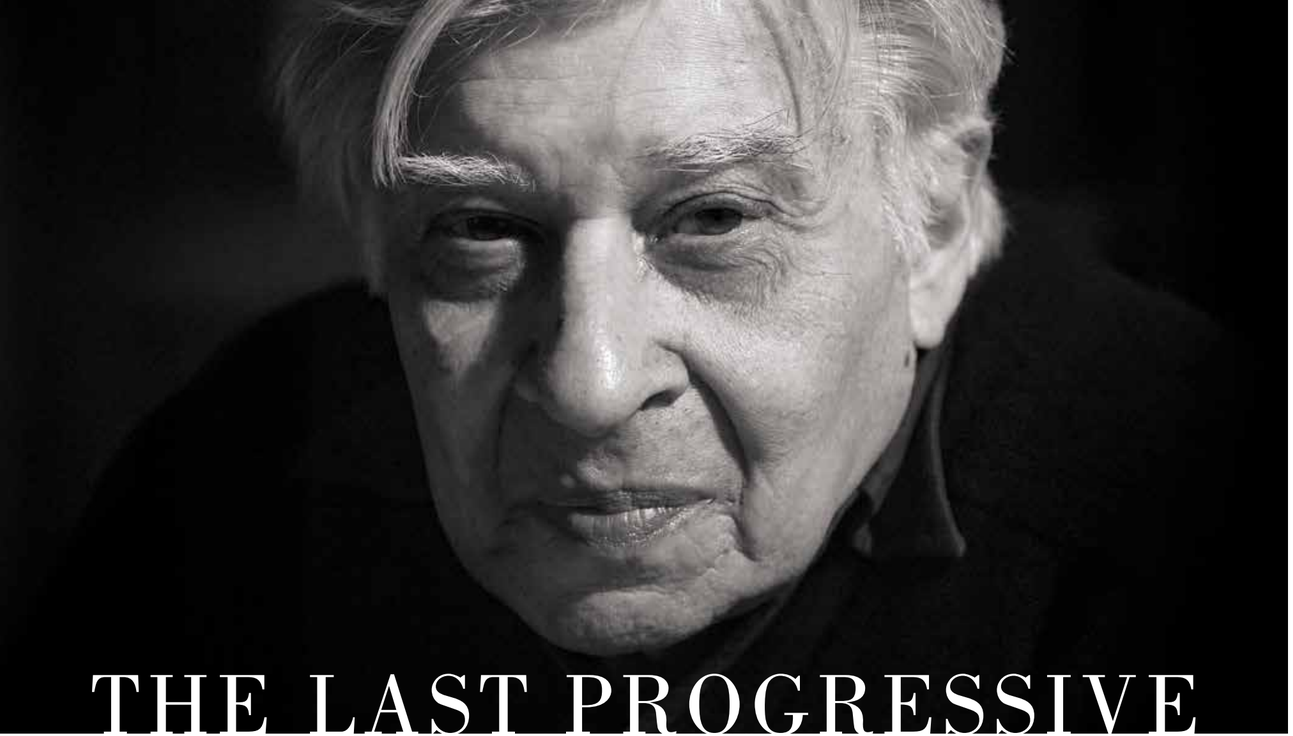
OIL ON PAPER, 9″ X 12″ (EACH)



OIL ON BOARD



OIL ON BOARD, 12" X 12" (EACH)



THE LAST PROGRESSIVE

KRISHEN KHANNA at 100

10 November - 10 December, 2025

National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai
Jehangir Public Hall, Sir Cowasji,
Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mantralaya, Fort,
Mumbai, Maharashtra 400032




















ABSTRACTION AND CONFLICT



ABSTRACTION AND CONFLICT




CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION


KRISHEN KHANNA
THE LAST PROGRESSIVE



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EXHIBITION

This vibrant, tumultuous section is a celebration of Krishen's life and art: a burst of colour, capturing the riotous bustle of the Indian street, of clamorous wedding processions and the humorous-heroic figure who has come to be the most beloved subject of Krishen's oeuvre: the Bandwalla. The Bandwallas gaze down at us higgledy-piggledy from the walls in all their gaudy glory. A relic of the bygone British Raj (as the series of paintings depicting Bandwallas in Ravensdale, Krishen's house in Shimla, remind us), this red-coated gentleman, his hands tightly clasping his garish-gold trumpet, is strangely reminiscent of the Generals of the 1970s, yet he is also something other: colourful, slightly grubby, and touchingly poignant. By the 1980s, the Bandwalla's entry heralds a new direction for Krishen. This section begins and ends with one of the most ambitious, panoramic paintings of Krishen's oeuvre, "A Far Afternoon", 2014 — in which some of Krishen's iconic characters unite to revel in a career devoted to capturing the music, chaos and, above all, resilience of the people of India.

Facing page: (L to R)
OIL ON CANVAS, 43" X 55"
OIL ON CANVAS, 70" X 94"
OIL ON CANVAS, 72" X 50"
OIL ON CANVAS, 80" X 130"





MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS, 36″ X 24″

MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS, 41″ X 24″





OIL ON CANVAS, 36″ X 24″



OIL ON CANVAS, 30″ X 20″



OIL ON CANVAS, 41″ X 24″



OIL ON CANVAS, 36″ X 24″



OIL ON CANVAS, 66″ X 85″



OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 60″



OIL ON CANVAS, 36″ X 42″



OIL ON CANVAS, 69″ X 96″



OIL ON CANVAS, 60″ X 47″



OIL ON CANVAS, 83″ X 63″



OIL ON CANVAS, 70″ X 49″



OIL ON CANVAS,
75″ X 45″



OIL ON CANVAS, 60″ X 50″



OIL ON CANVAS, 66″ X 47″



OIL ON CANVAS, 56″ X 41″



OIL ON CANVAS, 66″ X 44″

“

When you are young, you are trying to prove something, to yourself, to others. Now, there is nothing to prove. The painting becomes quieter, but also more honest. You accept what you can and cannot do, and within that, you find freedom.

”

KRISHEN KHANNA



OTHER IMPORTANT WORKS



OIL ON CANVAS, 50" X 70"

OIL ON CANVAS, 40″ X 72″





OIL ON CANVAS, 48" X 30"

OIL ON CANVAS, 24" X 17"





OIL ON CANVAS, 72" X 48"

OIL ON CANVAS, 40" X 30"





OIL ON CANVAS, 60” X 180”



OIL ON CANVAS, 12” X 9”

OIL ON CANVAS, 52” X 12”



OIL ON CANVAS, 42″ X 78″





OIL ON CANVAS, 36″ X 24″



OIL ON CANVAS, 32″ X 46″

OIL ON CANVAS, 48″ X 108″



OIL ON CANVAS, 52" X 72"





OIL ON CANVAS, 48" X 180"



OIL ON CANVAS, 42" X 78"



OIL ON CANVAS, 48" X 36"



OIL ON CANVAS, 72″ X 48″



OIL ON CANVAS, 44″ X 18″



OIL ON CANVAS, 34″ X 46″

OIL ON CANVAS, 24″ X 17″



OIL ON CANVAS, 42″ X 78″





OIL ON CANVAS, 72″ X 50″



OIL ON CANVAS, 48″ X 72″



OIL ON CANVAS, 24″ X 20″

OIL ON CANVAS, 46″ X 31″





OIL ON CANVAS, 30″ X 19″

OIL ON CANVAS, 43″ X 18″



OIL ON CANVAS, 42″ X 78″





SANTOSH KUMAR BEEN WALLA
BRONZE, 49″ X 23″ X 27″



SHAM SUNDER TRUMPET WALLA
BRONZE, 56″ X 32″ X 20″



SHIV KUMAR SIPPY TRUMPET WALLA
BRONZE, 52″ X 36″ X 20″



PATINDER JI HARAN WALLA
BRONZE, 56″ X 32″ X 18″



REKHY SAAB DRUM WALLA
BRONZE, 46″ X 24″ X 20″













CLAY MODELS OF WORKS IN PROGRESS

ABOUT ICIA

Nestled in the heart of Mumbai's art district, Kala Ghoda, the Institute Of Contemporary Indian Art, also known as ICIA Gallery, takes forward the legacy of establishing Indian art in the mindspace of art patrons and enthusiasts. The gallery was set up by Mr Vickram Sethi in the year 2007 with a vision to redefine the orthodox infrastructure not only with regards to the curating and viewing process but also to acquire authentic and prime artworks.

ICIA is one of the largest grassroot galleries in India and has been actively enhancing 'The Exhibition Experience' for the viewer. Over a period of ten years ICIA has exhibited works of revered Modernists and established contemporary artists. The gallery has deftly carved a niche for itself by representing India's art culture with a balanced approach, showcasing the seminal attributes of the masters in tow with the experimental and disruptive vision of contemporary artists from within the country. AstaGuru is a part of ICIA.

ABOUT KRISHEN KHANNA ART LLP

Krishen Khanna Art LLP, a Public Art Initiative; an endeavour to make art accessible to everyone, with an aim to showcase the incredible works of artist Krishen Khanna across various locations in India through sculpture and other mediums to create accessible and engaging art experiences for the general public. The introduction of public art in India represents a significant step towards fostering a more culturally vibrant and inclusive society. This initiative would create a legacy of art that enriches our urban landscapes and connects with the community on a profound level. By celebrating the talent of Krishen Khanna along with making art an integral part of everyday life, we can preserve India's rich cultural tapestry and elevate public spaces through the power of art potential. Krishen Khanna Art LLP represents the interests of the artist and is the official entity incorporated by the artist with a select group of partners to carry his legacy forward through his artworks.

ABOUT KKN ART LLP

KKN Art LLP is a dedicated platform focused solely on the representation and sale of mixed media paintings by Krishen Khanna. Working closely with collectors, galleries, and institutions, the company facilitates the placement of significant works while ensuring authenticity and long-term value within the market. Through strategic exhibitions, publications, collaborations, and targeted outreach, KKN Art LLP is committed to strengthening the commercial presence and global demand for the artist.

ABOUT NAMTECH FINE ART

Namtech Fine Art is committed to fostering a wider appreciation for Indian Modern and Contemporary Art through thoughtfully curated publications. With a focus on producing high-quality books, catalogues, and critical writings, the initiative seeks to document, preserve, and illuminate the diverse practices and legacies of Indian artists. Through its publishing efforts, Namtech Fine Art cultivates a rich dialogue between artistic heritage and contemporary thought, offering a platform that connects scholars, collectors, and wider audiences to the evolving narrative of Indian art.

ICIA Institute of Contemporary Indian Art AstaGuru India's Premium Auction House

KRISHEN KHANNA ART LLP

KKN KKN ART LLP

NFA NAMTECH FINE ART

