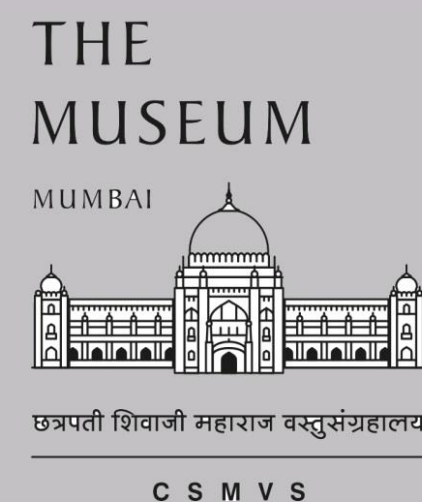


S H RAZA  
Zamin : Homelands

Curated by Puja Vaish

on the occasion of  
S H Raza's centenary celebrations  
&  
the CSMVS Museum's 100th year

at the JNAF Gallery, CSMVS museum  
2nd June 2022 - 31st July 2022



ART MUSINGS





Gallery View



Zamin

Acrylic on canvas, 189 x 300 cms, 1971

Collection: Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation

# S H RAZA

## ज़मीन : Homelands

Curated by Puja Vaish



The works of Sayed Haider Raza (1922-2016) suggest an internal dialogue with separation and belonging, in relation to the artist's migratory life and the social realities of the time. Raza's journey from rural India to France and back, shaped his idea of kinship to place.

Born in a small town of Madhya Pradesh, Raza shifted to Bombay to pursue art. In his youth, Raza witnessed significant moments in the nation's history. At the cusp of independence, Raza's art was informed with the aspirations of a new nation. However, the optimism of independence was offset by personal and political events - national discord, Gandhi's assassination, the death of his parents and a separation from his siblings through Partition. These losses impacted Raza and perhaps ideas of desh bhakti and longing for the lost land in his later works had their genesis in this moment which was further distilled through a sense of alienation when Raza resided in France.

'Zamin: Homelands' traces Raza's oeuvre as a landscape artist, a diaspora artist and as an artist in pursuit of an Indian modern sensibility. We see these paradigms merge through a recourse to abstraction. The exhibition hinges on the period between the 60s - 70s, when Raza moved from painting street scenes to an abstraction of nature, through a desire to connect with the Indian forest landscape.

From this defining juncture, we look back at some of the early cityscapes of Bombay, the French landscapes and the later 'Bindu' works from the 80s onward.

Among the first Indian diaspora artists, Raza work encapsulated the profound experience of expressing one's identity through the eyes of the other within a

global context. The external to inward gaze, meshed ideas of the native and the foreign, the East and the West. The quest for a rootedness in one's origins is observed in many of the artists who relocated to the West. For Raza, this meant a study of Indian aesthetics, spiritual scriptures and revisiting his childhood to rekindle a sense of wonder and meaning to nature and the environment.

The exhibition showcases Raza's experiments with European and Indian painterly traditions to arrive at a unique form of abstraction. Raza's painting titles, letter exchanges and diary notes written in French, English, and Devnagari, reveal his varied knowledge of art, literature, poetry and philosophy of world cultures.

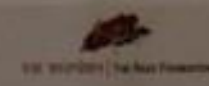
Raza imbued meaning in form and colour through ancient Indian aesthetics and cosmology. While abstraction was largely regarded as a creation of western modernism, Raza's practice grounded abstraction in Eastern thought, referencing primordial concepts of sacred geometry and power diagrams of yantra and tantric philosophy.

For Raza, the 'Bindu' marked his arrival at making of an icon that was universal in form and rooted in the national. It afforded multiple associations and meaning as the Shunya - void, beej - seed, dhyana - meditation, naad - reverberation, the sun, the world and the cosmos.

The artist's life and work may be read as a deliberation on the human experience of migration and displacement. In an increasingly polarised world, Raza's legacy finds relevance today by an affirmation of plurality and coexistence.



ART MUSINGS





Untitled  
48 x 46 cms, 1940s  
Collection: Darashaw Mehta



Untitled

Tempera on paper, 47.7 x 61.7 cms, 1952

Collection: Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation



Untitled  
Gouache on paper, 49.5 x 58.5 cms, 1953  
Collection: Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation



Untitled  
Graphite on paper, 44.5 x 57 cms, 1953  
Collection: Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation





Houses with Medieval Church

Charcoal on paper, 43.5 x 42 cms, 1953

Collection: Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation



Untitled

Gouache on paper, 22 x 29 cms, 1948

Collection: Pramit & Mukeeta Jhaveri



Untitled  
Gouache on paper, 36 x 42 cms, 1948  
Collection: Pramit & Mukeeta Jhaveri



**S H RAZA**  
ज़मीन : Homelands  
Curated by Puja Vaish

The works of S H Raza have consistently evoked an emotional dialogue with spectators and belonging, in relation to the artist's experience of life and the social realities of the time. Raza's journey from rural India to France and back, shaped his sense of belonging to place.

Raza is a small town of Madhya Pradesh. Raza studied in Mumbai to pursue art. In his youth, Raza witnessed an Indian independence movement in relation to the movement of the country's history. At the stage of independence, Raza's art was influenced with the experience of a new nation. However, the experience of independence was often a period of political and social crisis. Raza's commitment to the cause of the nation and a sense of belonging to the land through Raza's art, these issues inspired Raza and perhaps shaped his artistic path leading to the last part of his life which led him to France in the 1940s which was Raza's final journey to the land which was Raza's final destination in France.

From Madhya Pradesh, Raza's journey to a European land, a European culture and an art world in pursuit of an Indian artistic tradition. He saw these parallels through a movement in abstraction. The exhibition begins in the period between the two. The work Raza created from painting these scenes in an abstract manner through a desire to connect with the Indian land landscape.

Raza had a deep connection with the land of his birth. He was born in Mandla, Madhya Pradesh, India. Raza's work throughout the professional experience of representing his subjects through the work of the artist, which a

global context. The process to travel from rural India to the world and the journey the East and the West. The quest for a connection to one's origin is observed in most of the artist's work exhibited in the show. For Raza, this was a study of Indian mythology, spiritual traditions and embracing the challenge of creating a sense of nation and identity in art and the movement.

The exhibition, however, Raza's experience with European and Indian artistic traditions to create a unique form of abstraction. Raza's journey from India, his migration and later years in France, India and Europe, around the world, knowledge of art, literature, politics and philosophy of world culture.

Raza's deep connection to his land and culture through Indian mythology and spirituality. His abstract work is inspired by a sense of nation and identity. Raza's journey through abstraction, in a sense, through embracing potential concepts of world politics and power dynamics of nation and nation philosophy.

For Raza, the 'World' started the period of looking at his art that was inspired by his work and moved to the national, a global, multiple connections and movement in the 'World' and 'World' art, literature, mythology, and contemporary, the East, the World and the West.

The artist's life and work can be read as a dialogue on the Indian experience of migration and displacement. In an increasingly globalized world, Raza's legacy stands as a testament to the art of embracing of plurality and movement.

Gallery View



Grey Landscape

Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 149.5 cms, 1968

Collection: Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation



Untitled  
Oil on canvas, 92 x 92 cms, 1974  
Collection: Piramal Museum of Art, Mumbai



Untitled

Acrylic on paper, 64.3 x 49 cms, 1978

Collection: Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation



Untitled  
Oil on canvas, 26.8 x 22 cms, 1967  
Collection: Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation





Gallery View



La Terre

Oil on canvas, 114 x 196 cms, 1979

Collection: Piramal Museum of Art, Mumbai



Gallery View



Gallery View



Gallery View



Gestation  
Acrylic on canvas, 175 x 175 cms, 1989  
Collection: Pundole Family



Untitled  
Drawing on paper, 13 x 10 cms, 1976  
Collection: Tarun Raghavan



Five Elements

Drawing on paper, 9 x 15 cms, 1983

Collection: Tarun Raghavan





Untitled  
Oil on paper, 61 x 44 cms, 1957  
Collection: Darashaw Mehta



Seine Port

Oil on canvas, 97 x 117 cms, 1960

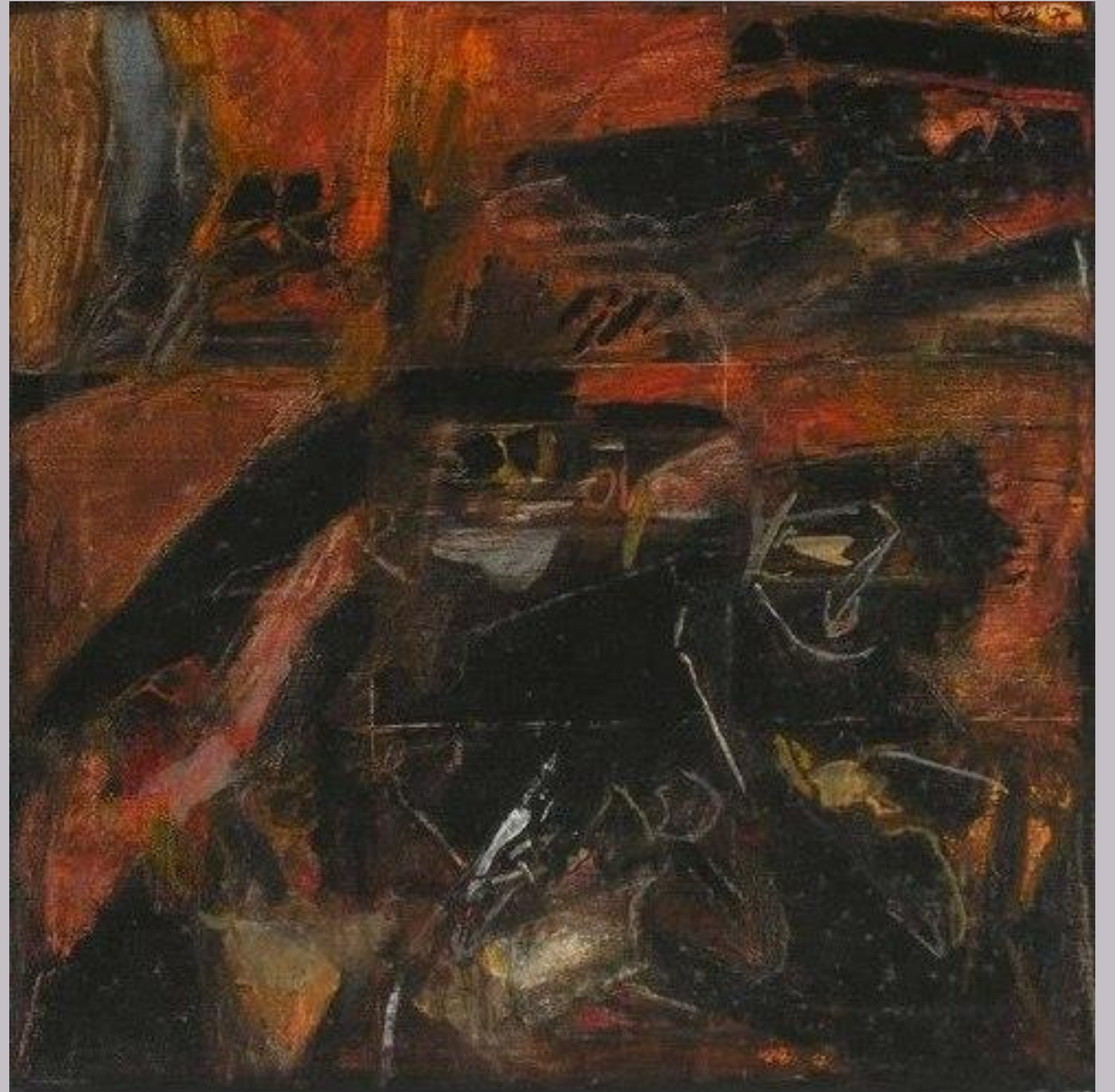
Collection: Piramal Museum of Art, Mumbai



Gallery View

L'Inconnu  
Acrylic on canvas, 78 x 39 cms, 1960s  
Collection: Darashaw Mehta





Untitled

Oil & acrylic on canvas, 50 x 50 cms, 1978

Collection: Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation



Gallery View

Heart Beat  
Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 40 cms, 2005  
Collection: Tarun Raghavan



Untitled  
Acrylic on canvas, 90 x 60 cms, 1970  
Collection: Harsh Goenka







Untitled  
Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 80 cms, 1982  
Collection: Dara Mehta



Madhya Desh

Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 200 cms, 2011

Collection: Shanti Chopra

Punjab  
Acrylic on canvas, 135 x 106 cms, 1969  
Collection: Piramal Museum of Art, Mumbai





Gallery View

Untitled  
Gouache on paper, 61 x 50 cms, 1952  
Collection: Piramal Museum of Art Mumbai





Genesis

Acrylic on canvas, 49.7 x 49.7 cms, 1996

Collection: Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation



Gallery View



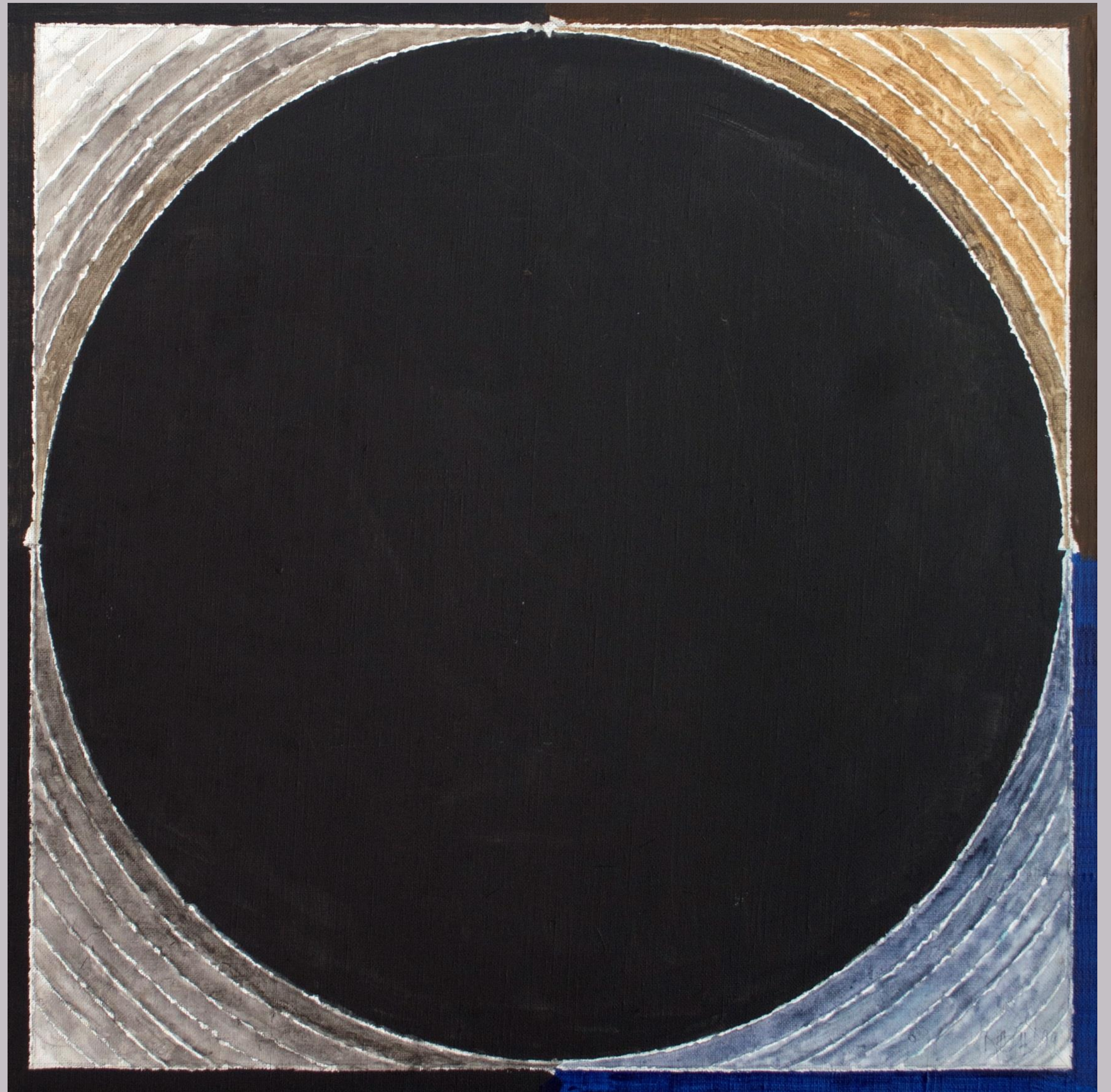
Gallery View



Church at Meulen  
Oil on canvas, 90 x 71 cms, 1956  
Collection: Darashaw Mehta



Bindu Nad  
Acrylic on canvas, 50 x 50 cms, 1999  
Collection: Art Musings



Mosque  
Gouache on paper, 50 x 42 cms, 1951  
Collection: Pundole Family



Satyamev Jayte

Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 100 cms, 2012

Collection: Vinay Patil





Navbharat

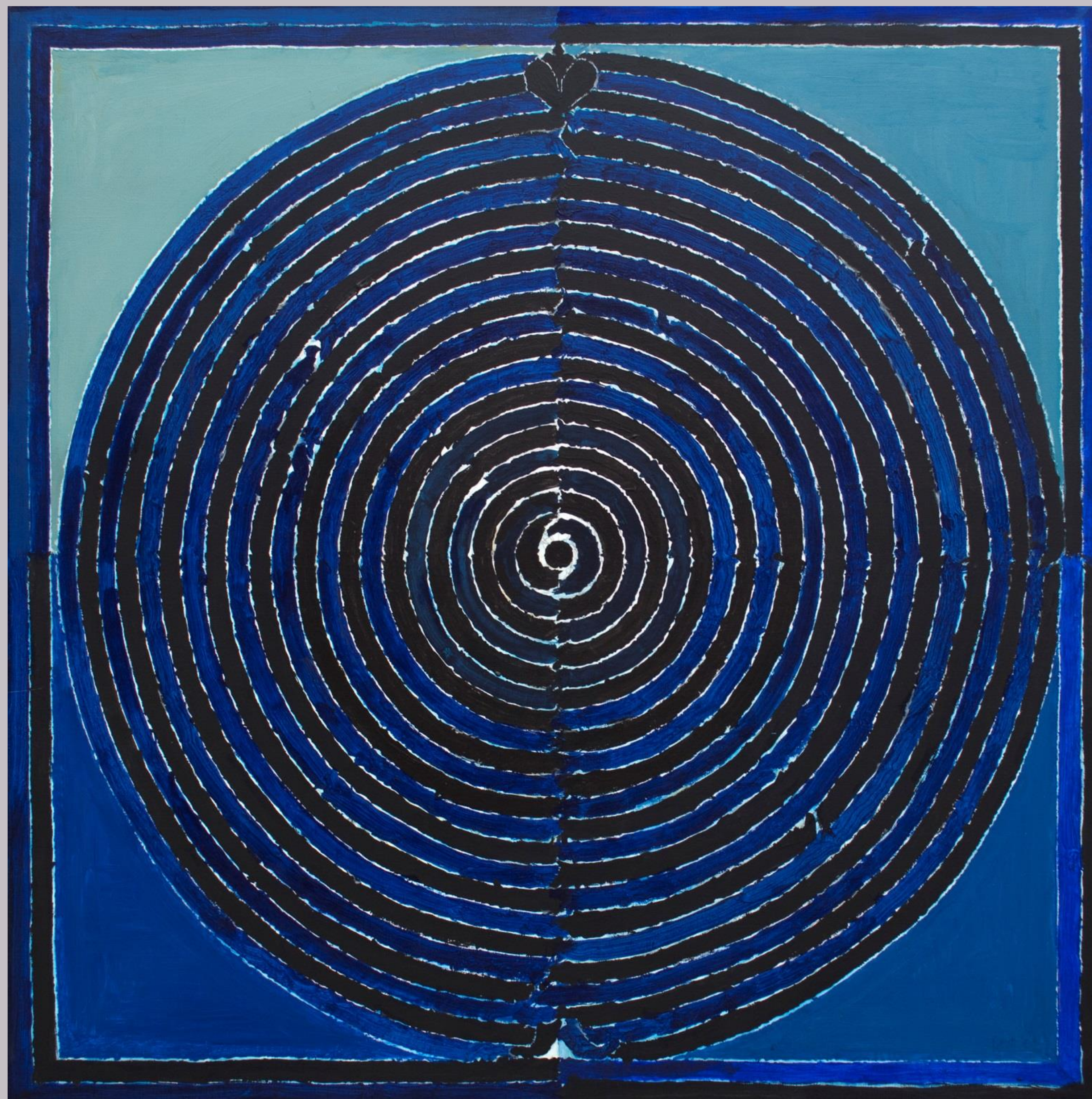
Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cms, 2009

Collection: Shanti Chopra



Gallery View

Neel Kunda  
Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cms, 2002  
Collection: Ashwini Kakkar





Amar Katak

Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 195 cms, 1998

Collection: Sangita Jindal





Gallery View



Gallery View

