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| **Your article** |
| Panicker, K. C. S. (1911-1977) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Kovalezhi Cheerampathoor Sankaran Paniker was of Malayali background but spent most of his active life as a painter, teacher, and organizer in Madras, now Chennai, in Tamil Nadu. His work is important for three reasons: it shows his own stylistic trajectory out of the modernist dilemmas faced by an artist before and after Indian Independence; it indicates the way Indian visual material from Malayalam script to magical diagrams could be mobilised to produce a kind of abstract pictorial discourse; it manifests how regionally based artist could link up with and generate significant modernist work at a national and international level. Modernism is a reflexive discourse where the subject is how an art form manifests the modern, the position which relativises the past, to make new selections of pre-modern exemplars where the modern becomes a pair with an invented tradition, and distances practice from a naturalised, unconscious customary. Modernism’s subject is the modality of the modern. Paniker’s work clearly shows this shift from a humanist identification with the Indian poor or politically oppressed using the practices of post-impressionism to the early-1950s. He moves to an identification with the Indian folk as a repository of visual experience but also a public visuality with considerable pre-colonial history. |
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| Further reading:  (Bhaghat)  (Brown)  (Panikkar) |