

An exposition of abstract paintings by Chennai-based artist, Pravin Kannanur, commemorates Madras Day celebrations, his textured, layered, nuanced artwork, complementing the multi-faceted nature of this extraordinarily old yet modern city.

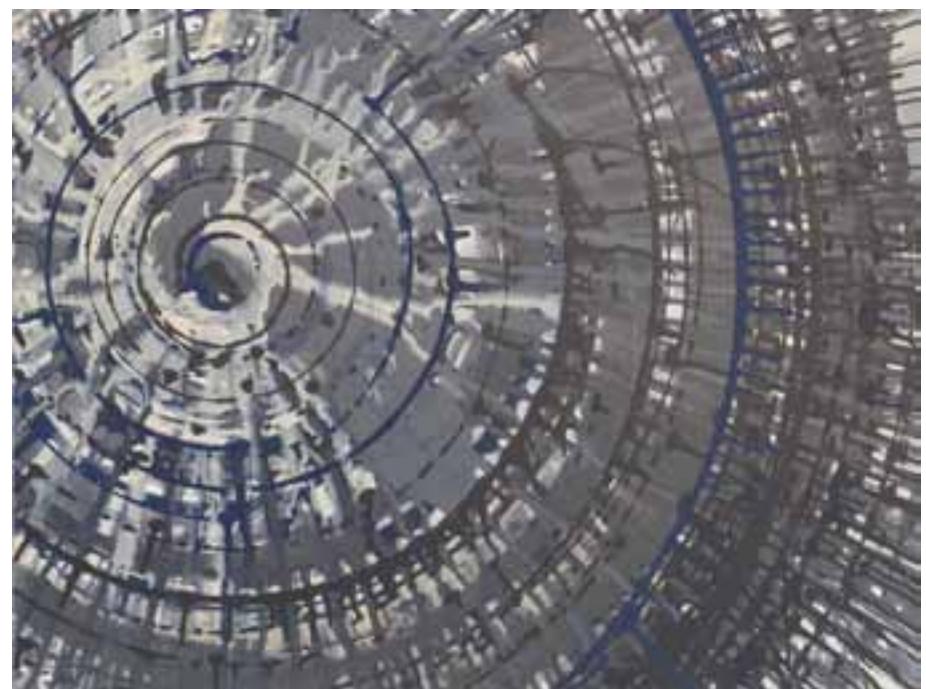


*In my abstract tableaus, I create environments where the eye is attentive but not focussed. Inclusive, abstract spaces where the senses flow attentively, wandering but aware and alive.* -  
Pravin Kannanur

'An image begins with a dot. A bindu. So too, much of the observed world. An atom, a molecule, a pixel, a nano-particle. One centre, one core, that suggests infinite multi-centres. From that seed, a cosmos imagines itself into being.'

The core throbs, pulsates, explodes. A big bang. Universes are born, expanding into space in every direction. A gigantic ripple in the void, progressing and amplifying in cyclic and radial waves.

After some years of exploring the figurative, the narrative, the flat geometric, the installed and so on, Pravin Kannanur has now come up with a body of work that seems to reflect his own core. Like a musician discovering the *sthayee bhava* of a *raga*, this artist has landed on a style and a working method which enables him to pull away from the banality of the flat surface to a more nuanced expression of textures, layers, depths.



**038 Vital,**  
23.6 x 31.5,  
Acrylics on canvas, 2017.

The end result is well articulated. It travels beyond abstract expressionism as it sets about training the viewer's eyes to pare down to the core, layer by layer. It makes no claims to any deep significance. On the contrary, it appeals to the experiential, asking us to align our vision to the palpable rhythms on the canvas, which should help us in diving below the surface to connect with the ebb and flow of the ceaseless dance of humanity'.

- From Circular/Radial/Cyclical - Algorithms of Transition by **Sadanand Menon**



**028 Gyre,**  
66.5x56,  
Acrylics on canvas, 2018.

'The enigmatic abstracts of Pravin in his recent suite of works are dynamic, energetic, complex, even as they are contemplative and subdued. The inherent duality in his work is reflective of his persona, belonging simultaneously to two artistic professions – namely theatre and visual arts. Integrating the two arts in his canvases has resulted in making his works provocative, evocative, visually challenging and almost bordering on the spiritual.'

The abstracts are consciously planned and, to a certain extent, are inspired by the medieval Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci.

Aesthetically, the artist defines the center of his canvas – not literally but metaphorically – to convey the idea of the power tussle rampant in all dimensions of lived reality, which creates the binary of the center and the margin. His combination of Fibonacci sequences and the subverted polity of power push his abstracts to a different plane. He balances the tensions through a process of complex layering, where he begins with dark hues like black/red or lighter hues like the white of the canvas.

His unorthodox method involves placing the canvas on the ground and working from all sides. His tools are both conventional and unconventional – brush, palette knife, spatula, rake, syringe, squeegee – and applying paint in controlled dribbles or brushed on thoughtfully or raked in certain areas for required effects. These methodologies are carefully worked out and planned. The colours range from sophisticated blacks and greys, pastoral fluorescent greens, spiritual purples, sunshine yellows, flaming reds and earthy browns.

At the heart of this is an intuitive, subconscious process, pushing him to self-reflexivity. The viewer is provoked to engage with his works not superficially, but to connect with it through sight, memory and imagination. The light at the metaphoric center of the composition provides a visual path guiding the movement over the entire surface<sup>1</sup>.

- From *The Metaphoric Centre* by **Dr. Ashrafi S.Bhagat**, Art Historian and Art Critic.

Pravin is an artist working in the fields of visual art, theatre and contemporary dance. He is a founding member of the theatre group, Magic Lantern, the contemporary art collective, Basement 21 and is part of the theatre collective, India Theatre Forum.

The first exposition of **Core** was held in September, 2018 at the Jehangir Art Gallery, Khala Goda, Mumbai.