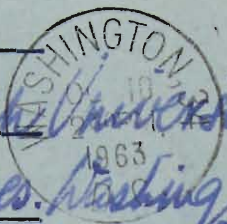


Alanna
Art Dept - American University
Mass. & Nebraska Aves. Washington
D.C.



Mon. J. H. RAZA,

15 Rue Paul Bert,

PARIS 11^e

FRANCE.

AÉROGRAMME • PAR AVION

FIRST FOLD

To The Art Dept - American University -
Mass and Nebraska Avenues N.W.
Washington 16, D.C.

17th Oct 1963.

My dear Raza, This mixing of inks is in bad taste but excuse it, my usual pen has run out. I was delighted to receive your letter short as it was. Thank you for the effort you made in receiving my letter. As you said, Akbar's letter to me crossed with mine to you in the post. I have taken care of the matter & by the time this reaches you, Akbar should be in possession of the cheque. I went to New York on Sunday for a couple of days and met Husain. He spent most of Monday together. I suppose my mood was grey and I must have been uninteresting. On the other hand I am beginning to feel a kind of gap between him and me and I feel that I cannot say a great many things that matter to me, largely because he doesn't come out with the things that matter greatly to him. He was supposed to contact me the following day but I never really expected him to do so & he lived up to my expectations! He told me that he has finished the murals for WHO in New Delhi. You know Raza, it suddenly strikes me that the reason for all this is simply the fact that I think that he spends most of his time & attention on people who are pretty useless & all they can offer is adulation. I have a strong feeling that he senses what I feel. I suppose I am in a good position to make my judgements because his socialising activities are just what I used to indulge in myself and now I am plain fared with most people. This will sound strange to you - you who used to warn me jokingly about "people" & still twig me about charming the camels of Arabia! Perhaps you are a better friend to me than I am to Husain. If I ever thought that you were expressing untrue opinions to me of me as a person or my work, I would feel betrayed. I have no fear of this however and I am thankful that I have a few honest friends. Actually Husain has never invited my comments on his work, at least not in the past four or five years & this in itself means that my opinions are known & not wanted - so why should I open my big mouth. — To revert to what you said about "Temper your charm..." Believe me dear boy that I am not a bit interested in the females around here. Do you recall me in Paris in 1954? You swore that I would trompe - I didn't and I can say it with the same confidence that I won't. I don't want to sound like a saint or Noranji Desai but I am not tempted - not that I have lost my sex but I am still very much in love with my wife. Moreover, I am desperately interested in my own work & that takes up all my energy. Believe me I get exhausted by the end of each day. However, I don't want you to get the impression that I am living in a monastery. I have been in some situations which were pretty startling & had I been an Indian stud bull I may have considered myself to be in the seventh heaven of delight. As I am not this kind of a beast, I had to find ways of getting out of these situations. — I am working steadily and well & at the moment I'm not giving any thought to selling or exhibitions. All this I feel will take care of itself. In the month that I have been here I have painted five paintings, two of which I consider very good - at least as satisfying to me. There are plenty of people who want to buy, but we'll see about that later. Thank God I don't have to teach and I am left entirely to my own resources. I have only given one lecture cum demonstration which was successful. The people who teach are pleasant and very intelligent though I do not consider them as artists - all have theories which they try to paint out. In this sense their paintings & a hell of a lot

of what ~~one~~ passes for painting is an illustration of a theory or an idea. Painting has just to be, ideas + theories are for the intellectuals to formulate after the painting has been established as a fact. - It was rather funny, & I am glad you were not here to see this or else I would never have heard the end of it. - After I had finished my lecture, students came up & asked me if they could carry my paints etc back to the studio & one of them, a girl asked me if I would sell my drawings! I have two rooms here with a bathroom & a kitchenette & am equipped with all the fundamental necessities of life (excepting a wife!) I use one of the rooms as my studio. It is large and well lit. I am left alone & capable of being so. - I met Samant in New York. I have a feeling that he is a little drunk with success. He is having a show at The World House Gallery in December & from what I could gather, he wants to stay on for another two years! I don't think

that he will ever go back to India if he does he will be unhappy. Life here as you know is terribly competitive & the law of the jungle prevails when economic interests come into clash. This is what the Americans call the rat race - How to succeed is everyone's aim - The Bitch Goddess of Success is their Lakshmi. I would be unhappy to be in this atmosphere for ever & thank goodness that I won't have to be. Samant is in all this, he is in the total ambience of New York. I think that there are more important things than being successful & with all our deficiencies I think that our atmosphere is more congenial. I wonder if you will agree. I was interested to read what you wrote about Janyal. He is a NICE fellow, but weak and selfish. If he had had any sense of fair play he would not have come to the conference in N.Y. This as it turned out was comprised of similar delegations from other countries. My own feeling is that we don't have to bother about him or the other. Our work should occupy our major attention. In this sense I am glad to be away from everyone & on my own though I miss Lenu more than I have words for. - Sorry the Studio Project flopped but something else will. I'm sure turn up for you. My fond love for you & Janine. Krishen