

WEEKEND



FRENCH WINDOW/ROOPAM SINGH - LE BERRIGAUD

Art across borders



The book "Seven", on the works of 7 Indian painters
Top: MP Kala Parishad's magazine, Kalavarta

"A FEW Indian artists - Dhawan, Bajaj, Vishwanadhan and Raza - are living in France and each has succeeded in giving an original form, the form of their roots to the artistic debates in a world that is larger and more open than ever before.", are the opening lines of the preface given by Paris-based publisher Ravi Kumar to a book entitled "Seven", dedicated to the works of seven Indian painters including Seema Ghurayya, Manish Pushkale, Akhilesh and the four others mentioned above. With text by Ashok Vaidya, this book also aims at bringing out the dialogue between Indian artists and their Western counterparts, each inscribed in their own traditions and following their own paths of metamorphosis.

The choice of artists, 4 based in Paris and 3 in Bhopal, seems to be purely co-incidental. Their individual itineraries have spanned across more than these two cities, "But none of them could either be

called uprooted or exiled. Not in art. Each one practices art in a manner which seems firmly rooted. Each is at home in his or her art.", reiterates the author underlining the importance of spiritual unity in each artist's expression, whatever his or her place of birth or residence might have been. Cross-currents and the refraction of culture and tradition are the object of study here, whether they span across countries or regions within the same country. Dedicated to the great French philosopher and Indophile, André Malraux, this book was released last month in Delhi by the new Ambassador of France to India, Mr. Dominique Girard. Accompanying the release, was an exhibition of these seven artists, circulating in the seven cities of Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, New Delhi, New York, Tokyo and Paris.

Kalavarta - remembering Raza

On similar lines, a special edition of the Madhya

Pradesh Kala Parishad's magazine, Kalavarta, dedicated to S.H. Raza was released in the month of February. This collection of conversations, articles, essays and poems aims at capturing the essence of Raza's thought, art and life. Contributions from Ashok Vajpeyi, Dhruv Shulda, Akhilesh, Manjusha Ganguly, Geeti Sen, Michel Ambach and Rudy Von Laden make for an interesting reading.

The main line of thought adopted in this edition underlines the movement between the inside and the outside, which can at one level be considered as the home country (India) and the adopted land (France) and at another level, the inner and outer space within which the artist thinks. Raza's works are deeply rooted in a multicultural context and serve as a rich example to bring out reflections which place art in a space that goes beyond the confines of geographical borders and cultural traditions. ●