

*Cultural Roundabout*

# Useful introduction to Raza's work

By S. I. Clerk

Sayed Haider Raza is reckoned to be one of the top contemporary Indian artists. A monograph on him published by Chemould Publications & Arts was 'officially' launched on Friday at Alliance Francaise de Bombay by their Director Peter Beck. The function was well attended by the local art world.

The actual monograph (priced at Rs. 100.00 and available from Gallery Chemould) is in a square format of 8½" 8½". It is slim with several illustrations — colour and black and white blocks.



S. H. Raza

photographs, drawings. The text consists of English, French (with English translations) and Hindi articles gathered from the artist's previous exhibition catalogues.

Even though the monograph offers no new material, it still has a considerable reference value for a Raza 'fan' and for anyone interested in the evolution of modern Indian art. It is a fairly useful introduction to the artist, his work.

By way of criticism, one wishes the monograph had some fresh, specially written material, the artist's own statement on the 'why' of his works and an overall critique/analysis/prognosis. It should have been in hardback.

Raza was born in 1922 in Babaria, Madhya Pradesh. In 1948 he won a Gold Medal in the Bombay Art Society Annual Exhibition for his painting "Bombay View" (Bombay from Malbar

Hill). Since then he has left the obvious far behind in his evolution to date. During the past decade or so he has become deeply involved with Bindu — a point, a primordial form "to me a very significant symbol. All my paintings emerge from this condensed unity" as he has stated somewhere.

The launching of the book on Raza was followed by the screening of the film "Paris — Inde, Huile sur Toile 1955-1985" (colour, 52 minutes). Beautifully photographed, this outstanding documentary film comprehensively covers the life and work of four major contemporary Indian artists — Krishna Reddy, Raza, Akbar Padamsee, Ram Kumar — who have had extended stays in Paris. The film tries to bring out the Parisian influence on these artists. It is in French but an English synopsis was distributed amongst those present at Alliance Francaise on Friday.

In fact, there should be far more screenings of this well made art film amongst the local art students and art lovers. Incidentally, one of the co-producers of this film is The Festival of India in France.

## MUSEUMS IN THE F.R.G.

Federal Republic of Germany has today well over 2000 museums. These are diligently compiled repositories of the past, many being devoted to early cultural history having some rich material from the ancient civilizations of the Far East, India, Egypt, Islamic Middle East, indigenous and America. The technical museums reveal a fascinating facet of life in the past ages. It is said that no other museum in Europe owns such a wealth of exhibits on the history of industry and technology as Munich's Museum. And of course there are the great art galleries and museums often founded by the state and by private individuals — Stadel Art Institute in Frankfurt, Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne, Alte Pinakothek in Munich, Berlin's Gallery of Painting and National Gallery and Brucke Museum, et al, all amply demonstrating how the tremendous cultural and educational value of a museum/art gallery is being appreciated by the state and the people in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany).

## FORTHCOMINGS

July 1 & 2 Kasaibada (Hindi play) Exp. Theatre 6.30 p.m., July 2 K. Rehini Prasad (Sitar) NCPA 6.30 p.m., July 2-5 Film Festival, House of Soviet Culture 6.30 p.m., and July 4 Kalyani Sarma (Karnatic vocal) NCPA, 6.30 p.m.