



Akbar Padamsee and Raza in Paris

Impressive film on Indian artists in Paris

Alliance Francaise was virtually jam-packed on June 27 with the cream of the local art world for the launching of Raza, a monograph brought out by Chemould Publications and Arts. The book was launched with a short speech by Peter Beck, the director of Alliance Francaise, to the gathered artists, art connoisseurs, art lovers et al.

This was followed by the screening of the 52-minute colour film 'Paris-Inde, Huile sur Toile 1955-85'. Which comprehensively traces the 'Parisian influence' of four major contemporary Indian artists, Raza, Krishna Reddy, Akbar Padamsee, Ram Kumar. Here is indeed a very well made documentary covering the finished creations, the artists at work in their studios, even their day to day

life activities.

Raza has been in Paris for 38 years. Krishna Reddy was in Paris for years but migrated to New York in 1976. Akbar Padamsee and Ram Kumar live in India. While pinpointing their different approaches, techniques, media, styles, the film also in its own way and on a subtle level, brings out their sheer intensity and the dedication they bring to their muse. The strikingly photographed visuals the background music (at times, the tabla, sitar) leave strong impact on the viewer. And with a little background on these four artists, the language barrier (the film is made on in French) does not matter in the least. The portrayal of these artists both while working and while relaxed or busy with their day to day routine

life all the more strengthen the human element of the film which makes it interesting even for the common man.

The film opens with visuals of Raza, Akbar Padamsee and Ram Kumar arriving in Paris way back in 1955. It moves on to our best graphicist Krishna Reddy, his work, his lifestyle, his philosophy.

Next the film makes a reference to Amrita Sher-Gil, the creator of modern art in India and then moves on to Raza—his studio at Gorbio, his paintings, his involvement with the Bindu as a symbol. Raza is followed by Ram Kumar's work in Delhi—the influences of Leger, Le Corbusier, his turning to abstracts. And so to Akbar Padamsee in his studio at Juhu—his becoming a sculptor; supervising his work in a foundry, his paintings, drawings of female nudes. There is also a reference to his studio in Montparnasse.

The film produced by Patrick Gazals (part of the Festival of India) ought to be screened at the J.J. School of Art and under the auspices of one or more art societies. As a documentary by itself it offers some valuable lessons to the local documentary film makers.

—S.I. Clerk

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