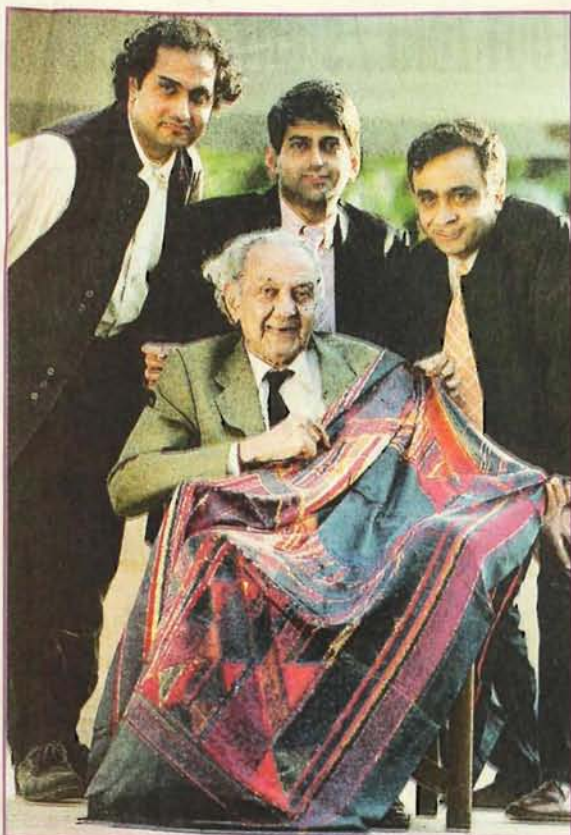


## 4 GALLERY

# Exploring Raza's World, In All Its Vibrant Colours



Asmita Aggarwal

THE ONE thing you can't but help notice about celebrated artist Sayed Haider Raza is his love for two things - women and art. Of course, it's worth a debate as to which is actually his bigger obsession.

He breaks into a few lines of poetry about love, by his friend Ashok Vajpayee, and exclaims: "Indian women are so beautiful, they are the most striking in the world."

The scarves designed by the Satya Paul team, replicating my Bindu series, are spectacular." And what fascinates him most are those vibrant colours draped around what he terms as "those beautiful bodies".

This isn't the first time, of course, that art and fashion have found a perfect soulmate in each other. MF Husain's textile designer daughter Raisa Husain has been translating her father's paintings on horses and Mother Teresa onto saris for a long time now.

But to come back to Raza, the Paris-based artist belies his age (he was born in 1922) - indeed, his sharp presence of mind leaves you impressed. "I'm not a prolific painter. Rather, I believe in concentration. Colour is my life, on and off the canvas and like a dressmaker I too express my creativity through various hues," he points out.

As he tells you about how he comes every year for a month to the Capital to escape the cold, he also says that Indian contemporary art has found recognition abroad. "Art is a superb means of communication and it transcends all boundaries of language and reaches out to everybody, just like fashion. It's a celebration of life, culture, love and it's an exuberant time for Indian contemporary art right now," says Raza,

Clockwise from left: Puneet Nanda, Sanjay Kapoor and Jyoti Narula of the Satya Paul design house, with artist Sayed Haider Raza

PHOTO: RAJ K. RAJ

the founding member of the Progressive Artists Group that bought about resurgence in the Indian art scenario.

Besides art, what the Babaria (Madhya Pradesh)-born Padmashri awardee is deeply involved with is poetry and music. "Poetry and music make your soul stir and with an artist's sensitivity, I can appreciate both equally," concludes Raza, with a smile.

### The Raza Factfile

- ◆ Sayed Haider Raza is the founder of the Progressive Artists Group
- ◆ He is a product of the Nagpur School of Art and the JJ School of Art
- ◆ Raza was awarded the Padmashri in 1981, and was elected a Fellow at Lalit Kala Academy in 1983
- ◆ He moved to France on a scholarship for studying painting at Ecole Nationale de Beaux-Arts in Paris between 1950-53
- ◆ Raza is married to French artist Janine Mongillat



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