

RAZA

India is today living through a period of many contradictions, both social and political, it is at the same time witness to an energetic, cultural effervescence, unfortunately little known in the West. A vivid testimony to the intense bonds between the ancient tradition of his country and the shock of modern, European art is given in the work of Raza, who hails from Babaria, in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Raza has been living in Paris since 1950 and, more recently, for a part of each year in Provence.

Raza neither repeats the forms drawn from his tradition nor plagiarises modernist forms from abroad. He invents relentlessly, renewing his artistic heritage in painting that has confronted Klee and Kandinsky and the abstract art of the mid-twentieth century.

For the past five years the central theme of his work has been *Bindu* : the symbol of divine and artistic creation, creative energy at its quintessential, the Great Point which lies at the heart of all movement and form. On a purely plastic level, it is the equivalent of the « point » in the visual grammar of Klee. From this point emerges the circle, then the chromatic square, with the bursting forth of the five coloured elements; and, finally a metamorphosis of living, swarming, luxurious forms in infinite profusion such as are conjured up by the tropical forests that Raza knew in his childhood. These forms grow, overlap, combine and intertwine. Raza has sought unceasingly to translate them in the language of an abstract and violently coloured expressionism, inspired by a passionate quest to transmute pictorially the whole « Earth ».

But *Bindu*, the starting point of each cosmic cycle of creation, is also its point of return in keeping with the law of periodic reabsorption in the One, in *Bindu*.

Thus begins a dialogue, at once cosmic and plastic, between the initial black circle and the « circle of coloured incandescence called the creative beauty of the world ». Thus begins, too, the fascination of Raza's images assembled here.

Pierre GAUDIBERT
Director
Museum Painting
Grenoble