


Hotel Chelsea, Room 511, 222 W. 23rd Street

New York - Dec. 22nd

My dear Raza - Excuse this sheet of paper, uncremored as it is, from my sketch book. Raza & I are spending the night at the Weisthats & this is all I have at the moment, & of course I have that other much needed entity - TIME. I have been busy painting. Believe me it is hard work. Canvases don't come easily and there are no shortcuts. I have almost finished another large canvas (60"x28") and am fairly satisfied with it. - I expect you & Abby are awaiting news of the show at Gallery 63. It opened with a terrific cocktail party & the place was packed by "ART LOVERS" to use a common Indian cliché. They however seemed greater admirers of the Champagne that flowed than the paintings which seemed a bit neglected of attention! Nothing was sold on the opening day and nothing has happened to change the position. On account of the Newspaper strike there have been no reviews at all & this does not help a shop in a new & unknown Gallery. Another factor which Mrs. Girst says is acting as a deterrent is that the paintings are priced very high. Your large one is the most expensive \$3000 - All the others range from \$500 to \$1200. Mrs. Girst said that someone had come in and said that one of Abby's studies was up for \$1000 whereas in Paris it was for the equivalent of \$275. The real position as far as I can see is that (1) The paintings are everything as good as one sees in most American Galleries but (2) The American buyers don't want to think that Indian painting is as good and this is reflected all the time when people say "But for that price I could buy a LAVINE" etc. This feeling of racial superiority has something to do with our being a "backward" nation & the military defeat which we have suffered recently will only serve to confirm this feeling. I know it is pretty illogical but peoples motivations are not always "reasonable". People like our friend Raza were the best possible thing for our cause. What a tragedy that he died  Regarding the paintings themselves, first of all yours - I prefer some of the ones you painted in Berkeley more - The very large one is a little too scattered and I feel that the shapes (of your wife) tend to repeat - I haven't seen all the paintings anyway - Only three paintings of each gas are up, all except Raza's Kumar who for some obscure reason had only one painting up

It was quite good I thought - but being quiet and unobtrusive, it hardly got any attention in the gloomy little corner that it was in. Two studies of Akbar and a landscape of his were up - I didn't care too much for the studies but I personally liked the yellow townscape - The colour is fresh & it is more Montane. His paintings have a subtle charming quality and I can see that his paintings would be popular though speaking for myself I think that the entire complex of his painting is too limited and the apparent simplicity of his statements lacks profundity. Husain's three paintings are not good. I'm told that there are better ones in the Godown but I haven't seen them yet. Of mine, I shall try to be as objective as I can - I think my large one which I have painted since coming here, is good & amongst the best I have ever done, the remaining two ~~are~~ are so - done while I was tied up with in by the recent events on our frontiers. Since then I have painted another large canvas which I feel is good - I shall be sending you some photographs soon - On account of the newspapers & radio, there has been no news about home & I get news from the Indian papers. We have entered a period of negotiation & talk but at the same time we are building our defences. This will of course be at some expense to our development schemes.

23rd

I have just received your greetings cards. It is good & in fine taste. I'm afraid that this year I'm not sending out any greeting cards - too busy painting. I shall write letters to friends instead. I'm very glad that the dinner was such a success. Three cheers for Akbar the Great. Incidentally you might nudge him to drop me a line when he can. I am most surprised that the remittance has not yet been received by Fatima. It was made on Nov 1st & should have reached her by the 10th or 14th Nov. I hold the bank's receipt & I was assured that the receipt would be sent to me in due course. This has not yet been received by me. I have written a letter to the bank requesting various confirmations and as soon as I hear further I shall let you know. In the meantime you should not worry as the remittance was made by me in your name & your obligation has been discharged. The fault if any - lies with the bank. Regarding the plan for the 63 show - He tells me that the committee has talked things over with the gallery & it has been agreed that the Asia Society will take over the paintings after the show - I expect, though I don't know for certain, that the paintings from France will have to go back to France; the paintings from India would have to go to Calcutta on similar terms. But our Consul General here (Jamil Roy) will probably be able to obtain their release from India or arrange for an extension. Asia Society will then arrange for the paintings to be shown in Baltimore, Washington, etc. etc. - on a public basis. I have been asked to accompany the show & to talk but this depends on a number of things & I'm not so sure in that I'll be able to agree. The main reason is that this project is to be in April & I was hoping to be in Europe in March. It will depend therefore on whether Asia Society can agree to continuing my grant so that I can still spend three months in Europe.

Must close now and go & do some shopping for the children. Let us hope that the New Year will be kind to us all. Both Lena & I wish you and Janine all the best in every way. Our fond love to you both.

As always,
Krishna