

ArtsIndia Brings Collection to West Coast

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One of New York City's most delightful — but mostly hidden — treasures can be found in a former mattress warehouse in the city's Flatiron District, up an elevator to the fifth floor.

A gorgeous collection of modern Indian art awaits the visitor to Gallery ArtsIndia, one of America's leading outlets for contemporary art of the subcontinent. The gallery claims that its extensive online companion collection of contemporary Indian art (www.artsindia.com) is the largest in the United States, with more than 2,000 paintings from 60 artists.

Now, its founders are bringing a new collection out west, with a program called "Highlights of Indian Art."

The Crespinel Studios, a large gallery space in Belltown, Wa., will join Gallery ArtsIndia in hosting a unique exhibition of some of India's top names — M.F. Husain, Satish Gujral, Jamini Roy, Ganesh Pyne, Laxma Goud, and Abanindranath Tagore — in a showing of more than 70 paintings in a range of sizes, prices and media, from Aug. 14-18.

Gallery ArtsIndia's sunny, 3,500 square-foot Manhattan showroom has been a hot spot for art collectors since it re-

opened in February 2002 after moving from its original location, just blocks from the World Trade Center.

ArtsIndia was founded by two Indian American brothers as a labor of love, said Projjal Dutta, 33, an architect originally from New Delhi. "We specialize in finding new talent," he told **India-West**. Together with his brother, Prajit, 42, a Columbia University economics professor, and their wives Mamta and Sue, Dutta finds that running a gallery is as educational as it is aesthetically rewarding.

When the team started the company in 2000, "we thought the Internet would click," said Dutta. "That's not how it happened." But fortunately their flair for scouting out promising new artists, and their strong collection, was on their side. The gallery became known as an important cultural part of the New York *desi* cityscape, and in July 2001, the company started to turn a profit. They suffered a dip in revenues post-9/11 but are once again going strong, with the median price for a painting around \$2,500. "It's fantastic art, and it crosses boundaries," said Dutta of an impressive recent collection of paintings by Sanjay Bhattacharyya that drew a mixed Indian and Western crowd. Paramjit Singh, Shuvaprasanna, Jehangir

Sabavala, Satish Gujral and other emerging artists have shown there as well.

Good art is more than an enhancement to one's living space, maintains Dutta — increasingly, it's becoming a valuable investment. Contemporary Indian artists have won major international awards, and have exhibited at London's Tate Gallery (2001), the Asia Society, New York (2002) and the Zimmerli Museum at Rutgers University (2002). According to Dutta, Alfred Taubmann, the former head of Sotheby's, has predicted that the next global phenomenon in art could come from India, and that now is the best time to invest. "Look at Frida Kahlo," Dutta said. "Her paintings were going for \$16,000 in 1978. In 1999, one of them sold for \$1.1 million."

"Highlights of Indian Art" opens Aug. 14 with a reception from 6-9 p.m., and runs through Aug. 18. A wine and cheese reception will also be held Aug. 16 from 6-9 p.m. Call (206) 728-6276 for details of the show.



This untitled work by painter Satish Gujral is indicative of the artist's modern style. Gujral's work is part of "Highlights of Indian Art," a group show in Seattle Aug. 14-18.