



# Soaring Beyond the Self

Recent Artworks by

*Renuka Sondhi Gulati*





**Renuka Sondhi Gulati** paints to exist and sculpts to underline her existence. Her works vivify the journey of a woman from birth to death, undergoing all the pangs of life and feeling all the bliss of maturing. In these works one can see the vigorous negotiations between spaces, a critique on the technological and emotional submission of women by the socio-economic forces, the external spaces of self assertion and the internal spaces of contemplation and reconciliation. Renuka believes in experimenting and re-inventing herself.

## Soaring Beyond the Self

An exhibition of recent Artworks by

*Renuka Sondhi Gulati*

### **Convention Centre Foyer**

Habitat World, India Habitat Centre

Lodhi Road, New Delhi, India

Mon. 21st – Thu. 24th August, 2017

Daily 10am to 8pm

### **Workmix Cafè & Lounge**

960 Randolph St, Napa, CA 94559

California, USA

Thu. 9th November, 2017



# Flying High the Beloved Selves

Existence in the multiple spheres and their skilful juggling like a clever goddess make a contemporary woman relevant unto herself and to the rest of the world. Anyone who succumbs to the public and private pressures is destined to become stains of tears that she herself would perhaps hate to see. That means a woman in the contemporary world is expected to hold, analyse, understand and act upon her own life instead brooding over the lost chances and bygone opportunities. In such a life whatever she creates becomes an expression of her own freedom as well as a model of freedom that the women around her could emulate. Looking at the present body of works by Renuka Sondhi Gulati, as an art critic, who has written on her works earlier as well, I could definitely say that she has left behind the early scepticism about her own divided existence as a public artist and a private person and has become a person who has successfully fused the public and private selves into one. In these works one could see the vigorous negotiations between spaces, a critique on the technological and emotional submission of women by the socio-economic forces, the external spaces of self assertion and the internal spaces of contemplation and reconciliation.

While Renuka as an artist employs the image of an eagle as a symbol of feminine freedom, ambition and ability to fly high, she very skillfully brings forth her own self as well as a surrogate self and attributes them with a sort of iconic nature. Like Lord Vishnu who sleeps horizontally on the serpent of Time in the ocean of wisdom, here in Renuka's works the central female protagonist is seen in a horizontal position as if she were in the process of creation and in the creative slumber as the male Gods do. The same mythological concept comes to the fore when she uses her sculptural family unit complete with an umbilical code running up with a foetal figure in the divine sleep. This myth of genesis or the myth of creation that we see in Indian mythologies (the way Brahma comes out of the lotus sprouting from the sleeping Vishnu's navel) is aesthetically carried over to the sculptures by the artist. To prove this point, we have another sculpture from her in which the female protagonist is seen lying horizontally in her creative slumber.

Coming back to the eagle imagery, we could say that eagle is a bird that could soar high up in the sky and also see its preys down. Eagles do prey as they float in the air but there are times they simply move like idle beings and in the very

floatation itself they find their happiness. Here in Renuka's paintings we see an eagle as the paraphrasing of the artistic self and interestingly one of the works where we find the eagle imagery quite dominant is titled 'Let Me be Free'. 'Soaring High Through Her Vision' is another work where the presence of a neck scarf worn by young executives in the job sector makes the newer roles of women in the contemporary society. Perhaps they are tied down by the noose around their necks as the jobs demand but they have all the freedom to fly high using their newly found economic and social freedom. But at the same time Renuka provokes the viewers by bringing her self portrait in one of the works, morphing her likeness as a part of one of those electronic devices like memory stick or a part of the computer's circuit board. Here the protagonist is seen with a pair of headphones over her ears, almost blocking the other voices of the world. But her face is soft and thoughtful. In the title of the work she declares that she is not a machine ('I am not a Machine').

While the female protagonist is capable of declaring her freedom to the world and soar high with her own energy, agency and might, she sees and almost sympathizes with those women who despite having good jobs and pay checks, are forced to live a submissive life under the yoke of patriarchy or its social set up called marriage. Look at the work titled 'The Silent Submission'. The anthropomorphic imagery has some kind of an ironic indication. Though the head of this figure is that of a contemporary girl with a scarf around her neck her body is that of a goat. Renuka is playing upon the adage, 'Bali ka Bakra', the sacrificial lamb. She is fattened for the marriage market. At the same time, there is a slight critique forwarded by the artist as she indirectly suggests the form of Kamadhenu, the female divine being with cow's body and human head. She is divine and powerful. But when she is brought to this world she becomes absolutely powerless. Renuka indirectly suggests that such a situation cannot be allowed for long.

The two works that almost appear as the manifesto of the artist are titled 'In My Dreams' and 'The Roots of My Country'. As I mentioned elsewhere, the protagonists are in a creative slumber. In the former work, the female protagonist is on a happy structure which no longer has the pain of the bed of arrows as experienced by Bheeshma in Mahabharata. Sleeping among the clouds, like

the Lake District Poet, she sees the vision of creations with eyes closed. The same contentment and happy face we witness in the latter work where the woman is seen sleeping under a Banyan tree, the tree of enlightenment. What makes this work interestingly intriguing and specifically bold is the artist's daring to make her protagonist sleep under the Banyan tree, snatching the right to enlightenment from the male hands and also daring to sleep under a tree like a mendicant devoid of the fear of theft or molestation. It is a sort of reclaiming the spaces for herself and for all the women in the world.

'Waiting' and 'Seeing Beyond' are two paintings that make the artist a bit existential. In 'Waiting' we see the protagonist among a series of painterly images including the hands of different colours are clasped together. There is a sense of apprehension in it. This is a moment of 'to be or not to be'. However, when we see the other works, we understand that such trepidations are easily dispelled in the other works. In 'Seeing Beyond', perhaps for a change and to transcend the gender specifications, Renuka brings the face of a male with eyes closed and covered over with palms. He too is seeing something beyond his closed eyes and I am sure it must be a world where genders are not a problem to be discriminated against, but celebrated. Renuka believes in the family establishment and also the role of the masculine protagonist within the domestic sphere. Such conformism however does not nullify her thematic enthusiasm in the paintings. In her sculptural ensemble the alpha male becomes the protagonist while the rest come under his benevolent protection. I would prefer not to see it as a contradiction but a living reality which is not really in conflict with the artistic personality of the artist. If she could manage both with care and verve, there shouldn't be a place for complaints by others.

Taking a cue from the changing times and the moods of the country, Renuka has emphasized her love for the mother land. According to the artist, the empowerment of the country has a lot to do with the empowerment of women and she is ready to go by the present day mainstream discourse of patriotism and she does find it as a morale booster for the artist in her. In the sculptures, she emphasizes in the ideological apparatuses like family and society and to conform with the given. She affirms her indebtedness to her country and family and celebrates it in her works uncritically. Onlookers could resort to the

poetic understanding of her works through willing suspension of disbelief. And Renuka Sondhi Gulati is an artist of our times who would stand for the country and family, come whatever may.

**JohnnyML**, Art Critic

July 2017, New Delhi



**My Out Look** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 24" x 24" | 2015





**Soaring Through her Vision** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 48" x 60" | 2016



**The Silent Submission** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 48" x 60" | 2016





**In My Dreams** | Oil on canvas | 48" x 60" | 2015



**My Roots in My Country** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 48" x 60" | 2017



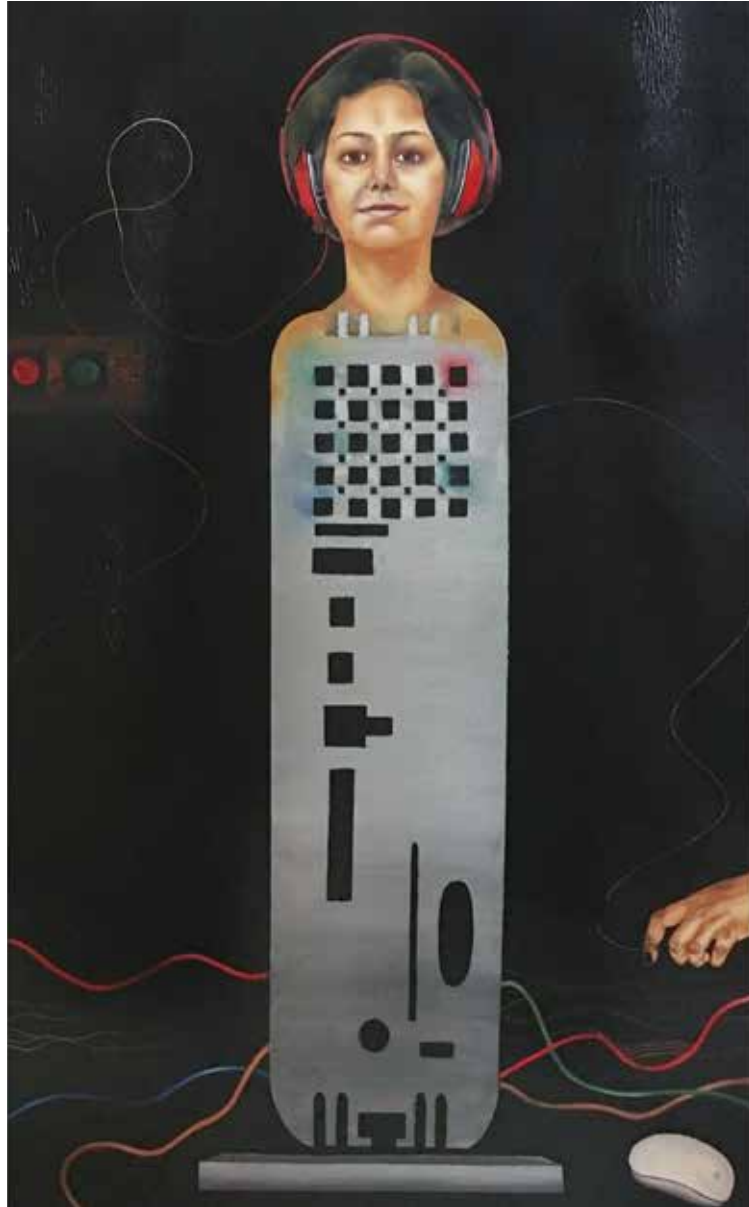


**Let Me Be Free** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 24" x 24" | 2015



**Waiting** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 24" x 24" | 2015





**I am not a Machine**  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
46" x 29" | 2016



**Feeling the Freedom** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 12" x 24" | 2015



**Amazing Grace**  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
48" x 60" | 2012



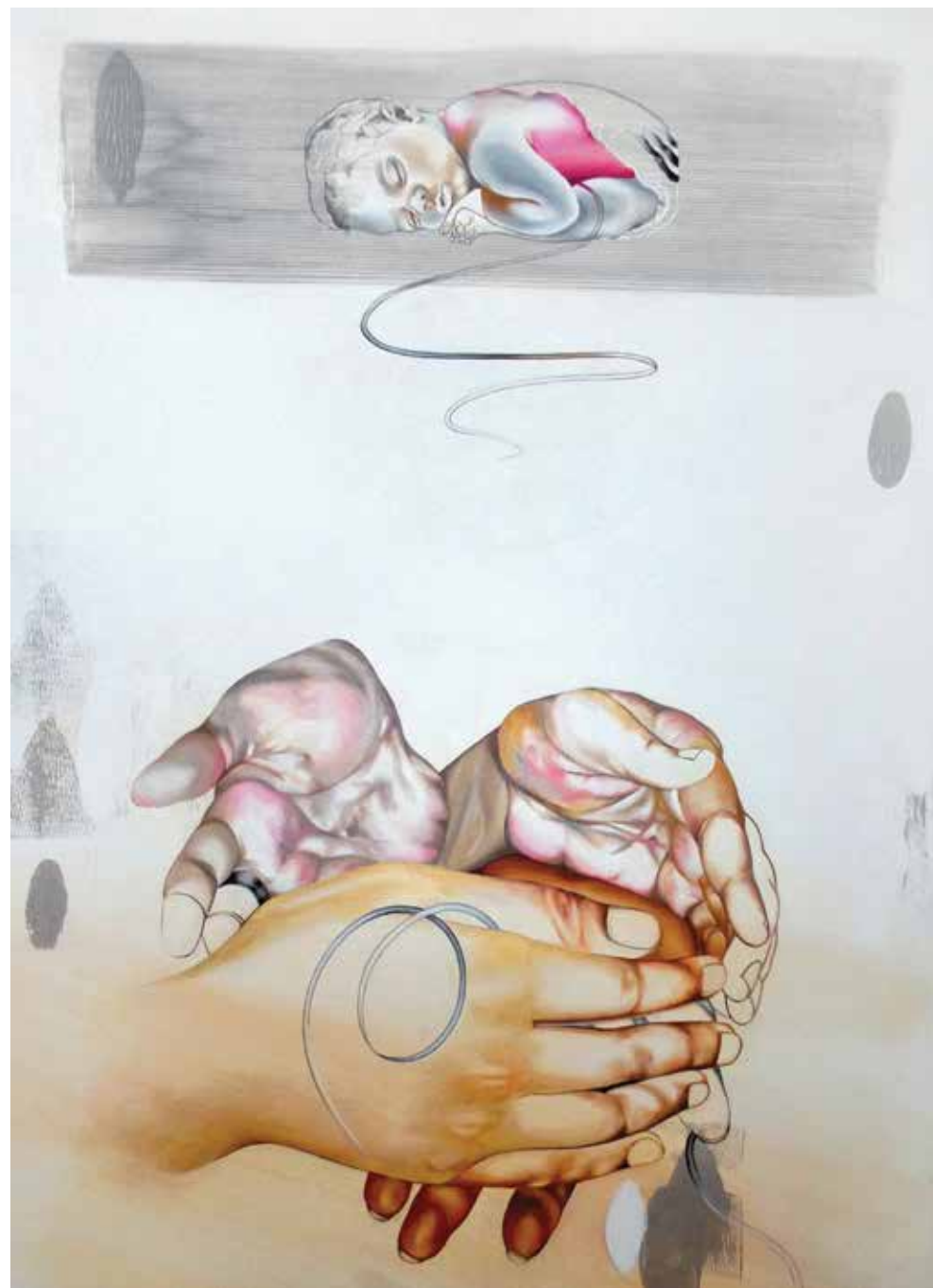


**Regeneration**  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
5" x 8" | 2014



**Seeing Beyond**  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
24" x 24" | 2015





**Kinship**  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
48" x 36" | 2014



**The Binding Threads**  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
46" x 29" | 2015





**The Flying Time** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 48" x 72" | 2013



**Feeling the Freedom** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 48" x 72" | 2013

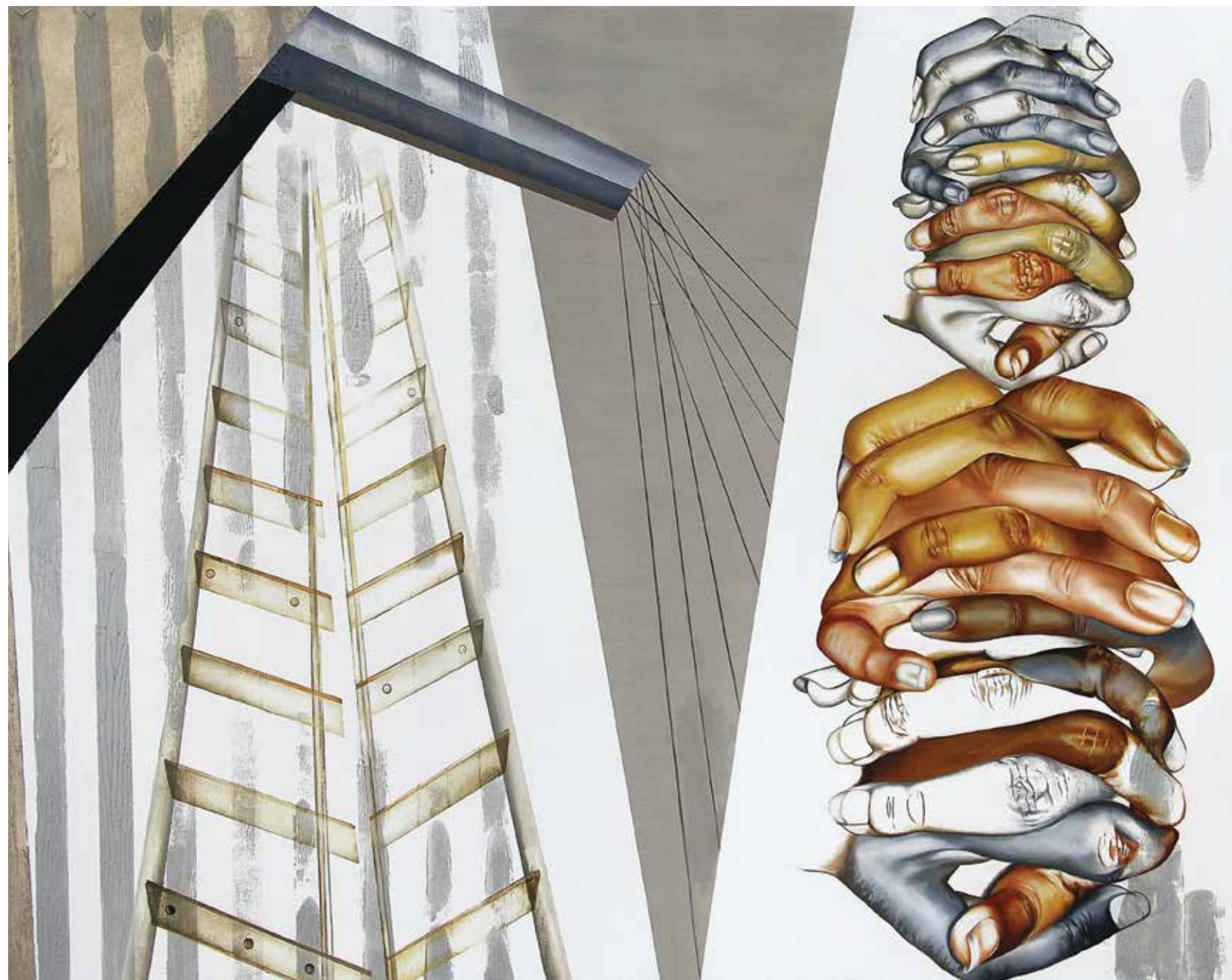




**On Duty**

Oil and acrylic on canvas  
73" x 30" | 2014





**The Prayer Way** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 48" x 60" | 2013



**The Hallowed Abode** | Oil and acrylic on canvas | 48" x 36" | 2014





**The Healing Touch Series** | Charcoal on paper | 13"x19" each | 2013



**Affection** | Bronze | 15" x 13" x 15" | 2015







**Togetherness** | Bronze | 10.5" x 9.5" x 22.5" | 2012



**My Roots in my Country** | Bronze | 10" x 11" x 20" | 2017





**Springing Romance** | Bronze | 13" x 12.5" x 17" | 2014



**Compassion** | Bronze | 18" x 11" x 12" | 2015





**A Dream** | Bronze | 7.5" x 17.5" x 9" | 2015



**My Valentine** | Bronze | 14.5" x 11.5" x 11.5" | 2015





**Thanking God** | Bronze | 27.5" x 10" x 6" | 2015



**In Conversation** | Bronze | 13.5" x 15" x 16" | 2013





**Together we can Win** | Bronze | 17" x 17.5" x 13" | 2015



**Searching for Home** | Bronze | 15" x 13" x 21" | 2017





**Crossing Over** | Bronze | 7" x 12" x 17" | 2016



**Soaring High** | Bronze | 5" x 4" x 22" | 2017





**Expanding Horizon** | Bronze | 10" x 12" x 17" | 2016



**The Phoenix Woman** | Bronze | 7" x 7" x 15" | 2013





**The Journey called Life**, ITO Metro Station, 100ft x 12ft., New Delhi



**Fantasies of Citizens in Indian Democracy**, ITO Metro Station, 100ft x 12ft., New Delhi



# Renuka Sondhi Gulati

## QUALIFICATIONS

B.A., B.Ed, M.A., Diploma in Textile Design

## SOLO SHOWS

- 2014 The Phoenix Woman Shridharani Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, N. Delhi 6-16 March
- 2013 The Divine Grace Taj Palace Hotel, New Delhi, 18-24 February
- 2013 The Divine Grace Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Azad Bhawan, 1-6 Feb, N.Delhi
- 2011 Life..a Journey. At Hotel Taj Palace Delhi 31<sup>st</sup> Oct -13<sup>th</sup> November
- 2010 Mystical Resonance, Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi, March
- 2007 'Elements in Space' Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi, August

## GROUP SHOWS

- 2017 Tranquil Trialogues, India Habitat Centre, Conventional Foyer, 21-24<sup>th</sup> August.
- 2017 Triumph of Master Works: Our National Pride Janpath Subway, Connaught Place, ND, 5-18 Aug.
- 2017 Art in Steps, Cabinet Secretariat Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi, July to August
- 2017 Number Eighteen, A group show by Triveni Artists Shridharani Gallery, 7- 31<sup>st</sup> May
- 2017 Art Escape Exhibition Chandigarh
- 2017 We group woman Art exhibition Chandigarh
- 2017 58<sup>th</sup> National Exhibition Lalit Kala Show in Modern Art Gallery, Bangalore
- 2016 Annual Art exhibition by Sahitya Kala Akademi, AIFACS New Delhi
- 2016 The Egg Gallery, at Narayan Manzil, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi
- 2016 Birla Art Academy Kolkata September
- 2016 CSOI Group Show, Chanakyapuri, N. Delhi June
- 2016 India Art Festival New Delhi Jan
- 2015 Freedom Art Gallery, New Delhi
- 2015 Annual Art exhibition by Sahitya Kala Akademi, AIFACS New Delhi
- 2015 India Design, K-2 Studio Lado Sarai, New Delhi
- 2015 Camel Art Annual Exhibition Lucknow
- 2015 Showcase Wonder by Geeta Art Gallery, Sadhna Enclave, New Delhi, April

- 2015 SIDDHI Yellow Ochre The Stainless Gallery, New Delhi 25-30 April
- 2015 Motley Hues, at Chandigarh, April
- 2015 Cabinet Secretariat, Rashtrapati Bhawan, March
- 2015 IASOWA Group Show at CSOI, Chankayapuri, Jan
- 2014 Expressions by Senior Artists at India Habitat Centre, November
- 2014 Bombay Art Fair, New Mumbai, November
- 2014 'Indian Artists Paint Russia' Russian Centre of Science & Culture, New Delhi, September
- 2014 'The Monsoon Show' Shridharani Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi, Sep 2014
- 2014 'Love and Affection' by Ruki Gallery at AIFACS August
- 2014 'Agnipath' at HUDCO Art Gallery, August
- 2014 Contemporary National Art Exhibition, NDMC Group Show, New Delhi
- 2014 Confluence 2014 by Gallery Art Eterne, Art Konsult, Lado Sarai, New Delhi
- 2014 Annual Show Ragini Gallery at The Visual Art Gallery, India Habitat Centre
- 2014 Under One Roof, Shridharani Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, ND
- 2014 Open Air Art Gallery Triveni Kala Sangam, ND, Jan-June
- 2013 ACE Tech 2013 Exhibition Interiors, Pragati Maidan, with Dream Design and Display
- 2013 Open Art Gallery Triveni Kala Sangam, Nov-Dec
- 2013 Centurion a Group Show at Visual Art Gallery, Indian Habitat Center, November
- 2013 Group show at Shridharani Art Gallery by Creativity Art Gallery October
- 2013 **United Art Fair-2**, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
- 2013 3<sup>rd</sup> Haryana Contemporary Art Exhibition at Chandigarh, July
- 2013 'An Escape Route' show by Smanvaiart at Jaipur, May
- 2013 Women Beyond Boundries, A Contemporary art show at PHD Chamber, March
- 2013 WAMA paintings of Women Artists of Delhi, March
- 2013 Show of HIFA Awardees at Punjab Kala Bhawan Chandigarh, January
- 2013 Triad Sculptures, Lalit Kala Akademi, N.D., March
- 2012 All India Art Exhibition at AIFACS, Rafi Marg, New Delhi, December
- 2012 Twelve Together, artists of Triveni at Sridharani Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, November

- 2012 Jism: The Divine Truth, Open Palm Court, India Habitat Centre & AIFACS, New Delhi, October
- 2012 **United Art Fair-1**, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
- 2012 Summer Art Show at Sridharani Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, June
- 2012 HIFA, (Haryana Institute of Fine Arts) Group Show at Lalit Kala Sangam, March
- 2011 9<sup>th</sup> International Art Biennale at Malta, Italy, Switzerland, Portugal, France, USA and Germany from 8 Jan to 31st December
- 2011 All India Art Exhibition at AIFACS, Rafi Marg, New Delhi
- 2011 CENTURION Group Show at The Visual Art Gallery, India Habitat Centre New Delhi, Feb.
- 2011 The Lavanya Art Show, Studio Vasant, Delhi. Jan.
- 2010 All India Art Exhibition at AIFACS, Rafi Marg, New Delhi
- 2010 One World at Hotel The Lalit, New Delhi. (Organized by Smt. Menaka Gandhi)
- 2009 All India Art Exhibition at AIFACS, Rafi Marg, New Delhi
- 2009 Summer Show: Work displayed by Burland Galleries in UK
- 2009 ART SHOW by Alshine Art Forum, Rajendra Park, New Delhi
- 2008 'Empyrean Revelations' at AIFACS, September
- 2008 Art Mall, Shivangi Marg, Moti Nagar, New Delhi
- 2008 India Habitat Centre by Aditya's Centre for Art, June
- 2008 3rd India Contemporary Miniature, Paintings & Sculpture Exhibition at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
- 2008 "Khushii" India on Canvas show at the French Embassy.
- 2007 Women Art Show, by the Art People. 4/6 Sirifort Industrial Area, New Delhi
- 2007 Art from Heart Show, World Wildlife Fund(WWF), India Lodhi Estate, New Delhi
- 2006 Art People Show Travancore Art Gallery, ND.
- 2005 Agnipath, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

## AWARDS / RECOGNISATIONS

- 2017 Painting selected for 58th National Exhibition by Lalit Kala, Bangalore.
- 2016 Painting selected For 89th AIFACS, Rafi Marg, New Delhi, September

- 2016 Won Second Award at Live Yoga Painting Competition at India International Yoga, Health & Wellness Exhibition, "The Yog Shala Expo 2016", Ministry of AYUSH, Namo Gange, New Delhi, June
- 2016 Selected for 57th National Exhibition by Lalit Kala, Lucknow
- 2016 Selected for 29th National South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Nagpur
- 2015 Selected for 28th South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Nagpur
- 2015 Selected for CAMLIN Art Contest
- 2015 "Confluence '15 (An International Artist Show) – Third Edition 2015".
- 2014 "Confluence '14 (An International Artist Show) – Second Edition 2014".
- 2014 Painting selected by The Lalit Kala Akademi (National Academy of Fine Art) for 55th National Exhibition, 2014
- 2012 Sculpture selected for 85th AIFACS New Delhi
- 2012 Haryana Institute of Fine Arts "Honourable Mention" Award
- 2011 Won 'Sculpture Prize 2011' at 9th International Art Biennale at Malta, Europe.
- 2011 Painting as well as Sculpture selected for 84th AIFACS, Rafi Marg, New Delhi
- 2010 Sculpture selected for 83rd AIFACS, Rafi Marg, New Delhi
- 2009 Sculpture selected for 80th & 81st AIFACS, Rafi Marg, New Delhi
- 2009 Work selected in Rang Rasia Art competition
- 2007 Painting selected for 79th AIFACS, New Delhi
- 2006 Bronze Medal at Agnipath, National Level Competition & Exhibition at Travancore Art Gallery, New Delhi
- 2005 Gold Medal at Agnipath National Level Competition & Exhibition at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

## FELLOWSHIP

Awarded Senior Fellowship, Visual Art (Ministry of Culture, Govt of India, 2012-13

## WORKSHOP / ARTIST CAMP

- 2017 58th National Art Conclave March 2017, Bangalore.
- 2017 International Artist Camp 17.17.17 by Lalit Kala Chandigarh

- 2016 International Artist Camp, Arts form Scrap by DMRC at Shashtri Park, Metro Station.
- 2016 National Art Camp for Painting in Ujjain.
- 2016 National Camp at Udaipur for Stone Carving.
- 2016 57th National Art Conclave, Lucknow
- 2016 Acad Group Camp Chikaldhara, Maharashtra
- 2015 Camp By "Master Sansar Chand Memorial Trust", at Patnitop, Jammu & Kashmir
- 2015 Sahitya Kala Akademi Camp at Shimla, HP
- 2015 The Senior Artists Camp AIFACS, N.D.
- 2014 FIPA-RCSC Annual Art Camp at Russian Centre of Science & Culture
- 2013 IILM Artists Camp, IILM Campus Greater NOIDA
- 2011 North Zone Cultural Centre, Chandigarh, 16-30 September
- 2011 Sahitya Kala Akademi, Delhi Painters Workshop 5-15 Feb
- 2008 Workshop Conducted By "KHUSHII" (NGO)
- 2007 Camp by TMZ group Connaught Circus, N. Delhi

## INSTALATIONS

- 2008 Mural 40'x11' made for OMAXE's Faridabad
- 2015 Two Artworks 1100 sqft each selected for permanent installation at Delhi Metro Station
- 2017 One installation at Kalka Ji Metro Station
- 2017 One installation at Greater Kailash Metro Station

## COLLECTION

- Private galleries: Burland Galleries Scotland, Ati Gallery; Suryaveer Kohli Art, Chandigarh Airport, North Zone Cultural Centre, Chandigarh, Sahitya Kala Akademi, Delhi, Lalit Kala Akademi,
- Private collections: **Shri M. Hamid Ansari, Ex-Vice President of India.** **Ms. Sheila Dixit, Ex-Chief Minister.** Omaxe Builders, Spaze Builders, Burmans, Dabur & Akash Institute. Galleries and private collections in India & Abroad

## GENERAL

Engaged in Social work with an **NGO AAPSI** co-founded by her husband Sunil Kumar Gulati, IAS.

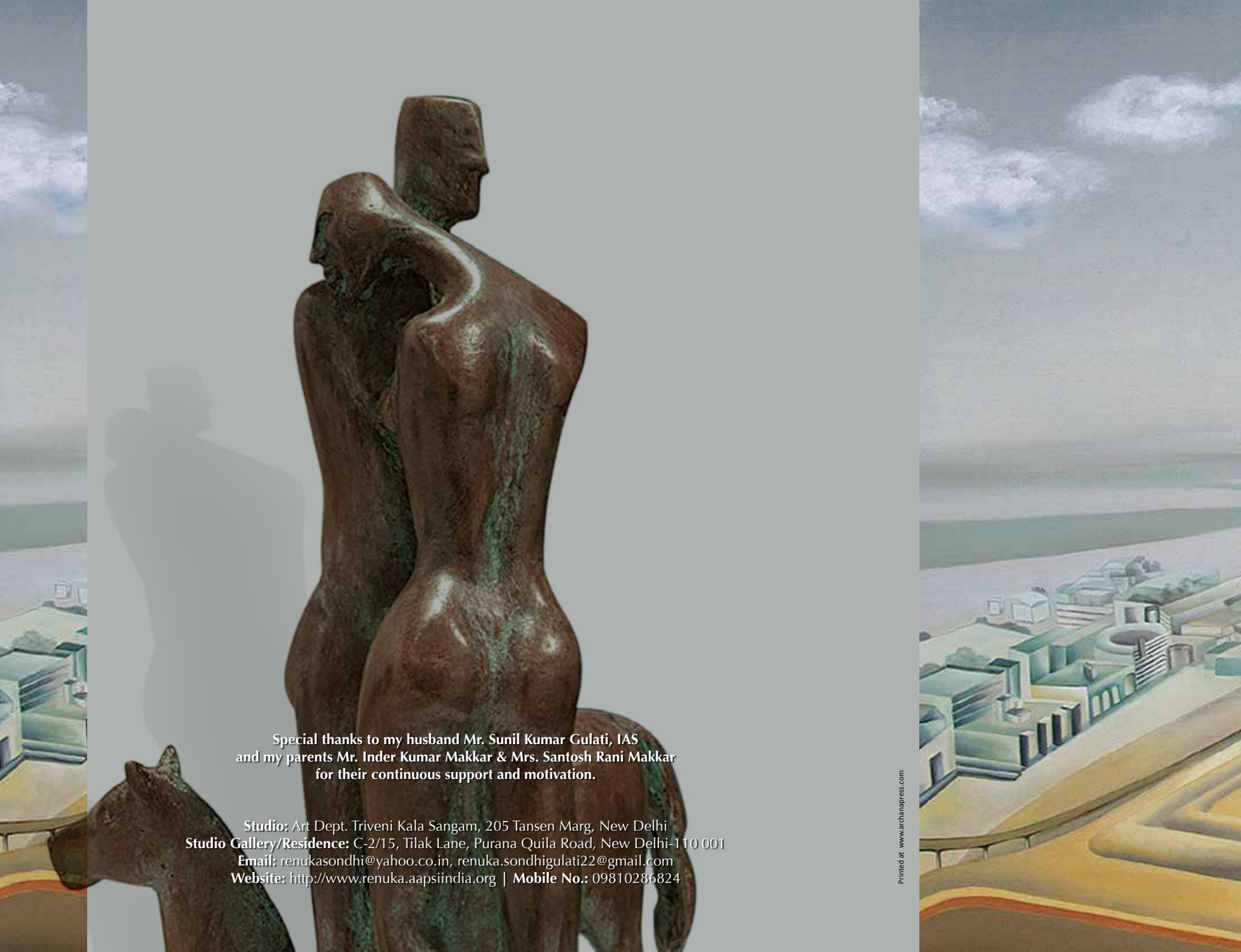
## GALLERY RESIDENCE

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Email: renukasondhi@yahoo.co.in  
Website : www.aapsiindia.org/renuka



Renuka has spent the best years of her life studying art at Triveni Kala Sangam, under the tutelage of Sh. Sanjoy Roy and Sh. Rameshwar Broota





Special thanks to my husband Mr. Sunil Kumar Gulati, IAS  
and my parents Mr. Inder Kumar Makkar & Mrs. Santosh Rani Makkar  
for their continuous support and motivation.

**Studio:** Art Dept. Triveni Kala Sangam, 205 Tansen Marg, New Delhi  
**Studio Gallery/Residence:** C-2/15, Tilak Lane, Purana Quila Road, New Delhi-110 001  
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**Website:** <http://www.renuka.aapsiindia.org> | **Mobile No.:** 09810286824