

# Taking a leaf out of nature for inspiration

## **BUSINESSOFART**

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**I** WAS on a 10-day visit to Bangalore. Thanks to the Earth Day, the city galleries that I visited had come up with exhibitions that centred on elements of nature. For someone who had lived in Bangalore 40 years ago, it was reassuring to know that nature continues to be important here.

National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), housed in the lovely restored Manikavelu Mansion, was the first place that I visited. Luckily the exhibition on Jamini Roy, curated by noted art historian Ella Dutta, was still on. Despite being familiar with the master's work, the exhibition threw up many surprises — such as the artist's early drawings, his portraits, and his gradual move towards a folk idiom. Most interesting were the preliminary sketches that I later linked with his large canvases. I was delighted to see two of my favourite Jamini Roy paintings, *Cat with a Fish* and *Santhal Mother and Child* at the exhibition. Since Jamini Roy's works fall in the category of 'national treasures', it is reassuring to see his works being safely preserved at the NGMA.

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath had organised a photo exhibition, *Nature is Art for Conservation*, by Bangalore-based photographer and filmmaker Anil Annaiah, to celebrate Earth Day. Anil stuck to his thematic expression — leaves, plants and tree barks — but has experimented with various techniques, such as a vortex-like image in print, as well as close-ups and dif-

fused images of flowers and leaves, which are as dramatic as abstract paintings. In another gallery at the same venue, a group of artists exhibited some interesting works — worth mentioning were studies of horses by Jeeva S, and black and white dogs by Sambasivam V. Vinodh Kumar S has explored nature with intricate cut outs. His cut outs of Buddha under the Bodhi tree and another of Buddha and a peacock were spectacular.

At Sublime Galleria, five elements of nature — water, fire, wind, earth, sky, and earth — were explored in detail by 22 artists. The exhibition was curated by Suresh Jayaram, who taught art history at the College of Fine Arts and was also Dean of the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat.

*Fly like a Bird: Birds in Contemporary Art*, by well-known artist Rekha Rao is being held at Gallerie De Arts. Daughter of eminent artist KK Hebbar, Rekha was trained by her father and has been exhibiting her works globally since 1973. At the exhibition, we can see many paintings in the artist's semi abstract style, with the theme of birds running through every painting. The exhibition is well worth a visit and will be on till May 15.

*(The writer is an author and a former art gallery owner)*