

RL Fine Arts

Jagdish Swaminathan (1928-1994)

Selected Works

Exhibition: Thursday 15 November to Saturday 15 December

Jagdish Swaminathan is one of the most important Indian artists of the generation following India Independence. Originally from Simla, he made a name for himself primarily as an art theoretician and writer. Only in the later 1950's did he make the decision to become a full time artist.

Forming a group called Group 1890, which rejected naturalism in art, sentimental nationalism as in the Bengal school, and also the modernism predicated on Western tradition, the group looked to create art that came from a sense of purity. Though the group had only one exhibition, Swaminathan continued to explore this sense of purity and calm. A series of works that came to be known as Time and Space, utilized the motifs of birds, mountains, trees, all arranged without apparent connection on the canvas, but intimately connected nevertheless. These famous works are deceptively simple, painted with technical finesse and polish. The colors recall those of Indian miniature painting, as does the finish. The works exude a yogic sense of calm and expansive meditation, evoking the basic elements of life.

Later on Swaminathan changed his styling and continued to explore the essence of being, utilizing tribal symbols and ancient writing, often painting the canvases with his hands alone, creating texture and contrast. Having nothing to do with Western modernism, his works continue to hold fascination for their sense of the pure essence of life. The symbols series take one back to man's past, with drawings and markings on rocks. One of the most original artists in the Indian art tradition, his works are devotedly collected by connoisseurs, and are not easily available.

In 1981, Swaminathan was invited by the government of Madhya Pradesh to set up the Roopanker art museum at Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal, where he continued as director until 1990.

The works in this exhibition are from both the Time and Space series, and also from the tribal symbols series. Major collectors have contributed works for the exhibition. All the works testify as to the particular gift that Swaminathan had for conveying so much emotion with a minimum of grandiosity and flourish.

Please contact Peter Louis at RL Fine Arts for images for press, and for further information. Peter Louis mobile number is: 1 917 716 8732