

## T. Venkanna

Venkanna holds a Masters in Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in printmaking from the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University of Baroda and Bachelors in Fine Arts (B.F.A.) in painting from J.N.T.U, Hyderabad where he was awarded a Gold medal. The artist was born in 1980 in Gajwel and lives and works in Baroda, India.

Venkanna had his ninth solo show in 2022 titled *AS I AM* curated by Abhay Maskara at Gallery Maskara. In 2019 the artist had a solo show titled *LOVE ME* curated by Abhay Maskara at Gallery Maskara. Earlier in the same year the artist had a solo project *Tradition/Transformation* curated by Abhay Maskara at Gallery Maskara. In 2018 Venkanna participated in an exhibition *Inde*, Manoir de Martigny, Switzerland. In 2017 he had his seventh solo show *Looking for Peace*, Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, India. In 2016 he was part of a group show *TIME*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India. In 2015 he had his sixth solo show *CELEBRATION* at Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India. In 2014 his shows include *Residual Remnants*, Site art space, Baroda, India; *Midnight's Grandchildren* curated by Girish Shahane, Kitab Mahal, Mumbai; *Trajectories: 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Century Printmaking from India and Pakistan* curated by Dr. Paula Sengupta and Camilla H. Chaudhary, Sharjah Art Museum, UAE. Major shows in 2012-13 include *Air Sri Lanka*, Galerie Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna, Austria, *Lunch with Olympia*, curated by Robert Storr, Yale University School of Art, CT, USA, *Between the Lines: Identity, Place, and Power*, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai, India, *Pancha Mahabhuta (The Five Great Elements)* at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kochi, India, *Cynical Love: Life in the Everyday* curated by Gayatri Sinha at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Noida, India, a solo presentation at Art Brussels 30<sup>th</sup> Contemporary Art Fair, *ProjectStage* at Art Stage Singapore, the India Art Fair, India, the VIP Art Fair, (online). In 2011, Venkanna presented a controversial solo performance at Art Stage Singapore and was part of *New Trends from South India*, at the Lalit Kala Academy, Chennai, India. Other key projects during the year included; *CROSSROADS: India escalate* (India Pavilion) at the Prague Biennale 5, Czech Republic, a solo presentation at the Art Brussels 29<sup>th</sup> Contemporary Art Fair, Belgium, *Fabular Bodies*, curated by Gayatri Sinha for the Harmony Art Foundation, Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai, India, *Printmaking: Open Studio*, at Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India, *(M)other India* at Galerie du Jour – Agnès B, Paris, France and *Window in the Wall*, Pearl Lam Galleries, Shanghai, China. In 2010 his work was part of *Finding India: Art for the New Century*, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Taipei, Taiwan. His solo show, *NERO* opened at Gallery Luce in Torino, Italy and he simultaneously showed at Artissima 17 Torino, Italy. He was also the youngest artist featured in the Saatchi Gallery show *The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today*, London, UK.

The artist was shortlisted for the SKODA prize in 2010 and 2012. His works are in major collections including the Charles Saatchi collection (UK), the Burger Collection (Switzerland/Hong Kong), Swagemakers collection (Netherlands) and many more in America, Japan, Russia Europe and India.

### **Artist Statement**

The predominant subject in T. Venkanna's works is sexual imagination which questions and confronts the stereotypical ways in which sexuality is understood and defined.

*"The sexual behavior of human beings is habituated by societal norms and conditions. I believe it is due to this, that sexual fantasy gains importance in a human being's life and an individual achieves extreme pleasure out of this simple act of day-dreaming, wherein s/he escapes from the harsh realities of this world via an undisturbed and uninterrupted flight of imagination."*

*"In this endeavor of mine, I also have been (re)presenting certain imageries/motifs taken from artists of yester years [like Hockney, Rousseau, Mondrian, etc.] as well as from specific forms of traditional art. The political and social contexts underlying these works were quite different when they were made. I re-present these imageries according to my idea, in the process critically evaluating the norms and terms that exist within contemporary society."*

His continuous persistence with this subject has stimulated his interest to explore image-making in all kinds of media, including drawing, painting, sculpture, installation and performance. Venkanna's most important linguistic device is the integration of the personal and the social using material as per the subject's requirement with complete freedom and ease.

**T. Venkanna**

Born 1980, Gajwel, India. Lives and works in Baroda, India

**Education**

2006 M.F.A. (Printmaking) Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda, India

2004 B.F.A. (Painting) (Gold Medal) J.N.T.U, Hyderabad, India

**Solo Exhibitions/Projects**

2022

*AS I AM*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2019

*Tradition/Transformation*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

*LOVE ME*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2017

*Looking for Peace*, Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, India

2015

*CELEBRATION*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2013

*Art Brussels 31, Contemporary Art Fair*, Brussels, Belgium

*Pancha Mahabhuta*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai

2012

*Art Brussels 30<sup>th</sup> Contemporary Art Fair*, Brussels, Belgium

*Pancha Mahabhuta, Kochi-Muziris Biennale*, Kochi, India

2011

*Printmaking: Open Studio*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

*Art Brussels 29<sup>th</sup> Contemporary Art Fair*, Brussels, Belgium

*Untitled Performance*, ArtStage Singapore, Singapore

2010

*NERO*, Gallery Luce, Turin, Italy

*Sacred and Profane*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2009

*For Identity*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

**Group Exhibitions**

2018

*Inde*, Manoir de Martigny, Switzerland

2016

*TIME*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India

2014

*Residual Remnants*, Site art space, Baroda, India

*Trajectories: 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Century Printmaking from India and Pakistan*, Sharjah Art Museum, UAE

*Midnight's Grandchildren*, Kitab Mahal, Mumbai

*India Art Fair*, New Delhi, India

2013

*Air Sri Lanka*, Galerie Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna, Austria  
*Lunch with Olympia*, Yale University School of Art, New Haven, CT, USA  
*Between the Lines: Identity, Place, and Power*, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai, India  
*Skoda Prize Show*, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi, India  
*India Art Fair*, New Delhi, India

2012

*VIP Art Fair*, Online  
*India Art Fair*, New Delhi, India  
*Mumbai Gallery Weekend*, Mumbai, India  
*Cynical Love: Life in the Everyday*, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Noida, India  
*ProjectStage*, Art Stage Singapore, Singapore

2011

*(M)other India*, Galerie du Jour – Agnès B., Paris, France  
*Window in the Wall*, Pearl Lam Galleries, Shanghai, China  
*Fabular Bodies*, Harmony Art Foundation, Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai  
*CROSSROADS: India escalate* (India Pavilion), Prague Biennale 5, Prague, Czech Republic  
*New Trends from South India*, Lalit Kala Academy, Chennai, India  
*Group Show*, India Art Summit, New Delhi, India

2010

*Finding India: Art for the New Century*, Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, Taiwan  
*Artissima 17 International Fair of Contemporary Art in Torino*, Torino, Italy  
*The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today*, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK

2005-2008

*loosentiefirst*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India  
*789*, Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda, India  
*Chronicles of the Unspoken*, Travancore Gallery, Delhi, India  
*Show-off*, Kitab Mahal, Mumbai, India  
*Group Show*, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, India  
*Student Show*, Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda, India

### **Residencies**

2013

Krinzinger Projekte/One World Foundation, Colombo, Sri Lanka

### **Collections**

Major collections in India, Japan, Russia, Netherlands, France, USA, UK, including the Charles Saatchi Collection, UK, the Burger Collection, Switzerland, and the Swagemakers collection (Netherlands), the Karen and Duncan Collection, USA amongst others.

### **Press Quotes**

“In every good exhibition, if it’s really good, there will be good paintings...And in Art Brussels, the one that really stole the show was from Indian artist T. Venkanna, represented by Maskara Gallery from Mumbai. There is a vibrant, life and death quality to all of Venkanna’s work, though I personally most enjoyed this painting. Though it is dark and features the face of death, it rises also with such urgency that it seems to spring to life. The multi-layered compositions and deft use of colors further expand not only the painting’s depth, but its reach. It’s no longer European or Indian painting – it’s pure, vibrant, source of life painting.” - Hadelin Feront, May 1 2011, Pulp Gazette – Art Laboratory and Journal, Brussels, Belgium

"Constantly immediate and with raw openness, T. Venkanna creates new art for a new world. His storytelling takes various forms through constellations of images, collage, pastiche, the recourse to allegory, painting - all ways of thinking-in-pictures from which understanding emerges without having to be expounded." - Sonia Nazareth, Feb 15, 2011, Art & Deal, India

"Mumbai painters T. Venkanna and Atul Dodiya variously hijack twentieth-century westerners such as Henri Rousseau and Jasper Johns, in paintings that force Western primitivism and avant-gardism into historical dialogue with the mixed iconography of India's aesthetic traditions and its urban present" - JJ Charlesworth, Feb 4, 2010, Time Out London, UK

"T Venkanna's reworked versions of Douanier Rousseau are fun and sexy..." - Adrian Searle, Feb 2, 2010, The Guardian, UK

"As the gallery going crowd dubs him one of the more radical voices in today's Indian Contemporary art scene..."T Venkanna, a bold and scathing Hyderabad artist explores a world of fantasy" - Georgina Maddox, Jan 12, 2009, The Indian Express, India

"A young artist pushes the limits of sexual imagination" - Vishwas Kulkarni, Jan 30, 2009, Mumbai Mirror, India

"The Baroda based artist, whose works focus on the sexual imagination, re-visits motifs and imageries from artists like Mondrian, Henri Rousseau, and other classical examples, but irreparably tweaks them with his patented perversity" - Vishwas Kulkarni, Sep 27, 2008, Mumbai Mirror, India

"Subversive, daring imagery inspired by the profane and the prohibited" - Georgina Maddox, Sep 24, 2008

## Bibliography

### Reviews

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<http://www.mattersofart.net/newsdetail.aspx?mpgid=4&pgid=4&nid=235>
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<http://www.artnews.com/2013/09/19/manet-mania-at-yale/>
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- Doshi, Riddhi, *Drawing on the elements*, Hindustan Times, Mumbai, India, March 30, 2013
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<http://blogs.wsj.com/scene/2012/01/13/gallery-maskara-what-im-bringing/>
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### **Publications**

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