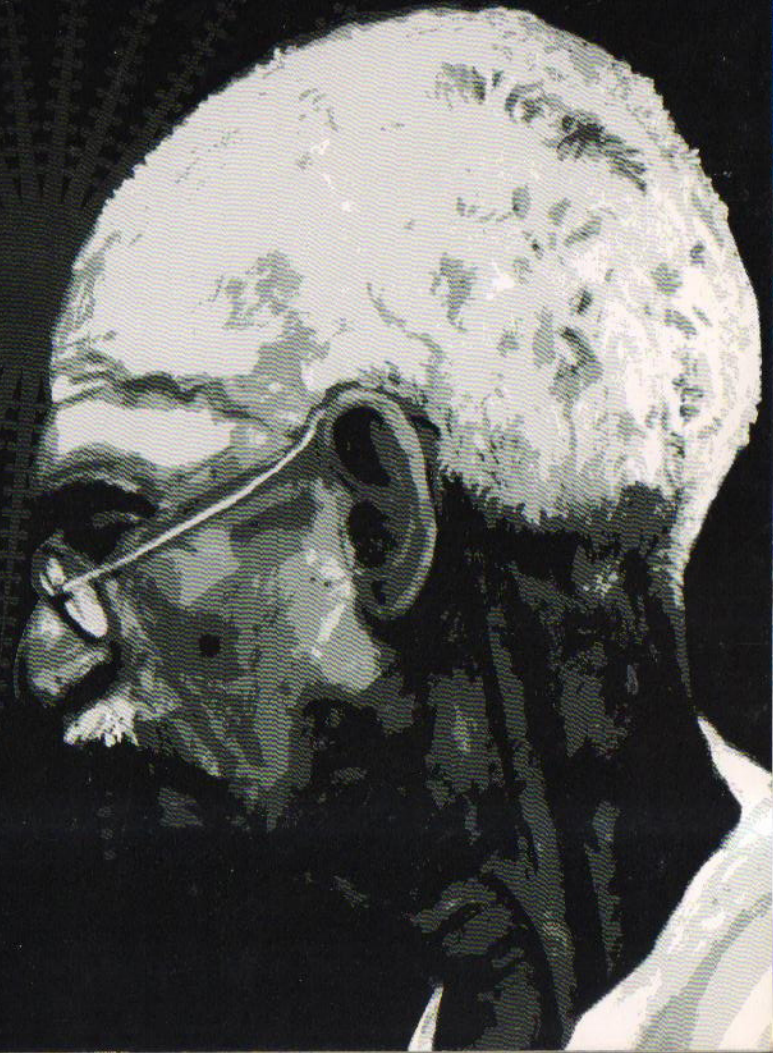
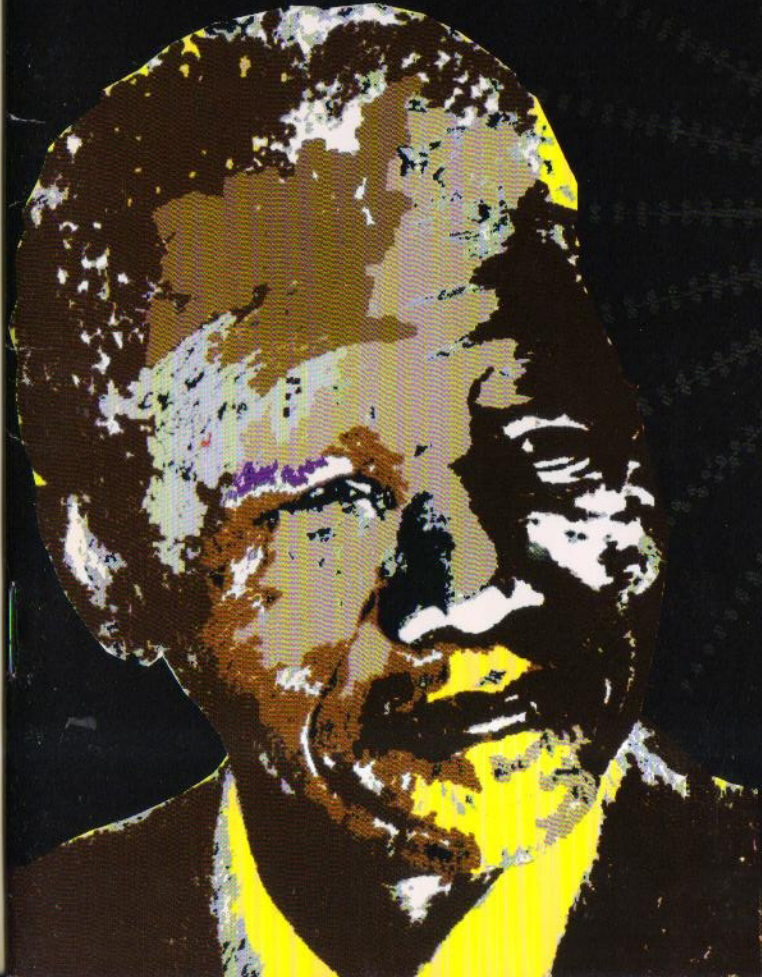


UTSAU:

A Tribute to M.K. Gandhi and
President Nelson Mandela





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CULTURAL
RELATIONS



EICHER GALLERY



UTSAV:

A Tribute to M.K. Gandhi and
President Nelson Mandela

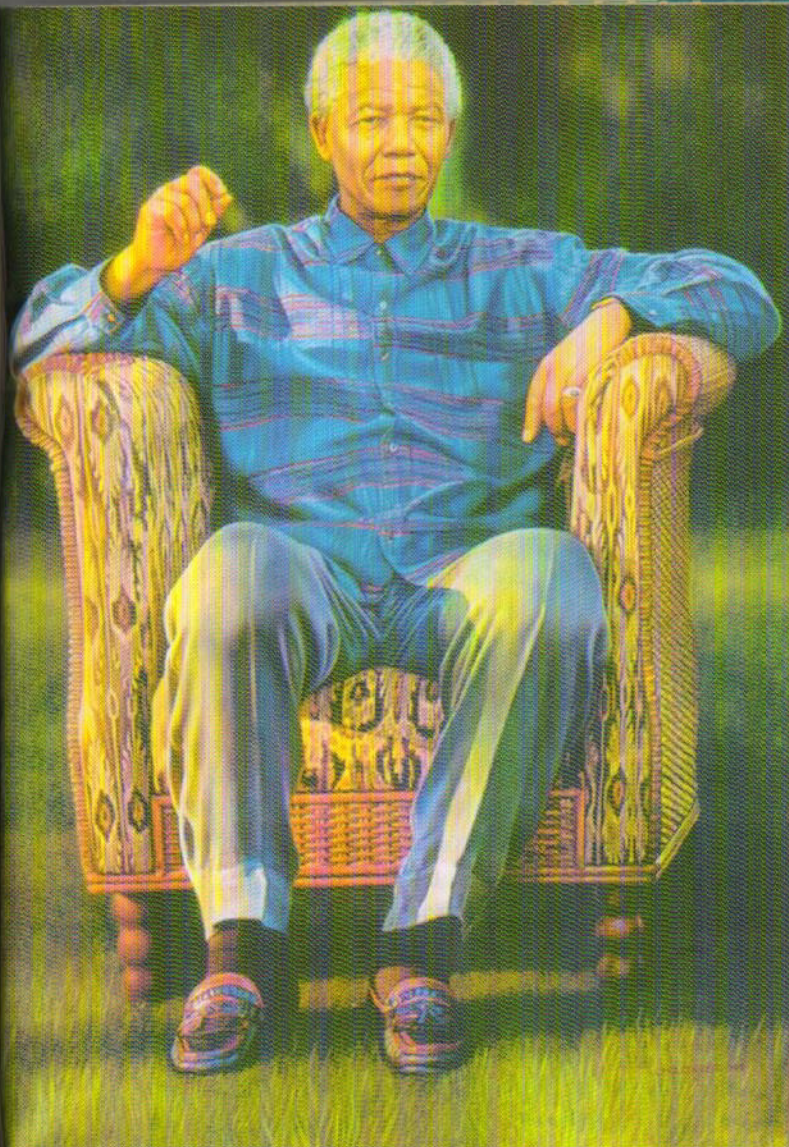
Haku Shah 'Gandhi Through My Eyes'
Khadi 'From Empire to Emporium'
'Revisiting Gandhi'
'Maz'enethole!'

DURBAN ART GALLERY
2ND APRIL - 28 APRIL 1998

ERRATA
pg. 20 Trevor Makhoba 'The Force of Truth' oil
on paper
pg. 24 List of contributing artists: George
Msimang, Joseph Manana and Hilton Gaza

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,
Where knowledge is free,
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by
narrow domestic walls,
Where words come out from the depth of the truth,
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection,
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit,
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening
thought and action,
Into that heaven of Freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

From 'Gitanjali' Rabindranath Tagore, artist and poet, India.



Message from **PRESIDENT MANDELA**

It is a pleasure to extend my warmest greetings to you all on this special occasion.

The links between South Africa and India are extensive and deeply rooted in the life of both countries. We share in a successful struggle against colonialism and racial discrimination, and today we are joined by many common cultural values and social ideals.

No person epitomises the shared heritage better than Mahatma Gandhi. He symbolised the unity of our experience and shared determination to be free. Gandhiji's contribution remains everlasting.

I am delighted that you are holding this international exhibition in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

My very best wishes for a successful exhibition.

President -Republic of South Africa

Foreword

Director: Durban Art Gallery

This exhibition marks the fiftieth anniversary of M.K. Gandhi's assassination. It has been said that two of the greatest peacemakers of the twentieth century were Madiba and the Mahatma and this exhibition was conceived to pay tribute to these two great men. It was decided not to present a curated and researched exhibition but rather to involve the broader community. It was for this reason that works ranging from the amateur to the professional are shown alongside each other. The Mandela portraits are selected from gifts sent to the President by a number of artists both local and international while the Revisiting Gandhi component consists of works created by local artists. Once the parameters of the exhibition were made known it grew and the event now consists of four exhibitions. Two of the South African exhibitions, *'Maz'enethole!'* and *'Revisiting Gandhi'* are directly concerned with these two men while the two exhibitions from India, Haku Shah: *'Gandhi Through My Eyes'*, and *'From Empire to Emporium'* have less direct links but reinforce the connections between India and South Africa. This programme of exhibitions is indicative of the new thinking in museums where former hierarchies of art are no longer applicable and museums are now engaging with other issues such as human rights and interpretations of history. We are proud that the Durban Art Gallery is part of this process and I would like to thank all the staff of the Durban Art Gallery and the many members of the broader community who have made this exciting and historic event possible.

Carol Brown



Message from the Consul General of India

The Consulate General Of India in Durban and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations are happy to associate themselves with the Durban Art Gallery in organising an exhibition of the portrayal of the vision of Gandhi by Haku Shah and 'From Empire to Emporium'. Haku Shah has made a mark for himself as an artist. As an eminent author recently said, 'the simple sense of wonder and abiding strength of the tribal forms are woven into the sensibilities of Haku Shah who, in his search of an enduring Indian reality, brought in the rural masses on his canvases'. Haku Shah was born and brought up in the 'flatland' of tribal art. However, the characters of his paintings do not emerge only from the substratum of tribal-rural India, but are compellingly contemporary in their tender gregariousness. His works strongly exude the simplicity that shrouded Gandhi's charm and powerful messages that changed the history of India. His exhibition 'Gandhi Through My Eyes' remains true to his childhood ideals of Gandhian simplicity.

The exhibition 'From Empire to Emporium' on khadi cloth is very much part of the overall ethos of the materials on display. Khadi was the cloth typically worn by peasant and artisan groups in the pre-industrial era. The term 'khadi' was used to describe certain varieties of coarse cotton cloth hand-woven from hand-spun yarn. During India's freedom struggle, Gandhi made this a powerful symbol of his 'self reliance' movement that greatly rattled the colonial powers. The exhibition represents the fascinating story of this cloth.

I am thankful to the Durban Art Gallery for its association with the organisation of the exhibition in a year that commemorates not only the 50th anniversary of our independence, but also the 50th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom.

M.K. Lokesh

Consul General - Consulate General of India, Durban

HAKU SHAH

A deeply felt, sensitively executed exhibition which could only have been conceived by one whose own thoughts and work are so much a part of Gandhi's own philosophy. The finest tribute that could have been paid to the father of the nation in the 50th year of the country's independence E. Alkazi 30.01.97

“To most of us today, Gandhi is a figure looking out of textbooks, postage stamps and posters, all things we give a passing look to. But for those of us who were part of the struggle for freedom or saw the millions of people who wept when Gandhi died something has been lost in the intervening period. This exhibition “Gandhi Through My Eyes” is an attempt to regain that feeling, to some extent.

As I worked with Haku Shah on this exhibition it laid bare before me how Gandhi's views are all encompassing, relating to every aspect of life. From man's relation to machines, truth, simplicity, silence, art, women, khadi's importance for physical labour, human equality, respect for all religions, environment and more. There is a certain minimalism in his words that made a great impact. His views are economical, straightforward and practical.

Haku Shah's art reflects this. His works are abstract, minimal and simple. They are mostly in tones of white. This is only a natural way to interpret the Mahatma.

- 6/ Haku Shah, one of India's master painters and a Gandhian himself, does this successfully using materials which were dear to Gandhi and a part of his daily activity - such as khadi, handspun cloth, cotton rags, handspun thread, waste and found objects, crushed leaves of the neem tree, recycled paper, mud etc.

From this work we can understand that the simple day to day teachings of Gandhi still survive - that they are as relevant today as they were then - in India, in South Africa and in the rest of the world.

On receiving the invitation for the exhibition to travel to South Africa - Hakubhai and I tried to find material on Gandhi's relation with South Africa in whatever way we could - meeting people, collecting newspapers and articles and trying to cull material from books. What emerged was an interesting but little known idea at least for us in India that for the people of South Africa there are two Gandhis - one is the South African Gandhi catapulted into a life of social and political activism and the other is the Indian Gandhi who was shaped in South Africa but flowered in India. I quote from the title from an article by E.S. Reddy who has published a collection of articles on Gandhi in South Africa and known to South Africans for his contribution to the struggle against apartheid which sums this emotion well, “Gandhi is South Africa's gift to India”.

This exhibition then is India's gift to South Africa for giving us the Mahatma. The Village Gallery is proud to present “Gandhi Through My Eyes”.

Dolly Narang - The Village Gallery, New Delhi

Haku Shah - Curriculum Vitae

- 1934 - Born in Valod, District Surat, Gujarat.
- 1959 - M.A. (Fine Arts); Fellow, M.S. University, Baroda.
- 1968 - Curator, Exhibition: Unknown India, in the USA.
- 1991 - Regent Professor, Davis, California, USA.
- 1997 - Curator, Lokshilp, Tribal and Folk art of India exhibition for ICCR, New Delhi.

Major Projects:

- 1979 - Process Technology, concept and design, Tropen Museum, Amsterdam.
- 1981 - Village Vasna, concept, collection and photos, Museum of Mankind, London.
- 1983 - Form and many forms of Mother Clay, concept, design, curator, catalogue, Winger International, San Diego, USA.
- 1986 - The Art of the Adivasis, commissioner, concept, design, Kobe, Setagaya Saitama Museum, Japan.
- 1988 - 'Form, Colour and Creativity', concept, design, Crafts Museum, New Delhi.
- 1989 - Shilpagram, permanent village of arts and crafts, concept and design, Udaipur.
- 1993 - Commissioner Exhibition: Contemporary Streams of Indian Art, New South Wales Gallery, Australia.

Books, articles and papers published in India and abroad.

Awards and Honours:

- 1968 - Rockefeller Grant, USA.
- 1971-73 - Nehru Fellowship for research in Tribal Art of Gujarat.
- 1989 - Awarded Padma Shri by President of India for contribution to art.
- 1991 - Regent Professor, Davis School of Environment Design, University of California, USA.

Solo Exhibitions:

- 1961-62 - Ashok Gallery, Calcutta.
- 1963-64 - Jehangir Art Gallery, Bombay . Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta.
- 1967 - Chemould Gallery, Bombay.
- 1968 - International House, Philadelphia, USA. 'The Art Scene Today', Chemould Gallery, Bombay. Asia Foundation Gallery, San Francisco, USA.
- 1969 - Chemould Gallery, Bombay. City Art Museum, St. Louis, USA.
- 1971 - Sanskar Kendra, Ahmedabad. Chemould Gallery, Bombay.
- 1976 - Gallery One, New York.
- 1984 - Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta.
- 1987 - Vikram Art Gallery, Madras.
- 1988 - Aressa Gallery, Bombay.
- 1991 - Bade Museum, Berkeley, USA.
- 1993 - International House, Davis, California, USA. Art Heritage, New Delhi.
- 1994 - Chemould Gallery, Bombay.
- 1996 - Cymroza Gallery, Bombay. The Village Gallery and India International Centre, Multimedia show 'Noor Gandhi ka Meri Nazar Mein'.
- 1997 - The Gallery, Madras. Herwitz Gallery, Ahmedabad, Surat.

Young
Weekly Journal

[V] Ahmedabad, Thursday, D

The Story
of
My Experiments with
Clay

Introduction

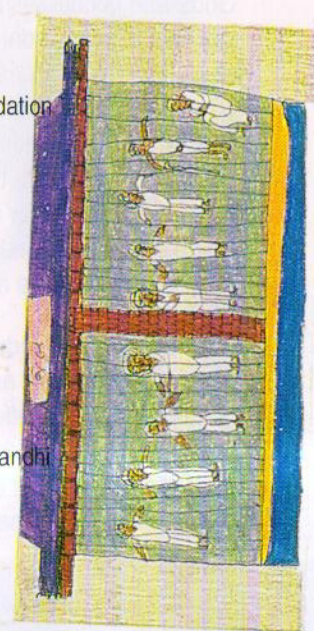
the purpose of my 'artistic autobiography' I
go to write my autobiography. I
made the start. But I had some trouble
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- lot of stress which colonized in my
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and finish writing the autobiography. I
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for myself, and that I could not
I should indeed have finished the autobiography
to reach the task.

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so spare time. I could not find
week. Something has to be
ask. Why should it not be
agreed to the proposal, at
apply. But a God-fearing
shared with me on the
is set you on this adventure
ography is a practice procedure
one in the East who has
in influence having written
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their conduct on the author
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either advised in writing nothing
not yet, if at all?

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to attempt a real autobiography. I simply
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my life is nothing but those experiments
the story will take the shape of a
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the present of the past. All that I do by
this is to write. I have and more and have my
is not the 'writing' as to me God face to face.
I have been trying to find for these things
so much tried to me. What I want to achieve,
and not to my family, the I receive more and
then there can be no room for self-pity. They
political field. If the experiments are really
have desired each other as I have to work on
which are known only to myself and from which
parture my experiments on the spiritual
have invited me. Don't I would certainly like
moment I could recall when it might be said
title has deepened me and there is not
room for me has therefore even here. I
now, and the title of 'Shaktim', the
I feel at it. It is not that they have not
known not on to I like but for a certain extent
I have written with the belief that a suggested topic

b. Truth

No. 49
December 3, 1975
Edited by M. K. Gandhi



Haku Shah 'At Sabarmati Ashram' 1997
mixed media 22 x 31 cm

HAKU SHAH

BY GANDHI THROUGH MY EYES
BY BULBUL SHARMA

by Bulbul Sharma from NAMASTE: The Welcome Group Magazine XVII/2/1997

He speaks so softly that you have to lean forward, shut out all outside sounds to hear him. Haku Shah, a committed Gandhian, and an expert on tribal arts, an eminent artist and a recipient of the Rockefeller and Nehru fellowships, does not believe in shouting either in art or to be heard. We sit surrounded by his silent, white works at his exhibition "Gandhi Through My Eyes" at the Village Gallery in New Delhi and words somehow seem redundant in this atmosphere of peace and quiet. Pieces of pure white hand spun cotton cloth, rough strands of cotton yarn, bits of handmade paper, torn postage stamps, strips of bamboo, grass and fragments of khadi cloth have been used by the artist to create these collages which speak in a silent, almost forgotten language.

Born in a village in Gujarat, from early childhood Haku Shah was greatly influenced by Gandhian philosophy. As a young boy he learnt spinning and made cotton thread which was later woven into simple garments for his family and friends. The tribals who lived on the outskirts of his village also made a great impression on him as a child and Haku Shah to this day remains true to his childhood ideals of Gandhian simplicity.

8/

The first time Haku Shah began to be interested in art was when he saw a folk artist draw with charcoal on the walls of the village huts. "We used to call him Mama though he was no relation of ours. He would pick up burnt wooden sticks from the fire and draw images of Gods and goddesses on the walls. I loved watching him. I too began to draw whatever caught my eye - the tribals in my village, the workers at the Gandhi Ashram, various interesting musical instruments that tribals used those days". Haku Shah later went to Baroda to study art where his teachers were eminent artists like Bendre and K.G. Subramaniam. His links with the Gandhi Ashram in Bardoli continued and during the holidays he would return to work there. "I would spin regularly even when I was at Baroda and I made a special type of charkha out of bamboo which was inexpensive and easily available. I made the cotton yarn for all my clothes. I would take the yarn back to the weavers in my village who would then weave the cloth for me. My mother and sisters all know how to spin and I was very famous for spinning in my village because I could spin very fast. Everyone would ask me to make something for them. I often made dhotis for my relatives and friends." He still likes to use the charkha and the stands of cotton that Haku Shah has used in these recent collages have also been spun by him.

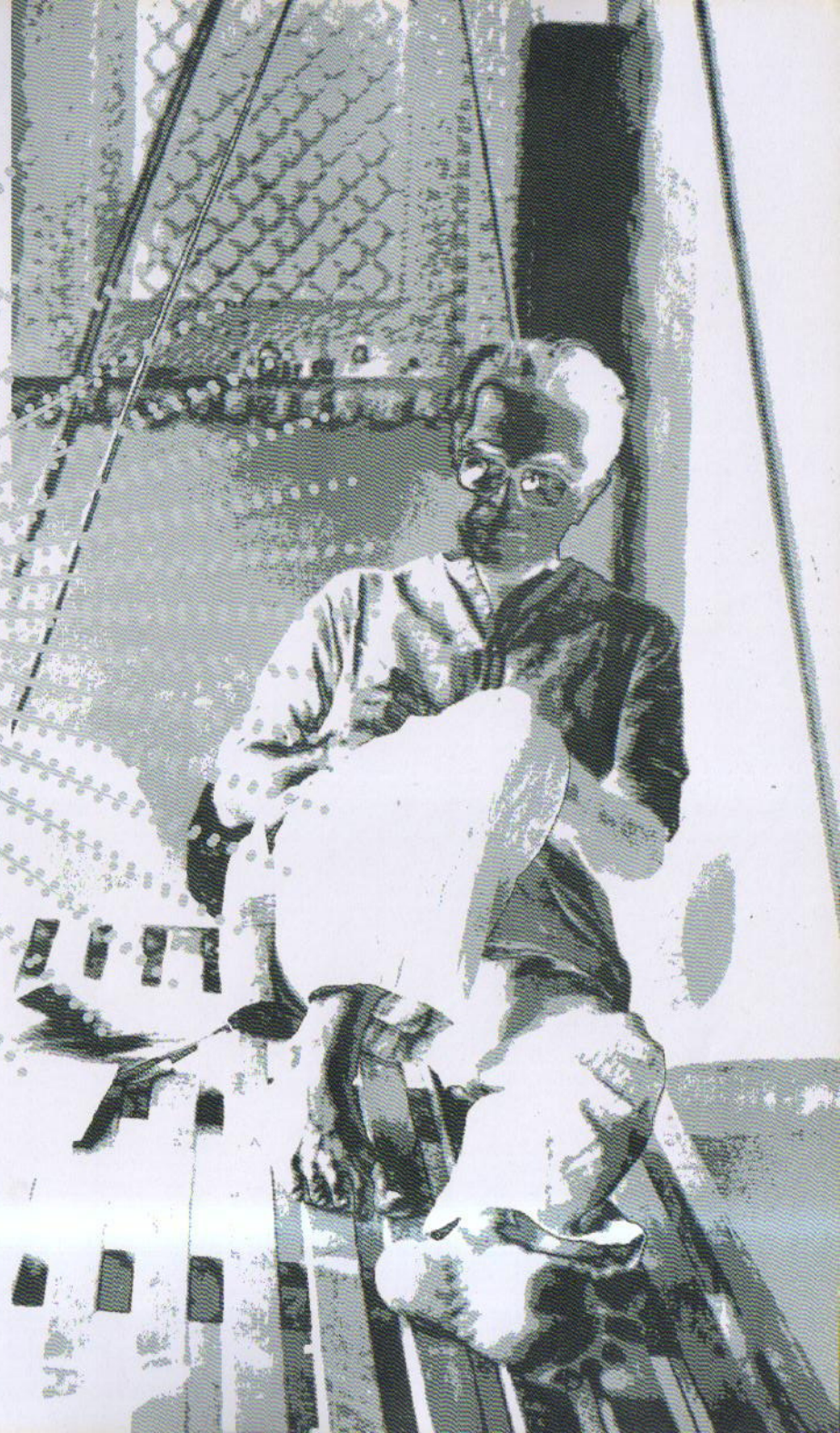
After Haku Shah graduated from Baroda School of Art he went back to his village to teach art at a school near the ashram. Here, he combined his formal art training with his close study of folk and tribal art to set up unique art lessons for children. "We did drawing and painting but with a different outlook. During exams the students had to decorate one corner of our school using materials they had either made themselves or found. They used old bricks, mud, grass, bamboo, flowers and many other objects. In a way these were probably the first installations of their kind. No marks were given and everyone who participated passed". Haku Shah's art students had another fascinating project. They built a house with their own hands along with the local craftsmen." This building process was used as a teaching tool



not just for art but for science, maths and geography lessons too." Haku Shah recalls how excited and thrilled the students were when they saw the house they had built emerge gradually out of nothing. "When the house was finally ready we decorated it with leaves, flowers and painting and everyone who had taken part in the building process was invited to come and celebrate with music and dancing. Suddenly I realised we had forgotten one thing. There were two donkeys who had also helped and we had forgotten to include them in our celebrations. We called them in and put garlands round their necks," said Haku Shah, laughing.

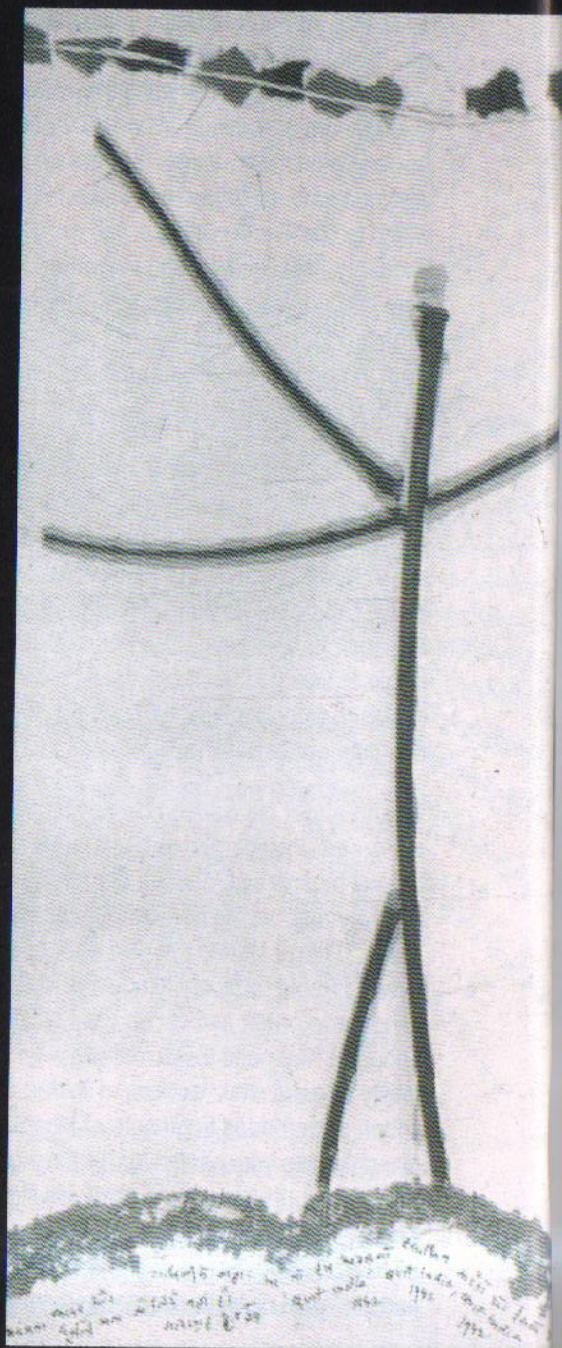
Haku Shah has travelled all over the world, holding workshops in various art institutions. In each city he uses a single element as a theme for his workshops; it was the sun in Madras, the river in Kerala and hands at the Rhode Island School of Design. "Students have to create painting, sculpture, drama, songs and poetry using only this single element. I often use waste material too like boxes, leaves, bamboo so that we learn to create something beautiful out of nothing."

Talking about his work on display, Haku Shah, who received a Padma Shri in 1981, says he initially found it difficult to portray Mahatma Gandhi's values and teaching in a way that would be perfectly balanced visually and in spirit. "Then I started thinking about the materials Bapuji used. Simple, ordinary things like khadi cloth, neem twigs, handmade paper and cotton yarn which he spun himself. Though I had used these materials for the first time I felt totally at ease while working. I folded the paper, tore the cotton yarn, added fragments of Khadi, used stamps. Gandhiji was very careful about saving bits of paper and recycling it. I have tried to show his strength, his simplicity. As an artist I like to speak softly. Art does not have to shout to be heard." Haku Shah's works speak of simplicity and silence and the white on white glows with quiet strength.

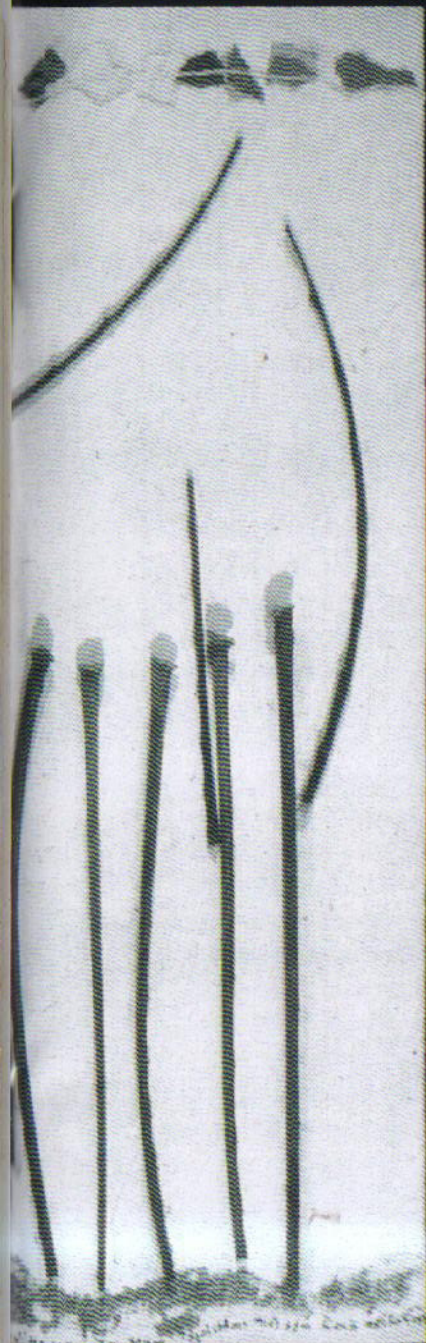




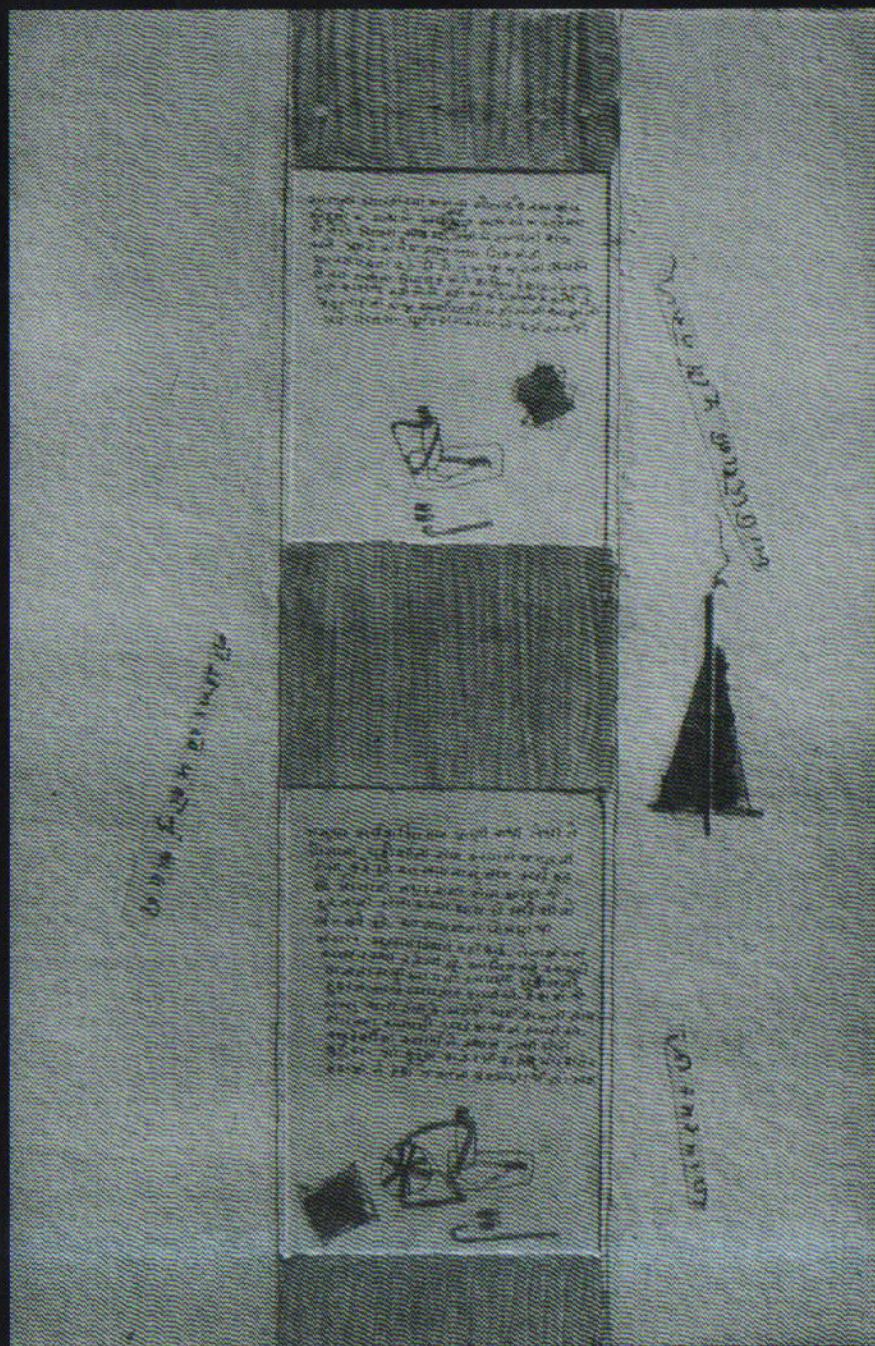
Haku Shah 'Salt March' 1996
mixed media 29.5 x 21.5 cm



Haku Shah 'Quit India' 1996
mixed media 31 x 22 cm



Gandhi Through My Eyes



Haku Shah 'Manush' 1996
mixed media 32 x 20 cm

FROM

EMPIRE to EMPORIUM



Curated by Emma Tarlo

INTRODUCTION

12/ **Walk through the streets of any major Indian city today** and you are likely to encounter a complex patchwork of polyester, terylene, rayon and acrylic, interspersed with fragments of cotton, silk or wool. Try to fathom which of these fragments are of khadi (cloth hand-woven from hand-spun yarn) and you are likely to find yourself scanning the horizons further. Eventually you will spot some; perhaps in the form of a "Gandhi cap" on the head of a labourer, merchant or Brahman; or in the form of a coloured khadi kurta (tunic) on the back of a student, artist or journalist. You might also spot a patch of white khadi-identifiable as a politician - partially obscured by his entourage of bodyguards. But the chances are that it is only when you enter the protected realm of the khadi emporium that khadi will become visually dominant, and that even there it has to compete with a strange variety of synthetics.

Behind these various modern-day repositories of khadi there lies a story; a story so familiar in its general outline that its richness and diversity tend to be forgotten. Like a neglected piece of khadi in the musty emporium, the story at first seems flat and lifeless. But just as the cloth, when examined more closely, is rich in texture, so the story of khadi weaves a complex tale, challenging old stereotypes as it leads us through the twists and turns of history.

This is not to argue that there is only one story or only one way of telling it. Like all stories, the story of khadi is created through its narration. Some might have chosen to pick up different threads, perhaps putting the emphasis on the aesthetics of the cloth or on the techniques of hand-spinning and weaving. The particular thread followed here leads us on a historic journey from the days before khadi came to occupy a central role in challenging the British empire to today, when it lies neglected on the emporium shelf. It is a journey from past to present, but since the past can only be understood through the present, it is also about the here and now. And so contemporary interventions assert their presence throughout this exhibition - sometimes in the form of a motor bike helmet, sometimes in the form of a denim backdrop or a little girl in a synthetic dress and plastic shoes. When one viewer queried, "*What have synthetic dresses and plastic got to do with khadi?*" she had, of course, got the point. The India of the present bears little resemblance to the India once envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi and the khadi-clad freedom fighters, and this exhibition invites us to consider why.

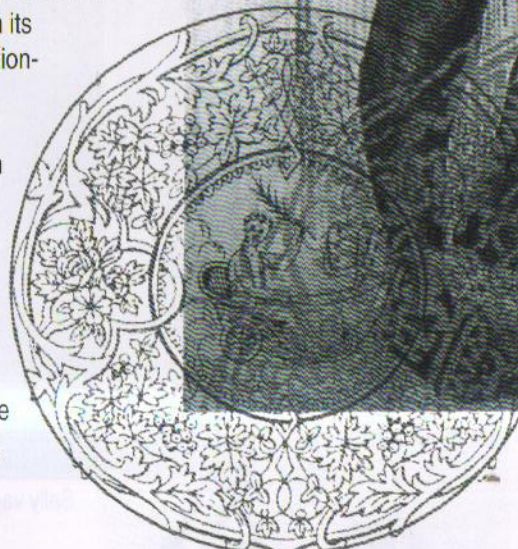
One point of entry for considering such a question is a popular poster showing Bharat Mata distributing appropriate symbols to the founders of the newly independent nation. The poster

probably dates from around the 1950s and can be read as a portrait of three different faces of the freedom struggle. Gandhi, dressed in a khadi dhoti and shawl, receives a charkha (spinning wheel), symbol of self sufficiency and non-violence. It is an image we are used to seeing in isolation but here it is set in relief by the presence of Subhash Chandra Bose, dressed in the military uniform of the Indian National Army and reaching out for the sword - a weapon which visually challenges the supremacy of the humble charkha. Finally on the right kneels Jawaharlal Nehru, dressed in more stylish khadi outfit, receiving the new national flag in which the spinning wheel motif has been replaced by the Ashok Chakra - a wheel that spins but no longer produces thread. It is, in a sense, a poster which puts both khadi and the charkha in perspective - revealing that despite their importance in the freedom struggle, they nonetheless, represented only one facet of it - a facet which united many in the 1920s, 30s and 40s but by no means all. It is within this framework that we ask you to consider the story of khadi.

But first - a simple question. What is khadi? The answer may seem all too obvious but in an era when we are offered "polyester-khadi" in khadi emporia and when mills manufacture something called "minister's khadi" - nothing can be assumed. Nor was it ever a straight-forward question in heterogeneous India with its diversity of languages and textile traditions. Conventionally the term khadi (or khaddar) was widely used in north and central India to refer to certain varieties of coarse cotton cloth hand-woven from hand-spun yarn. It was the cloth typically worn by peasant and artisan groups in the pre-industrial era. In the 1920s Gandhi reintroduced the stipulation that "pure khadi" must be hand woven from natural fibres using hand-spun yarn, and this is the definition that still pertains today. If you are wondering how "polyester khadi" fits the agenda, the answer is that it doesn't. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission classifies it, not as "khadi", but as a "Village industry".



"Captain
Johnstone,
with his
total liberty
and tact, has
clothed 2000
naked
savages, and
has succeeded
in inducing
them to wear
the
santal's
clothing."



*Women of the Jaung tribe in leaf dress.
Courtesy of School of Oriental & African Studies*

TRADE MARK
RP No 27223

the MAHATMA as the clothing designer of the nation

by Emma Tarlo

Gandhi's contribution to these debates lay not so much in the originality of his ideas as in his ability to enact them. As someone who had himself abandoned local Indian clothes in favour of Western dress, he comprehended the nature of existing sartorial anxiety, and by gradually stripping off "the tinsel splendours" of Western civilisation in favour of simple Indian clothes, he made his own body a site for national debate and an example for others to follow. When in 1915, he staged his dramatic return from South Africa by wearing an adaptation of Gujarati peasant dress, his clothes were still made from Indian mill-cloth. But Gandhi would not rest content until his clothes were hand-woven from hand-spun yarn. To him, khadi was more than just cloth; it was the embodiment of an ideal. It symbolised, not only freedom from the yoke of colonialism but also economic self-sufficiency, political independence, spiritual humility, national integrity,

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Sally van Heyzen 'Untitled' oil on canvas



and the embracing of non-violence. Through hand-spinning, Indians were to regain their autonomy. Meanwhile khadi was to become the national dress of India, symbolising not only the struggle for independence but also the state of being independent.

The power of khadi as a political symbol lay in the fact that since everyone wore some form of clothing, everyone had the opportunity, or as Gandhi saw it, the duty to participate in the freedom movement by spinning yarn and wearing khadi. And since this was traditionally the cloth of the peasant, artisan and tribal rather than the Indian elite, its potential wearers were in theory as numerous as the Indian population itself. Khadi and the charkha were able to forge the previously missing links between the personal and the political, hereby encouraging a new range of actors onto the political stage. Many women and children previously alienated from mainstream social and political movements, lent their support to the khadi campaign which clearly made sense in relation to their personal and domestic lives.

15/

By 1918, Gandhi was wearing genuine khadi in simple Indian styles and in 1920, the year the India National Congress began promoting hand-spinning and weaving as a counterpart to the boycott of foreign cloth, he took a pledge to wear khadi for the rest of his life. One year later, in the hope of speeding up the non co-operation process he reduced his clothing to a mere "loincloth" (really short dhoti). In so doing, he visually exposed Indian poverty and nakedness whilst simultaneously suggesting its resolution through the act of hand-spinning and the wearing of khadi. In this sense the sartorial experiments of a single man came to physically embody the trials of a nation struggling for its freedom.

MAZ'ENETHOLE!

The ANC Archives, in conjunction with the Durban Art Gallery, is proud to exhibit a selection from the Mandela Collection which occupies a significant place in the political and cultural history of the African National Congress and South Africa. This exhibition is symbolic of the momentous changes that continue to sweep across our country. The fact that these exhibits form part of the much larger Presidential Gift and ANC Archival Collections bears testimony to the greatness of our President and to the respect he commands nationally and internationally. Gifts presented to Madiba have come from different corners of the world indicating that the admiration for President Mandela extends beyond our borders. Such gestures have been undertaken not only with a sense of love but also with an acknowledgement of his heroic struggle to secure our freedom. This collection therefore holds a place of pride in our country and gives texture to the history of struggle in South Africa which is inextricably linked to the history of Madiba. Given these perceptions, we consider it an honour to exalt the unique qualities of our President through the holding of this exhibition.

The Mandela Collection also represents an essential component of our cultural heritage which has suffered neglect for far too long. Culture has been employed as a weapon by all sides during the apartheid years - as a weapon of oppression by the government, and as a weapon of resistance by the liberation movements. Prompted by such strategies, our archives have seized the initiative to employ it as a weapon yet again but this time as a weapon to inform, empower all South Africans, to promote the vibrancy of our history and the history of Madiba.

The exhibition will therefore speak not only to those who recognise the importance of such developments, but also to those who recognise the need to contribute to reconstruction, reconciliation and national unity in South Africa. We invite you to immerse yourself in this visual celebration of one of the greatest lives to have touched the 20th century, a man who has given hope and inspiration not only to all South Africans but to people all over the world.

Narissa Ramdhani
Head: ANC Archives





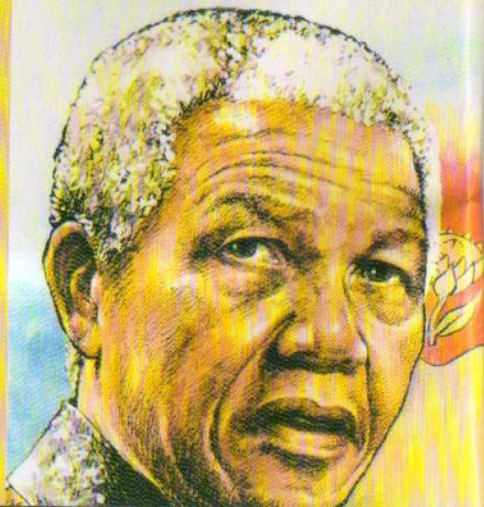
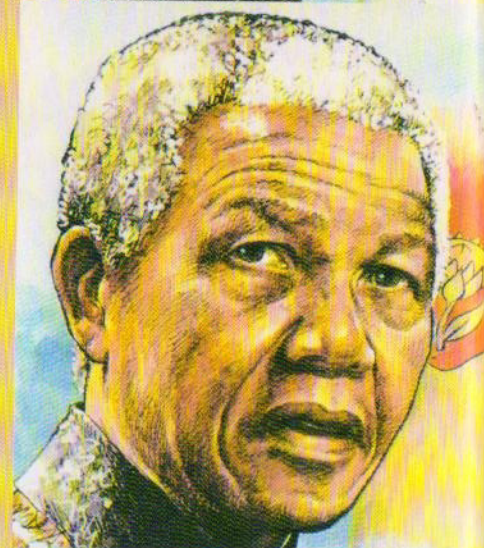
Lidi 'A man among men' 1996 mixed media

Katrina Turok 'Mandela on Robben Island' 1994 colour photograph



Above: Tony Mo-young 'Brixton celebrates' water colour on paper
 Right: (detail) Mynderd Vosloo 'Honorary citizenship of Heidelberg' water colour
 Far right: 'Back view of Mandela and friends' B/W photograph

MAZ'ENF + HOLF!

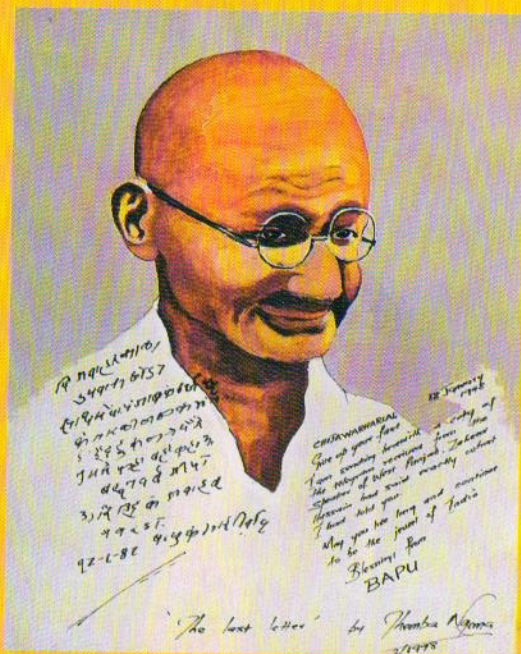
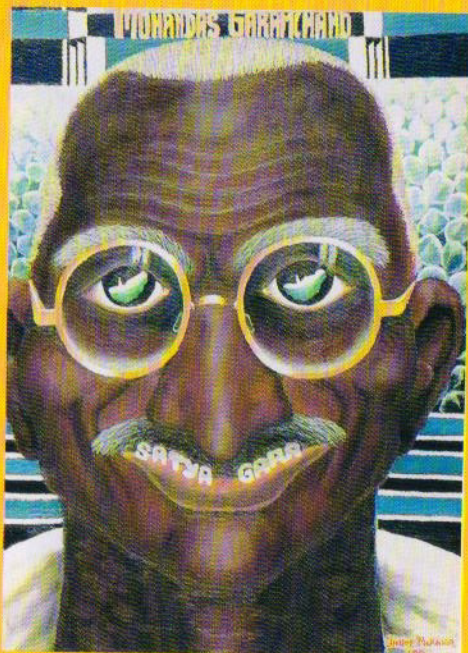




Revisiting Gandhi

by Uma Prakash - Guest Curator

20/



"All true art is thus the expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only insofar as they are the expression of the spirit of man".

Gandhi in Young India Nov. 13 1927

Above left: Trevor Makhoba 'Untitled' oil on paper

Above right: Themba Ngema 'The last letter' water colour

Right: (detail) Pascale Chandler 'The Builders' oil on board





The Utsav or festivity at the Durban Art Gallery is a celebration of freedom. It is a tribute to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Nelson Mandela who fought selflessly for the independence of their countries against colonisation and racial discrimination. Their courage and determination overcame severe hardships and opposition during their struggles in India and South Africa. The twentieth century pays them homage as two great leaders whose quest for freedom was relentless.

We pay tribute with an exhibition in a visual language of contemporary art called "Revisiting Gandhi" by South African artists. This will be shown together with Mandela's portraits, Haku Shah's minimalistic exhibition on Gandhi's philosophy and a creative Khadi display.

For "Revisiting Gandhi" there was great enthusiasm among South African artists as they interpreted their concepts of the

Mahatma. They have tried to capture his philosophy of truth, self-reliance and simplicity. An outlook relevant in today's world. Working with the artists towards the exhibition was a rewarding experience as each artist went into Gandhi's historical background and created art works of new visions and understanding in a multicultural expression.

Gandhi transgressed the boundaries between the two nations and united them with the same ideals and values. He once said '*All true art is thus the expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only insofar as they are the expression of the spirit of man*'.

South African artists have focused on Gandhi's teachings of **Ahimsa** or non-violence and **Satya-graha**, the force of truth which became the basis of his passive resistance philosophy. These were his weapons in his struggle for freedom and equality in South Africa and India.

Some artists were so inspired they have incorporated his teachings in their art works like Trevor Makhoba, Stephanie Churton, Nevin Anghar, Andrew Verster and Vedant Nanackchand. Pascale Chandler captures Gandhi's simplicity which was his strength together with his principled approach. Themba Ngema's Gandhi holds up his last letter and Chandra Naidoo's seizes the meditative expression on the Mahatma's face. Aidan Walsh has skilfully painted Gandhi's house in Johannesburg and Hilton Gaza has sculptured a bust of Gandhi.

Premi Chakravarthi's "Have things changed?" and "Aurat" by Asia Swaleh questions the viewer. George Msimang and Joseph Manana have depicted different moods of Gandhi.

The works produced for this exhibition are a homage to the great man by artists of diverse cultures who have united as one endorsing the spirit of the New South Africa

It is a product of an alliance of human minds with a creative direction that gives UTSAV a truly international stature. The paintings feature portraits of Gandhi and relevant scenes and images of South Africa and India. Our cultures have been connected in a prevailing language of contemporary art. The Mahatma served his political and spiritual apprenticeship in South Africa. In April 1997 The Freedom of the City of Pietermaritzburg was given to Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. 1998 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Gandhi. We commemorate this occasion by 'Revisiting Gandhi'.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Porbanadar, India on 2 October 1869 and assassinated on 30 January 1948. He studied law in Britain and after his return to India he came to South Africa to undertake legal work for some of the Indian traders. The turning point of his career was an ugly racial incident in a train which motivated him to fight for justice. He spent twenty one years in South Africa upholding the cause of human rights. He founded the Phoenix Settlement in Durban and Tolstoy Farm in Johannesburg. He returned to India and led the nation in their battle for Independence. I can humbly state that Gandhi's spirit was present on every occasion in curating this exhibition.

artists Quotes

'Words for Gandhi, song for Ahimsa-Satyagarha'

You've taught us that works uttered with warmth and love can be stronger than enemies

That silence can move with the force of whirlwinds of love

The inner peace is the army of non-violence

The spirit you planted on our soil oozes out of every corner soon to bloom

We celebrate creations.

 Pitika Ntuli


"Satyagraha is fundamental to Art. It is the force of Truth which celebrates humanity, resists oppression and engenders respect for freedom. May it continue to inspire human progress through the Arts".

 Vedant Nanackchand

"The humble wheelbarrow is used to symbolise the spirituality and compassion that Gandhi brought to all humankind, the hands embrace peace, and the colours celebrate the richness of Indian culture".

 Pascale Chandler

"Mahatma Gandhi, through his Passive Resistance campaign, showed the world that peaceful negotiation was not an alternative but the only right way of solving socio-political issues for freedom and the peaceful negotiation that led to South Africa's new dispensation bears testimony to what Mahatma Gandhi advocated. He is not only an Indian hero but everybody's hero ... our hero".

 Themba Ngema

"Painting for this exhibition brought back memories of my grandmother and her times as she was involved with the Passive Resistance movement. She went to prison for the cause. As a child I lived with her and remember all the experiences she narrated to us. We were aware of his teachings and admired him".

 Rani Pillay

"I am attracted to the man because of his contradictions: the saint with human failings: so unlike the saints I was brought up with. And when I saw his house in Troyeville I felt it had some kind of presence. Only after my initial sketches did I discover that he had lived there: an unusually grand place for a saint".

 Aidan Walsh


"I think Gandhi is a hero and was a very important man in South African politics. I wrote Satya-Graha or force of truth on the painting because he was non-violent. I don't know much about him except from books. We were not around when he was alive but we respect him and his philosophy".

 Trevor Makhoba

"Left wing artists do not produce images for their own sake, they also try to make an ideological political intervention in society, with reaching and influencing an audience. My portrait of Gandhi represents a youthful Gandhi and symbolises his quest to highlight social contradictions and injustices to represent the interests and viewpoint of the exploited and the underprivileged. As a monumental image within the context of the exhibition gallery, I intend for it to serve to educate and unsettle a predominantly middle-class audience of fine arts".

 Niven Anghar

"The idea of self reliance strikes a chord. Believing that each single person can make a difference is a gentle defiance against the tyranny of uniformity. To take charge of one's own life is to accept responsibility. The reverse, allowing someone else to make the decisions kills creativity, imagination and life itself".

 Andrew Verster

List of contributing artists:

Faiza Galdhari
Sherene Timol
Premi Chakravarthi
Asiya Swaleh
Niven Anghar
Lallitha Jawahirilal
Trevor Makhoba
Themba Ngema
Uma Prakash
Carey-Ann May
Alistair Mclachlan
Yusuf Vahed
Andrew Verster
Glynis Whittaker
Lesley Magwood Fraser
Sally Van Heyzen
Stephanie Churton
Selvan Naidoo
Lisa Van Wyk
Pascale Chandler
Rani Pillay
M.V.Naidoo
Kuben Pillay
K.Munsamy
Hannah Lurie
Marianne Meijer
Reshada Crouse
Vedant Nanackchand
Clive Pillay
Hilton Gaza
Nirupa Sing
Aidan Walsh
Jeremy Wafer
Chandra Naidoo
Bronwen Findlay
Pitika Ntuli
Nanda Sooben
Dr Fatima Meer

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Uma Prakash

Dolly Narang

Vedant Nanackchand

Sumant Jaykrishnan

Emma Tarlo

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Bulbul Sharma

Phillip de Waal

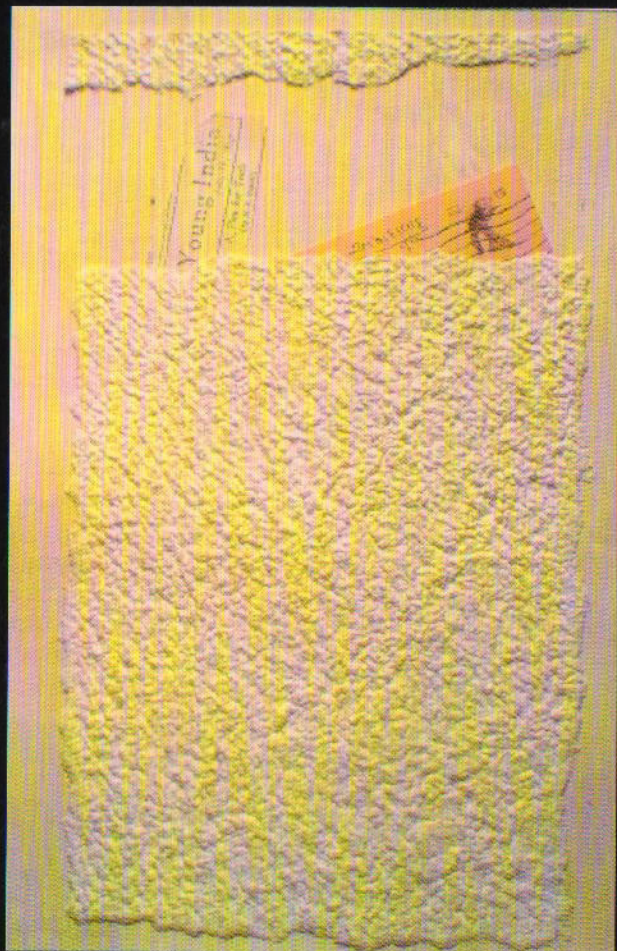
Ela Gandhi

Professor G.N. Moodley

Contributing Artists

Siwela Sonke Dance Company

Staff of the Durban Art Gallery



Above: Haku Shah "Bapu's bag" mixed media
 Right: Sumant Jayakrishnan 'Gandhi's Dilemma' installation
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 and Yusuf Vahed

