



Nathdwara Paintings from the Anil Relia Collection

The Portal to Shrinathji

Kalyan Krishna

Kay Talwar

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- Anil Relia's impressive collection of Nathdwara paintings and sketches displays the fine quality of artistry engaged in the service of Shrinathji
- The painters acted as story tellers by recounting the exploits of Krishna while also documenting important historical events and personages at the Nathdwara temple, Rajasthan
- The scholarly insights of distinguished art historians Kalyan Krishna and Kay Talwar have enriched this authoritative and engaging catalog

Nathdwara, located in the Aravalli Hills of Rajasthan, is home to Shrinathji, a 15th-century manifestation of the child-god Krishna holding up Mount Govardhan. Since the establishment of the haveli (temple mansion) in 1671, artists have flocked to the sacred town to adorn the walls where Shrinathji dwells with painted cloth hangings as well as to provide painted icons for the pilgrimage trade. At one time there were hundreds of artists in the service of Shrinathji.

This catalog explores Anil Relia's comprehensive collection of Nathdwara paintings and sketches, celebrating the wide-ranging talents of various artists. The painters are creators of icons and storytellers of Krishna's exploits. Krishna lives in their everyday lives permeating their thoughts and guiding their brushes. At the same time, they record important events in temple history and portraits of the people who participated in these affairs.

The paintings that document festivals adhere to a traditional hieratic style, but the artist displays a freer hand in telling the exploits of Krishna. A prominent artist showcased in this collection is Ghasiram Hardev Sharma, a master draughtsman with a penchant for naturalism. He influenced a whole generation of 20th-century artists and is still held in high esteem.

Kalyan Krishna was Professor and Head of the Department of History of Art at Banaras Hindu University (BHU). His Ph.D. was on Mughal Painting of the Akbar Period from BHU. Formerly Krishna was a Fulbright Teaching Fellow at the University of Syracuse, New York, and Curator at the Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad. Among the major publications that he has co-authored are *Indian Costumes in the Collection of the Calico Museum of Textiles* and *Gates of the Lord: The Tradition of Krishna Painting*. Krishna is a follower of Pushti Marg.

Kay Talwar holds an MA in Art History from the University of Michigan. She has co-authored with Kalyan Krishna *Indian Pigment Paintings on Cloth, Calico Museum of Textiles*, Ahmedabad and *In Adoration of Krishna: Pichhwais for Shrinathji, TAPI Collection*, Surat. For many years she has been involved in the Indian community of Los Angeles, promoting and supporting Indian art and cultural activities. She was Chairman of the Southern Asian Art Council at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art for six years.