

## CONTRIBUTION OF K C ARYAN IN THE SPIRITUAL GLORY OF INDIAN ARTEFACTS

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### ABSTRACT

Indian art has followed codified rules and regulations in respect of the creation of the art forms, even a stone is carved with the belief that satisfy our spiritual needs. Indian art revolves around the inner breath or prana Shakti. Our customs are linked with them. Kishan Chand Aryan a man of clear vision who contributed his life cycle in search for the age old culture, heritage and tradition India had preserved in its artefacts, an art collector and preserver for a life time. But the misery lies in the fact that such a visionary was left in the darkness and forgotten as an ordinary man. The relevance of this research is to revive the importance of these artefacts. Religious belief which is the core ingredient of Indian art is showcased in these artefacts. In a long time phrase Aryan's art proved to be a discovery, an emotion and in conscious efforts in research and meditation. These artefacts have inner breath and fragrance to be smelled and cherished. Thousands of paintings, miniatures, sculptures wooden and metal both and rare objects, vassals were collected by him. Hanuman masks made by the deft hands of common, everyday people, the tantric paintings of Hanuman, commonly known as the patakas in Jodhpur, These paintings were done by pujaris from Jodhpur and not by painters in a conventional manner. They are so vibrant and have now become extinct. No less exquisite are Mohras from Himachal Pradesh, these artefacts are on the verge of extinction which needs to be bring in limelight. The ideas lie in giving relevant recognition to such a versatile personality.

**Key words:** Artefacts, Mohras, Pataka Paintings

### INTRODUCTION

Kishan Chand Aryan is a known name in the field of art. He was a man of clear vision who wanted to contribute his life cycle in search for the age old culture, heritage and tradition India had preserved in it's artefacts. The study of this field was vast which made him an art collector and preserver for a life time. we are lucky enough that the documentation of all his journeys are with us as textual sources which we art students and scholars study as valuable guides. As an artist, art historian and art collector he has come up as a true guide. He contributed in the modern art scenario with the introduction of mediums such as collage and metal assemblages. He was a skilled artist since childhood but had to face many hardships to establish himself as a master in this field. During his stay at Lahore he comes up as a skilled graphic designer. Many more such endeavors are associated to him, but the misery lies in the fact that such a visionary was left in the darkness and forgotten as an ordinary man. The museum of folk and tribal art is also in a neglected state, which needs restoration and support. Through this study I have tried to touch all the fields he was associated with. Lot more can be done in this context. The ideas lies in giving relevant recognition to such a versatile person, it's going to be a little effort. Through this research many

facts have been put in lime light, which were ignored by art fraternity. In the study of works by K C Aryan one need to be patient enough to bare the scarcity of material available on the topic, because not much has been written about him he ever came into limelight. He worked hard tirelessly throughout his life but was never in the glamorous world and in search for name and fame rather he wanted to devote time in true search of the valuable art culture India inherited. (Figure I)

The life story of K.C. Aryan seems to be full of adventures and miracles one which has all the sweet and bitter moment of true life journey. One would feel immensely excited while reading journey of such vibrant and versatile artist. One who has devoted his whole life in collecting, conserving, artefacts and most importantly working in the field of art. He comes across us like an open book nothing is hidden to a reader and we pay right amount of homage to such a great personality. He was self made, self taught and self trained man who has become a source of inspiration for us. He inspires us and put in an urge to work tirelessly in the art field.

K.C. Aryan was born in the year of the horrendous massacre of Jallianwala Bagh, at Kucha Ardasia, Amritsar on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1919 in an ordinary family. The family draws its inheritance back to Iran. They travelled across Afghanistan and spent nearly six centuries. Finally landed in India. K.C. Aryan inherited his skill in art from his father who was a gifted artist, an aesthetically inclined and skilled person. He was adept at painting in Kangra Qalam. He was equally proficient at painting and repousse technique. This skill can be seen in the canopies which are displayed in the golden temples Amritsar, only on Guru Gobind Singh's birthday. One work which I as a scholar have come across by him which I saw during an exhibition at IGNCA is a hanuman figure with the mountain lift in his hand; this scene comes from the epic Ramayana. (Figure 3)

We get the reference of master artist Malla Ram, who was the Guru of K.C. Aryan's older brother, Heera Lal Aryan. He has also trained the well known Punjabi artist S.G. Thakur Singh and Sobha Singh. Mother Thakur Devi and Father Harnam Dass were from the same place but it's believed that they were of Iranian inheritance they left the place with Zoroastrians. They moved to Afghanistan and were settled for next six centuries. They came to Lahore and moved to Amritsar due to lack of patronage and commission work of painting.

This profession was associated with them from many years it was a means of livelihood for the family moreover it was the tradition of family to produce the works and skill which they invented by themselves. They were known for mixing gold color in meenakari colors into painting. His grandfather was the last person to known this

technique. His Father Harnam Dass was excellent and proficient artist in kangra Qalam he was creative, expert, talented and an artist of higher intellect. He had full control over his expertise. He was known for his repousse technique with which he has expressed human emotion. But some traces can be seen at golden temple domes. From an adolescent age he had keen interest in drawing and painting. It's believed that creativity comes with a sense of responsibility. He was conscious of his inherited values towards the field of art. K.C. Aryan had to face many ups and down after his mother left him to destiny at the tender age of one and a half his father was there for him. He was a shy child. He was sent to school. His teachers were very impressed with his punctual behavior and good skill in learning. His handwriting once amazed his principal and his class in-charge and his father was advised then to have greater focus on his life and future. He got an opportunity to work upon his talent and bring honor to his name. He was a precious child to his father. But the irony of the fate was again waiting for him. He came with weak eye sight in the eight standards so get advised to get a pair of spectacles. Life at that time was not as easy as these day .He was advised to discontinue his studies which would have a bad effect on his vision and health. His father always wanted him to be a businessman and he started his new career as a helper for grocer. But was not satisfied with what he was doing his maternal uncle once visited him and made him clear about the vision of successful life so he decided to revolt. So, He joined his brother at the shop, where gold ornaments were made .He could spend enough time in his artistic endeavors. The ambience at his home was extremely conducive to his artistic temperament .Art had been their family vocation for many generations.”The love for line and color ran through my blood,” he says<sup>1</sup>.

India is a land of culture and tradition. We celebrate all the festivals as a life cycle. These festivals were the true inspiration at the early age for this mature artist at the Amritsar the contributed a deal to his artistic training and development. The Krishna Janamashtami was such a event celebrated on high note his life story illustration were made by the family with great ease the cutouts with high level decoration provided inner satisfaction as an artist to Aryan. There ‘Hindolas’ were beautifully set in the background such as hills ,the river Yamuna , the groves of the banana trees, plants and flowers. He was happy to dabble in paint during this festive season.

His father himself an artist was a disciple of Bawa, who was the last paint to work in kangra style, he used to recount stories about traditional artists and artisans of Amritsar. K.C. Aryan wanted to go one step further, but his father, a Chitera believed

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1K C Aryan , Sadhna kala Yatra.(New Delhi:Rekha prakashan,2000),12.

that in the absence of patronage he saw no prospects for the profession he had seen many of the professional artists starving. The gloomy prospect of a life full of struggle and hardship.

However he got a chance in his professional life in 1934, Shahji<sup>1</sup> who was a known Muslim painter from Lahore visited his brother. He needed a helping hand to paint the drop scenes for the Rama Club theatre. So K.C.Aryan was sent to give retouches. This theatre line has been lucky for many artists like Kedar Sharma who become a renowned name at Calcutta and Bombay. There works were of huge size up to 20 feet by 36 feet, which gave him renowned confidence. The way Aryan worked on this project with self control and not once did his hand falter, astonished everyone who predicted a promising future for him. But he knows that he had miles to go in this long journey full of adventures. Though he has a family associated with this profession still he was luckily in guidance and direction. He didn't know which way to go. He never had any formal training in art nor was he destined to get one in future, he was entirely a self taught painter. His only assets were hard work, patience and determination that guided him along the path

He started his professional career as graphics designer. He worked under Niranjana Singh who employed him in his printing press not as an artist but on daily wages. Fine art was still miles and miles away. This left him with plenty of time to practice life study and the art of landscape making. He had put in all the efforts working feverishly day and night exploring the technical mysteries of western painting through trial and error. Nature was his only companion. He was still at a loss to comprehend the secrets of composition, perspective rules and other pictorial technicalities.

He visited Delhi, Jaipur, Agra, Indore .At Bombay he had a chance to visit J.J. School of Arts. He had the opportunity to see live nude model which was a rare chance in his social setup. He was offered a scholarship but his father didn't like the idea to live in that place. After coming back to Amritsar, he could not remain unaffected by the experiences he had in his journey. He made up his mind to move to Lahore which was a place of utmost talent at the time. All the artists, musicians and dancer's poets and literatures were interested to work in there.

As an artist we always strive for a means of communication with which we can express our inner thoughts, feeling and emotions. One should break all the rules traditions and technical boundaries to free oneself and express the true emotions. From the very beginning Aryan was person of humble attitude with not even a single

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<sup>1</sup> ibid,14.

ting of pride. He has always been a student in true sense, keen to learn from each one who came across as a teacher. Even when he was at the peak of his career he was very down to earth. He never let the appreciation change him as an intellectual person.

He was a person with the qualities of a saint and his thought process was very much intellectual and full of creativity with meaningful aspects. He was a polite person with sweetness in his heart and perfection in hand. He was an artist in true sense. He was born into an artistic family. He was a gem of a kind person the family didn't, knew that he will cross the boundaries of the country and will bring laurels to the family .

### **SOURCE OF INSPIRATION**

This was his true wealth with which he could smell the fragrance of success and simultaneously he faced the hardships in life. One of the festivals being celebrated at Amritsar was the “Vanara Dance” which was performed by the new born. This was a belief that those couples who were deprived of kids will bring their first blessed child to the temple for the performance of the “Vanara Nritya” All the children had to come up on roads ready in manner with red colored dresses. That kind of scenes had great impact on the creative mind of the artist. There were such colorful festivals which had given long lasting impression to his mind. Which is unforgettable. Not only this he knew all the mythological stories, incidents very well. Hindu temples were decorated with Fresco's which were so creative and attractive. He said himself that he was proud of this inherited culture. We always do in search work , a new direction and vision to showcase the talent we imbibe, we artists travel a lot to take inspirations, so he did many such adventurous trips initially with his father. In 1940 very famous classical dancer Ramgopal came to Amritsar for shows .Aryan had great relaxation with which Ramgopal had performed his skillful dance. The audience used to bow in front of him in a manner of surrender. People were mesmerized with this fact. Aryan came up with a thought that if there are treaties on performing and visual arts then there must be certain rules and regulation for painting, sculpture and art of Architecture as well. He was adamant to gain the knowledge and answer to the questions. He searched for such textual resources. He had come up with his own publishing house with the name of Rekha Prakashan in 1951. We are lucky enough to know that Sadhna Kalayatra and many other books are written by the great master for guiding our path. He went to the libraries, Archives and Archeological sites and decided to establish his own publishing house in the end.

### **VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF K C ARYAN'S WORKS**

In a long time phrase Aryan's art proved to be a discovery, an emotion and in conscious efforts in research and meditation. He not only gave form to his feelings but

also gave inner breath and fragrance to be smelled and cherished throughout. This he could manage only because he was not only an artist but also a writer an art critic and analyst. He visited all over India and was in close contact with the new generation. He was indeed a true inspiration for all the art lovers. He worked hard with the traditional style and technique of Punjab art and excelled in it. Just like literary art, visual arts too provide us with our inner reality<sup>1</sup>.he was inspired from contemporary art and gave a personal touch to it. As Paul Klee a famous western artist has given importance to the content and emotions and provided us with a form of his brush strokes. Aryan too believed that we add personal touch to our paintings with the vigor of our strokes<sup>2</sup>. by this he delivered a message to the coming generation to work and search for an individual style. Due to this impact his works turned out to be towards abstraction.

### **ANALYZING HIS NEW WORKS**

Art has a continuous flow, we cannot stop it. It's a way through which we get aesthetic pleasure. Through meditation focus and devotion one can attain true sense of art. These images provide us with the social structure and frame work of the society at that time. Art is a process with main motive of creation and expression. Artist mind is filled with many thoughts which they try to express through various art forms. its not necessary that they follow a certain style or linked up with any art movement. K C Aryan always tried to deliver some personal, novel and different aspects of art which was the true essence of his works. Aryan had great interest in linear aspects or artforms. He loved to play with line. The rhythmic quality has provided him ample opportunity to express himself. he had great command over line. Which he attained through practice, skill and experience. this was due to his determination. he learnt the art of writing devnagari in block format.

There was a big market of printing at Lahore, he started with the art of calligraphy in Urdu. He also tried his hands upon illustrations and book jacket designing. The very first commissioned work he came up with was titled, "Mincare a Luck Luck". (Figure 7) These books used to be related with history, religion and psychology. The knowledge of these books added to his intellectual level. One needs to be good in imagination to draw illustrations, which Aryan was very skilled at.

In 1941-1943 there were threats of World War II, which resulted in the decrease of any commissioned work so it was very difficult for Aryan to work for his livelihood, so he decided to come back to his home town Amritsar. By this time he was an expert in illustration making. He went back to Lahore in 1943, and this time he worked with

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<sup>1</sup> Ram Manohar Sinha, *contemporary art Lalit kala Akademi* (New Delhi :n.p.march, 1996), 26.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, 28.

sheikh Innayatullah khan. Who was a big name in publishing line. By this time the swadeshi movement had affected my intellectual mind. So was the case with Aryan. He was not happy with the fact that why we Indians are working for foreign names like erose, regel and odan etc. he was the one who rebelled against the tendency of the selection of these foreign names. He said out Indian art is filled and rich with own meaningful symbols. He himself chose the chaitya arch for Rekha Prakashan his own publishing label. He said as a musician cannot leave his sound, same way I cannot part with 'Rekha' he said these lines hold the color and composition at place. Rhythm is the primordial character of line. In 1947 an important phase of partition came to his life, like many others he had to travel to other land of the country for his survival. Aryan too had to leave Lahore. He moved to palampur near kangra with his family and then left that place for Delhi. (Figure 8 ) He had established his studio at dariya ganj. In 1948 he became the part of AIFACS, but soon he realized that he is not meant for this association. With combined efforts of his friend Dinkar Kaushik he formed a group by the name of " Punjabi Chitera", later they came to know that many other artists wanted to be a part of it so the name was changed to "Punjabi Shilpi", and finally the name " Delhi Shilpi Chakra" came t existence. The head office was at Shankar bazaar. They conducted annual art exhibitions from 1949 to 1959. This was a time of great fame and acknowledgement.

### **METAL ASSEMBLAGE**

Artists had freedom of expression through any medium he wants. In 1959 his interests shifted towards metal works. He gave new dimensions to this field. He introduced expressions and movement in his metal assemblages. All his works had beauty and technical qualities. For example Men and Women, in 1959. Aryan tried to impart sensitivity, compassion and affection in this work. He imparted third dimension to his works cubistic approach to his works. He worked on the theme of beggar in 1970. The content is main in this composition. He had given importance to the depth, curves and emotions in his metal works. He had put in a lot of mental efforts to compose these metal works.

### **IMPACT OF ART TEACHER**

Art is a flow which moves from one direction to another. It can reach heights but will not stop .It is like meditation which requires sacrifice and full dedication. We need to connect to oneself and start from a zero point and dip into the flow of thoughts and listen to the voice of our inner feeling to produce a great work of art. Aryan started his journey as a history painter which has influence of F.Matania. He learnt his skills from matania and became expert in the field. His ability, patience, skill and dedication

lead him to devote his life into the “kala Sadhna”. One name which was very important in his life was Fortunino Matania who was an artist at London. Aryan had a good collection of his magazine Britannia and London news, the tattler etc .K.C.Aryan had the entire collection of the magazine from 1902 to 1946, containing the entire record of Matania’s life work .He had the opportunity to meet him in London in 1958. For Aryan, F. Matania was his true guide. He was inspired and trained just by the guidance of his magazines. He met him at his residence in London in 1958.

### **COLLAGE WORK**

He came up with the interest of collage making in 1959. The first once to experiment with the art of collage were cubist artists. After the freedom struggle artists were exploring the abstract styles and collage was an interesting medium. Aryan had used old newspapers and magazines for this with a ting of color to add vibrancy in his collages. He always tried to find out certain forms in the torn out papers. His collage compositions were complex and not easy to understand in first attempt.

### **SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION IN FOLK ART**

more than 40,000 small and big artefacts from paintings, miniatures, sculptures wooden and metal both and rare objects, vassals are preserved there in. over 30 years, a regular Gurugram home has housed a priceless, yet little-known collection of tribal and folk Indian art. Now it’s keepers are looking for a permanent space. By 1984, when KC moved to Gurugram and set up the Museum of Folk and Tribal Art (also sometimes referred to as the Museum of Folk, Tribal, and Neglected Art) at his own residence, the initial focus had broadened to encompass indigenous art from across the country. Gurugram then was far removed from the concrete jungle it is today but, as you push open the Iron Gate to the 500 sq. yard property, you could be forgiven for thinking you have stepped back in time. Past the somewhat unkempt front yard, a 20th century wooden marriage post from Bastar stands at the main door to the house, which can only be visited by prior appointment. Step in, and there are a handful of Himachali votive panels depicting the goddess Durga on the walls, besides variously shaped metal horns used at large gatherings such as the Kullu Dussehra festival. Hanuman masks of all sizes from across South Asia are mounted on the wall facing the front door, three long strides away. (Figure 2) Folk art is unique in its primitiveness, its simplicity, and its naivety, made by the deft hands of common, everyday people. It is something that comes from beyond just imagination, with this efforts k c Aryan had given recognition to those artisans as well.



KC Aryan also noticed the gradual disappearance of many everyday objects he had played with as a child in Amritsar, in undivided Punjab, and later had around him as a young man when he set up his first studio in Lahore in the early 1940s. From rattles and whistles to cymbals and tops, he determined them to be design inheritances from the Indus Valley civilization and made a special trip to Lahore to retrieve some specimens.

“When he set up this place, my father was greatly inspired by the Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum,” Subhashini says. The museum in Pune was set up by a collector, Dinkar Kelkar, in memory of his young son Raja. A tribute to everyday life in India, it showcases writing tools, musical instruments and paintings from the region dating back to the 17th century, and has artefacts from the Peshwa dynasty. In 1975, Kelkar handed over the collection to the Maharashtra government’s department of archaeology.

However, “no one has taken such interest (in KC’s collection),” Subhashini says. Even Delhi-based gallerists like Sunaina Anand, founder-director of Art Alive, which has hosted several exhibitions on folk and tribal art over the years, have not heard of the museum.

Statuettes and panels line the staircase leading up to the second-storey room with the mukhalingas, accessible through a door painted by a Kangra folk artist. Some of the mukhalingas are unpolished. A brass Bhairava form is especially resplendent, while another, more rustic-looking Shiva looks a little dull. Art (of any kind) is usually very fragile. It’s quite a responsibility to maintain it.

### **AMRITSAR BAZAAR PAINTINGS**

Another important section is the Amritsar bazaar school of paintings done by local folk artists from Amritsar and executed by both Hindu and Sikh painters. In one frame, Hanuman leads a chariot carrying Ram and Lakshman in an early 20th century painting. Nobody knows about the great contribution of Amritsar bazaar painters in folk style. They were so spontaneous and important and totally unconventional. Unfortunately those creating them were poor and didn’t have the money to buy mineral and stone colours. They were using aniline colours and would sit without shops or studios on the roadside in Amritsar.(Figure 4)

### **THE PATAKA PAINTINGS FROM JODHPUR**

The late painter KC Aryan was the first to preserve and promote these unknown paintings from Jodhpur. In a rare and interesting portrayal of Hanuman, the allegory-filled central character in the Ramayana, the empty spaces within his silhouette

outlined in black ink can be spotted bearing inscriptions in Arabic and Gujarati. The artwork from the 17th century, has its origins in either UP or Gujarat. The work lends clues on how its painter was a Muslim tantric worshipper of Hanuman. Many similar interesting facets of Hanuman and his varied depictions across the country find their way into the exhibition “Hanuman: The Divine Simian”. “The reason for doing this exhibition is that nobody knows about these works,” says BN Aryan, who has curated the show, which comprises 300 paintings, sculptures and masks centered around Hanuman. Bearing the brunt of time with its frayed edges and black spots, the tantric paintings of Hanuman, commonly known as the patakas in Jodhpur, show Hanuman with 11 hands and stepping onto a demon, reminiscent of the popular depiction of goddess Kali. These large-size paintings were done by pujaris from Jodhpur and not by painters in a conventional manner. They are so vibrant and have now become extinct. (Figure 5)

### **KC ARYAN AN ART COLLECTOR, EVALUATION OF THE FOLK AND TRIBAL ART MUSEUM**

K.C. Aryan’s Home of Folk Art but nothing had prepared me for the actual magnitude of this art treasure tucked away in a non-descript two-storey house of Gurugram when I visited it. Thousands of folk paintings, embroideries, tribal wood and stone carvings, folk and tribal bronzes, priest art (tantrik), litho prints, traditional book covers, folk toys, tribal jewellery, calico printing wooden blocks, papier-mâché masks, card puppets, minor art and utilisation objects lay crammed in four rooms of the two-storey 500-sq yards house. There was barely enough space for its director B.N. Aryan to sleep. This should indeed rank as one of the most outstanding private museums — and also the smallest, most cramped and with virtually no security arrangements worth the name and no insurance either.

These varied creations of artists and artisans were collected by his illustrious father, K.C. Aryan, over 70 years mostly from undivided Punjab, Afghanistan and Swat and many of the items are all but extinct in their places of origin. To that extent, the exhibits are a peep into another era, which has been elbowed out by the march of modernization.

Aryan senior was a top-notch artiste himself, having won the National Award of Lalit Kala Akademi in 1964, besides many other honors. Nobel laureate Octavio Paz had said about him: "Aryan is a contemporary Indian artist successfully welding together the Indianness with the language of modern art and whose contribution to modern art in India will remain memorable for all time to come". He was perhaps the only artist in the country who also wrote 23 books on various unexplored fields of art. Some of

his best-known books are *Encyclopaedia of Indian Art*, *Hanuman: Art Mythology and Folklore*, *Indian Folk Bronzes*, *The Cultural Heritage of Punjab* and *Punjab Murals*.

Besides being a painter, sculptor, story-illustrator, graphic designer and art historian, he was also an art collector who was deeply anguished that many of the folk and traditional art objects of India were facing extinction and he started assiduously collecting them in 1938 despite his limited means. That is how the museum came into being in 1984 and has since been expanded by his four children two sons and two daughters all of whom are committed to art.

Both the daughters hold Ph.D degrees in their respective subjects. The chairperson, Dr Subhashini Aryan, is a renowned art historian with more than 15 books to her credit. She did her Ph.D on the temples of Himachal Pradesh. Dr Anuradha, a trustee and life-member, is a Ph. D in history from JNU and a Fulbright scholar.

Baij Nath Aryan, the director, has travelled widely all over the world for lectures on Indian folk art with more than 50 research papers to his credit published in India and abroad. Gautam Dev Aryan is also a trustee and life-member. Both brothers also run Rekha Prakashan founded by the late K. C. Aryan.

BN some years ago brought from the US a rare Bengali Kantha (wrap or blanket) of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which had found its way to the shelf of a professor of University of Missouri, Columbia, and was there for 30 years.

Of the very many objects in their collection, barely one-third are on display. The rest remain packed in boxes for want of space. Among the oldest exhibits is a stone Mother Goddess figurine from Mathura belonging to the early second century. Most others belong to the period between seventh century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The most eye-catching are Hanumans in various forms and mediums like paintings, stone images, armlets, bronzes, silver pendants, patakas, drawings, embroideries, wood-carvings and dramatic masks etc. (Figure 6)

Equally eye-catching are the artistically made objects of everyday use that are no longer in vogue. For instance, there are iron hemp filters from Rajasthan and Himachali locks called Shaingans. No less exquisite are Mohras from Himachal Pradesh, Shiva heads from North Karnataka, finest phulkaris and embroideries from Punjab (both East and west), Himachal Pradesh and Swat valley.

There are more than 200 intricately made Chamba rumals — some of the finest and largest in the world. In fact, it was K. C. Aryan who brought these to the notice of the

world. Then there are caps, manuscript wrappers, hand fans, rosary covers, *cholis* and coverlets. The aesthetics of these tribal and folk items is unique.

## CONCLUSION

Aryan worked on unexplored areas of Punjab art, architecture and culture and opened avenues for future researchers. If he hadn't written on folk bronzes, paintings and countless other subjects, these objects would have vanished long ago. He had seen people willfully destroying precious objects lying with them. He collected them for posterity.

He discovered and brought into limelight, for the very first time, folk bronzes from Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Orissa and other parts of India and folk paintings from Punjab that had never been collected by anyone. In 1962, Lalit Kala Akademi had commissioned him to copy the fresco paintings of Krishna temple, in Nurpur, Himachal Pradesh, which he did despite fierce opposition from certain vested interests who even threatened to kill him. These were included in his seminal book, *Punjab Murals*. What a pity that in 1991, all these frescos were whitewashed.

Right till his death in 2002 at the age of 83, K. C. Aryan continued pleading with various governments to provide him land at a concessional rate where a suitable building could be constructed to display the objects properly. But that did not move anybody, despite the fact that some embassies were willing to help with funds for building the museum. The same has been the case with B. N. Aryan.

The fruitless struggle has left the Aryans sad and dejected because taking care of such priceless objects is not an easy task and has taken a heavy toll on their personal lives, but there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Their father saved the country's artistic and cultural heritage; it is not certain if his labour of 70 years would survive the vagaries of time. For instance, some objects may wither away because of lack of scientific storage and some may get spoiled because of absence of air-conditioning.

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### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1 Aryan House, The Museum of Folk and Tribal Art

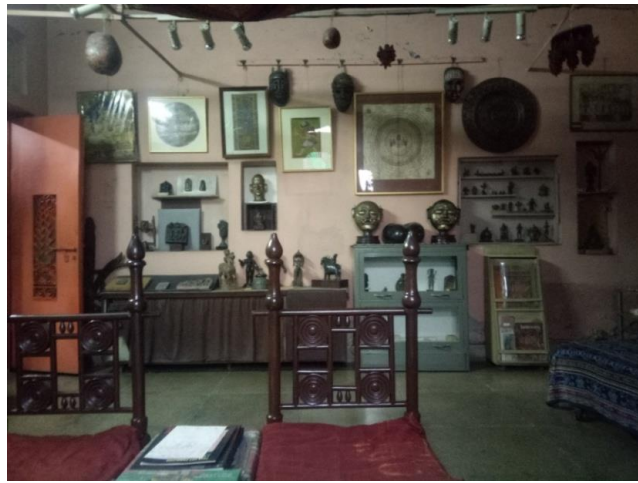


Figure 2 Museum of Folk and Tribal Art



Figure 3 Hanuman



Figure 4 Amritsar Bazaar Paintings



Figure 5 Pataka Painting of Jodhpur by muslim artist



Figure 6 Hanuman Heads from the K C Aryan Collection at the exhibition



Figure 7 first commissioned calligraphy and illustration



Figure 8 Aryan with family at palampur