

Kanchan Chander

This New-Delhi based artist is known for her thought-provoking portrayal of women in her works

FEATURE TRIPAT KALRA

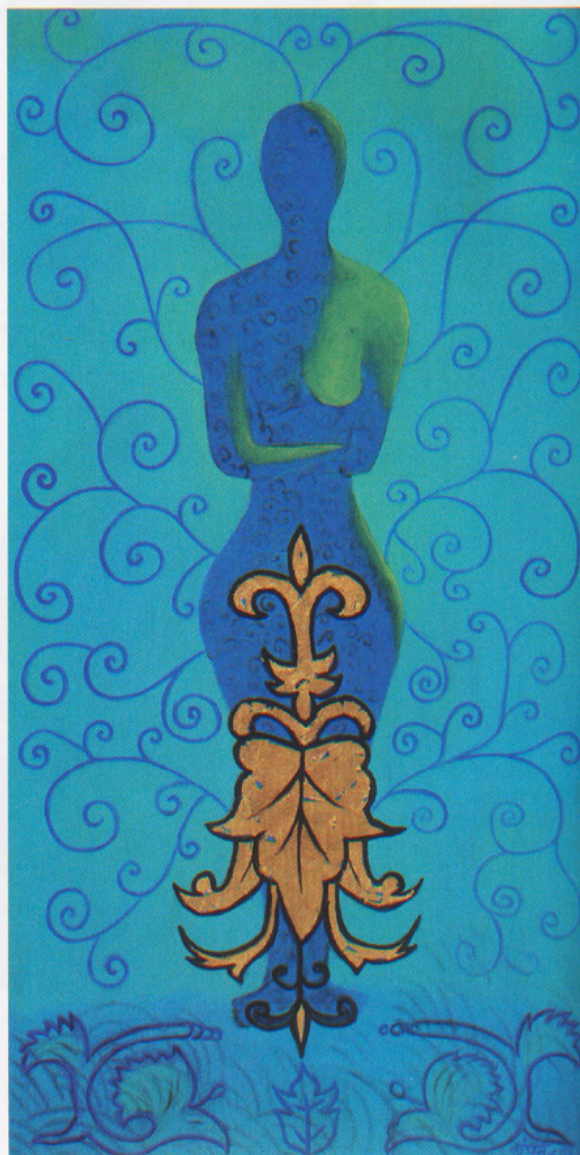


Kanchan Chander is an artist comfortable with most mediums. She is a painter, sculptor, printmaker and teacher. One of the most striking aspects of her work is that she is always keen to experiment and to explore. She explores the multi-layered lives of the new age women.

Kanchan graduated in painting from the Delhi College of Art in 1980, with a short stint at the Kunstochschule, Berlin. It is here that she developed a love for printmaking, a medium that she further pursued at the Santiago College of Art, Chile and at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris. Apart from pursuing her career as an artist, she taught at the Delhi College of Art (1986–2005) and the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi (1990–91).

A turning point in Kanchan's life was a visit to New York in 1997 when she visited an exhibition entitled Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum. Her approach towards painting took a turn, with decorative elements like sequins, lace and beads. Kanchan believes that 'the body is important for the woman; it is a symbol of her identity. Therefore, she enhances this identity through the use of ornamental accessories. For the ordinary woman, adornment is not just making herself attractive in others' eyes but in her own eyes as well; besides, it is also a means of self expression.

Her work celebrates femininity in a non-frivolous way. The work, the execution and thought process are all multi-layered. Her subjects are either modern-day goddesses or inspired by classical figurines of Belur, Khajuraho and Hasan. In recent times, her works have undergone a major change. She has gone back to depicting the full figure of her subjects, though the torso keeps re-appearing in some form, directly or indirectly. Says Kanchan, "I started with torsos as I didn't want to give any specific identity to the woman. For me, the issues that impact women transcend both time and space." Frida Kahlo and Amrita Shergill, Kanchan reveals, have been two great inspirations in her life. The works of all three artists are similar in that they symbolically capture the pain and joy of not just the self as a woman but also as part of a larger history. Kanchan Chander has received many important honours and awards within India and overseas. Her works are part of several prominent collections all over the world.



First exhibited in 2007, the *Motif* is a 2' x 4' oil on canvas. As in most of her works, Kanchan has used ornamental accents even in this painting. She has used metallic leaf foil in this painting. The painting represents the multi-layered persona of a new age woman

BUYING A PAINTING BY KANCHAN? FOLLOW THESE DÉCOR

- TIPS:** ■ Intricately-carved ethnic pieces ■ Metallic finishes
■ Neutral wall finishes