

Frozen in time at the Frieze Masters!

Held in a large sophisticated designer tent in the heart of London's beautiful Regents park, the art fair is now in its 14th year and sells tens and thousands of millions of pounds' worth of art all in just five days. Yes, it was the **Frieze Art fair week in London**, which has become the art event of the year with worlds top art collectors, investors, museum directors and artists flying into London from all over the world.

Its director Victoria Siddall has transformed this mega art event from a hard core commercially success venture into an internationally acclaimed institution with some serious art and finance. As Jennifer Higgin, editor Frieze Masters magazine, said: "Art history isn't carved in stone!"



party, to give our readers a first-hand experience of what he saw and felt or did not.

As you walk in this massive tent, you are taken in by the sheer size and scale of the display areas in the tent at frieze masters, it takes a minute or so to settle in. You cannot help but notice the wealth that surrounds you. VIP guests are draped in designer clothes, dripping with diamonds, dangling expensive hand bags. It's a display of power and wealth, you can't escape it all. And just when you thought you were settling well, you are hit by not one but three massive Picasso original painting all in green! As they would say back home in the USA: "Green is the colour of money". Welcome to the party!

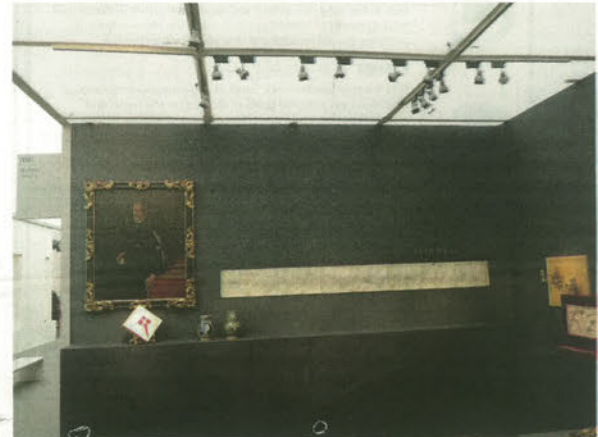
The mood is vibrant and the energy is electrifying, as I pass from one gallery stand to the other, I am struck by the effort that has gone in putting up this spectacular art event. English do things in style.

Just to share the structure of the event: **Frieze "Masters"** is very different in all aspects from **Frieze**. Frieze is in a separate tent in Regents Park and is more contemporary, it's not necessary for



When Tate Modern opened its new wing earlier this year, the facade of the gallery was emblazoned with a sharp yet deceptively simple message: 'Art Changes. We Change'.

Times have changed, but **Anthony Reynolds**, an art historian and critic from the **Contemporary Art Society Inc. New York, USA**, is on time for this mega art



you to make sense of what's put on display at Frieze. You might respect the concept but don't necessarily have to understand it.



Rudigier Art Gallery owners Gertrud and Alexander Rudigier with U. Gadnis

Frieze "masters" is more my style and my area of academic interest. So, Frieze Masters is more about a serious art.

As I have been visiting Frieze for more than 5 years now, I know by experience that you can take in one thing at a time, so this time I decided to do just one or two lanes, considering there are 300 international galleries showing some incredible art.

As I walk pass, I am drawn toward a gallery which has a crowd gathered around its art work. This is not unusual, as Frieze does so called "frieze talks" where artists are invited to talk about their art. I try to catch a glimpse of what's happening at this gallery stall no B13, **Rudiger, Munich**. I can barely see or hear anything, so I gently push my way forward, the English are just too polite and I actually managed to reach the front. Back in NY you will get stared or even snared at, not here its London - a city of etiquettes and grace.

There was a tall elegantly dressed artist talking passionately

about his displayed painting next to a massive portrait. What I hear is as follows "Lope De Vega (pointing to the man in the portrait) was the famous 16th century's Spanish writer, poet and novelist. He was one of the key figures in the Spanish Golden Century of Baroque literature. The sheer volume of his literary output is unequalled, making him one of the most prolific authors in the history of literature along with the famous Cervantes.

As you can see in the portrait he is holding in his hand a letter of appreciation from the Pope. So, when I was taken on a spiritual pilgrimage by my best friend and art curator Miguel Angel Collazo Araujo to the holy city of Santiago de Compostela to study the roots of Spanish **SUN iconography**, I was fortunate to learn about Lope de Vegas spiritual



poems, full of light, radiance, brilliance. It fascinated me deeply, as I had embarked on the study of **SUN In Civilisation** two years ago. His



work was inspiring.

"Santiago has the shrine of Saint James The Great, having one of the most beautiful and magnificent cathedrals. The cross of Saint James, also called as the Santiago cross, is charged with iconic power (pointing out to his painting displayed just below the portrait of Lope de Vega). It became the order of Santiago in the 12th century. Spanish military started exploring the world, following the journey of The SUN. Hence you see the Sun in the painting, encompasses the cross with very atypical Sun rays structure. It's all crush ruby paste on a block of 22k pure Gold", he suddenly stops and a long silence follows...

Who is this artist with such enigmatic presence? The **Rudigier Art Gallery** owner **Gertrud Rudigier**, now in her 70's, steps up and in her very German accent says: "In the past 40 years of my viewing, collecting and selling art, I have never seen a painting actually glow. Such radiant power from a small 12"x12" art work is simply amazing."

Her son **Alexander Rudigier**, co-owner of the gallery, adds on: "We are happy to exhibit **The SUN** of Indian renowned mystic artist **Udayraj A. Gadnis**". The artist just smiles.

Now things make sense. An Indian artist... I am just not surprised like the rest. India after all is and has been the cradle of human spirituality for centuries. The artist any way looked like Sidhartha. Before I could get hold of myself, the artist had just disappeared.

On inquiries, I was told that he just comes ones in a day for 30 mins and gives no interviews. I wonder

Frieze Masters!



why? I request the gallery owners for his visiting time the next day and like a pure academician dig in to his website, gathering all the information I could get then armed with a set of questions to meet the Mystic...

As he walks towards his painting, people just gravitate towards him asking questions. I walk up and simply ask him: "May I interview you?" and to my utter surprise he said Yes without asking who am I which art magazine I write, nothing... So confident he is that he simply looks straight in my eyes and says with a warm smile: "I am ready". In today's art world, you have several layers of agents and PR firms to cross over to reach an artist. And here I was straight in conversation with an artist who was making waves in the international art world.

So here are some of the highlights of that conversation we had at Frieze Masters. **Q: You have had an amazing year: first exhibiting at the Masterpiece and now at the Frieze Masters, the only living Asian artist to do so at a young age of 50! How does it feel?**

It is a miracle of timing, it's just pure destiny at its best. I am humbled by the admiration my art and I have received here.

Q: The unexpected appearance of your painting and personality - almost like out of time and place - has left the viewers with a sense of disbelief. Why is that?

Yes, it's just the way the first time as a child I saw a solar power calculator... I am glad that viewers are experiencing the same emotions when they see my SUN.

Q: How do you feel when your paintings are bought?

Ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have towards art. It's not that the art comes alive in the collector, it is the collector who lives in the art. So, I

feel blessed and gifted to have the power to transmit that universal energy on to the canvas. As years have gone by, I have become even more humbler than I was 25 years ago. I just feel that all that I must do is surrender, and surrender 100% to that divine universal force of creation.

Q: Does it truly matter to you to show your art at such mega international art fairs?

It does not matter to me personally, but it does matter to the art market. After all you are in a market place. No artist in the past or present could escape the art market. I think that even cave painters had patrons who got them food and kept the fire burning at night, so that the artist could just paint.

I am fortunate to have **Mentor-Cap Management Pvt.** as my art patrons, its Chairman **Shree Shailesh Haribhakti**, and Managing Director **Rahul Mehta** believed in my vision and supported me all along. My mother **Geetanjali** and my father **Anant Gadnis** pray for me 24/7. So, a lot of support, faith and trust flow my way...

(The theorisation of his "SUN Series" is now becoming a subject of academic discussion, as he is invited by several art institutes and universities to share his journey)

Q: Was the sun series challenging? Now that you are at the tail end...

Nothing is challenging if you are dedicated and focused, 24 SUN large paintings in two years' time was interesting and fulfilling.

Q: Will you someday take it to art galleries in India?

Till about last year art galleries in India were finding it difficult to handle my art, but nothing sells like Success, today I am glad that they are all in a rush to sign me on. But I will study the gallery in detail

and then see if it's worth my time and effort. Art galleries in India are still based on sensationalism, commercialism and favouritism. I want a gallery that values research and the serious art. I am in no rush. The Sun Rises On It Own Will. Regardless of the world's opinion.

Q: Where, do you think, is your dream gallery that can hold your SUN Series?

It's The National Gallery in London! It will be a dream come true for me, it was the gallery I visited 25 years ago when I first came to



UK. Even today I can spend days just walking around and looking at the vast collection it holds. Yes, I think it is as vast as the sky that can hold **The SUN**.

As I hear his deep voice in my head, I feel it might just happen

it in his life time...

As I leave this massive tent of art and wealth, I look back to see **Gadnis** patiently posing in his traditional Indian designer silk clothes (dhoti, khes and angawastra) right in front of a big banner with his



for **Gadnis**. After all how many artists have had the power to make it to their rightful place in the Sun in their life time?

Looks like **Gadnis** has that divine power and is destined to make

masterpiece painting, gently holding it in his hands like a child, for all the photographers who have patiently waited to capture his enigma. As if **Gadnis** is now frozen in time at the Frieze Masters.

