

## ART AND CULTURE

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# Aāmar with Amir



The gallery owner Amir Mohtashemi shows the Silver box, 200 years old

By Stephen Gallagher, Art Expert

Last week I was in conversation with Amir Mohtashemi (MA), the art gallery director and owner of a high end private art gallery on High Street Kensington and India's renowned Indian Mystic and Painter Udayraj Gadnis (UG) about an art exhibition they had collaborated upon. Our readers asked us some very important questions regarding this exhibition so we thought we could seek some answers...

**Q. How was the art exhibition received?**

**A. (AM)** The exhibition was so well received that we had to extend the show for 4 more days.

**(UG)** I think, it's about the role social media plays in our life, I had art lovers coming from Kent, Liverpool, Bath (!) Just because some of the visitors at the preview twitted and wrote in bloggs. I was overwhelmed with the response

**Q. How are such traditional "heritage" art shows relevant in our present world?**

**A. (UG)** I think they are even more relevant today than they would have been



25/50 years ago, in a world full of "use and dispose" products, one does need to show an effort that went in making a small silver box! It takes me 3 months to paint one big painting, hours are spent in a blissful isolation painting that you can take just 3 mins to see and 1.5 mins to comment upon...

**Q. As a gallery owner, don't you think, its a big risk to show such rare heritage pieces?**

**A. (AM)** I do agree but if you don't risk it you, will never know if you can pull it off, there are tremendous market pressures today on everything - starting time, revenue, image - but I think this show was worth it! UG is a big name in the London art world. Many wise and wealthy art lovers made it a point not just to visit but re-visit the exhibition and engage in a conversation!

**Q. Your paper on The Sun has now become a topic of discussion in the art world, what makes it so unique?**

**A. (UG)** It's simplicity that makes it unique. Yes, just simple, honest and truthful rendering. I think the readers are just struck by its simplicity! Mainly, because so much is being made of the contemporary art, complex words, complex thoughts, com-



Karuna Swamini Teresa Hale blessing the Silver mase

plex display - all of it has left the viewer even more confused. Art, if pure, will pour its heart to a sincere and sensitive audience. The Sun is simple, and will rise! Regardless of what the art world has to say about it.

**Q. What are your future collaboration?**

**A. (AM)** We want to recreate a mega show with UG and open the gallery for a larger audience, say a month of Indian heritage display with talks, discussions, workshops etc.

And request UG to show many more of his Suns and who knows some day even The Moon!

We would like our readers to know that if you watch this space, in the future you might be just lucky to win a preview invite to the next show.

# Sharp (शार्प) with Shapero!



Art Curator Miguel, Bernard, and Udayraj

By Suchertra Dasgupta, Asia Wisdom Centre and Art Historian

Last week took our readers on an art journey. Where on display were books of knowledge and some magnificent paintings, displayed at the Shapero Modern Gallery in the heart of May Fair, London. Today we re-visit the show and take another closer look...

**Q. Bernard Shapero, does being an academician help you putting up such intense shows?**

**A. Yes it does help, as you can rely on your**



The gallery owner Bernard Shapero, Udayraj with his magnificent creation - The Sun

wisdom and experience, and not Google! Being an academician, you develop some kind of intrinsic discipline. One is also equipped to handle a famous artist from India, Udayraj Gadnis (UG), who is showing his Sun painting and sharing his research on Sun.

**Q. Was it tough to handle UG, as he is a perfectionist and is known to be temperamental?**

**A. Not at all, it was a joy to host him and his art. Yes, he is very sharp and extremely intelligent; temperamental not in the least (laughs). UG is a rare gem in the art world, he takes nothing for granted. Even the lighting in the room was created by him. He knows what he wants and I admire his sense of perfection. That's refreshing.**

**Q. UG, why so much about your life is unknown, nothing other than your painting is ever known?**

**A. There is nothing in my life other than my Art, I have a simple, humble life. I am surrounded by the love of my parents and blessings of my Gurus. I am blessed to have my best friend as my Art Curator, who works very hard to help me put such a magnificent show like this one. I am happy to have friends like Bernard, who believe in my art and is willing to experiment. Bernard is a very respected name in the London art world and is always willing to open his collection to artists and academicians like me. He is a traditional Englishman who values and respects Art and Books!**

**Q. UG, your art exhibitions are always attended by high profile guests, mainly the wealthy and powerful, why is that so?**

**A. (Looks a little taken aback)** I don't view human beings as wealthy, wise or high-end, they are to me just "seeker", "explores" of knowledge. I am beyond class, creed, colour or race. I am an artist, not a banker. Being a spiritualist, I connect with people at a soul level, not just at a worldly level, I see no difference between The Hinduja's in London or Saints in the Himalayas. Both are equally dear to me. I have learnt a lot from both of them. Just look at Vijay Goel ji, an icon of humility, grace, simplicity and affection, always ready to offer guidance and help. So for me, it's the human connect.

**Q. UG, you have enjoyed much adulation and praise for your Sun series, will you ever speak about what goes on in your mind at a creative level, when you envisage such a vast magnum opus?**

**A. I have simply surrendered my life and art to the divine force above. I don't "think",**



Chairman at London Chamber of Commerce ABA Vijay Goel unveils The Sun portfolio

I feel, I just "feel". So there is a lot that goes on in my heart. My mind is at peace. It's my heart that's on fire. Fire of creativity (Sounds pretty mystical, but that was expected anyway)

Look out for future reports in detail about all that happens in the art world, though not so sure on reporting on what all goes on in the artists world!



At the Library/ Book Store & Art Gallery in Mayfair